

From *aliran* to dealignment: political parties in post-Suharto Indonesia

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Abstract: Surprisingly, the outcome of the 1999 and 2004 elections in Indonesia and the resultant constellation of political parties are reminiscent of the first Indonesian parliamentary democracy of the 1950s. The dynamics of party politics is still marked by *aliran* ('streams'): that is, some of the biggest political parties are still identified with specific milieux. But *politik aliran* lost a lot of its significance and re-emerged in a quite different form after the fall of Suharto in 1998. It is argued that parties are still socially rooted, so a modified *aliran* approach still has its analytical value. But one can witness a weakening of *aliran* (*dealiranisasi*) or dealignment of political parties. This dealignment is indicated by the rise of presidential or presidentialized parties, growing intra-party authoritarianism, the prevalence of 'money politics', the lack of meaningful political platforms, weak loyalties towards parties, cartelization and the upsurge of new local elites. The identification with certain parties has remained, but the ideological cement as well as the organizational base has been eroded. The reasons for this lie in reforms of formal institutions and social factors, ie shifts in the relationship between capital and the political class, altered educational patterns and the rising importance of mass media.

Keywords: political parties; dealignment; *politik aliran*; post-Suharto Indonesia

After the fall of Suharto in May 1998, more than 200 political parties emerged. Eventually, 48 of them were allowed to participate in the June 1999 elections, the first free elections since 1955. Voter turnout was very high, as was the enthusiasm of the population. Surprisingly, the new party system that has arisen as a result of the elections is reminiscent of that of the 1950s when Indonesia experienced parliamentary

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democracy for the first time. Because of these similarities, a range of scholars refer to the *aliran* (literally ‘streams’) approach of Clifford Geertz. These ‘streams’ structured the whole party system of the 1950s because of deeply rooted specialized associations around political parties that represented specific world views and social milieux.

Although Indonesia’s party system appears to have maintained stable cleavages over a long period of time – the dynamics of party politics are still marked by *aliran* – in recent years, the usefulness of the *aliran* approach has been increasingly questioned. *Politik aliran* has lost much of its significance and has re-emerged in quite a different form since 1998. Parties are not ‘organic’ aggregations of social interests, but are characterized by all kinds of deficiencies. Most of them are ridden with internal conflicts, their financing is often shady, their platforms are vague and party elites tend to monopolize decision making. Obviously, beyond old loyalties and ideologies, other forces are at work. The identification with certain parties by certain voters has remained, but the ideological cement as well as the organizational base has been eroded.

Therefore, it is argued that parties are still familiar as symbols to the electorate and that a modified *aliran* approach still has its analytical value. But one can clearly witness a weakening of *aliran* (*dealiranisasi*). The loosening of attachment to political parties, which is manifested *inter alia* by decreasing membership figures and rising numbers of swing voters, is described in the literature on Western parties as ‘dealignment’.¹ Such a process has also taken place in Indonesia.

The first part of this article helps the reader to understand the concept of *aliran* as interpreted in the 1950s, since the term is now often used confusingly. It lays the base for a comparison of parties in the 1950s with those in the post-Suharto period. Moreover, this part depicts some salient aspects of *aliran* and political party evolution up to the present. Then, the current debate on *aliran* will be outlined before proceeding with a description of indications of party dealignment in Indonesia since 1998, that is, the rise of presidential or presidentialized parties, growing intra-party authoritarianism, the prevalence of ‘money politics’, the lack of meaningful political platforms, weak loyalties towards parties, cartelization and the upsurge of new local elites. In the

¹ See the articles in Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000. See also Dogan, 2001 and Drummond, 2006. It has to be noted that the dealignment diagnosis for Western parties is disputed. Some authors see it as an exaggeration (Elff, 2007). Nevertheless, the theory of a weakening of partisan affiliations and a general erosion of group-based politics is widely accepted.

conclusion, the major reasons for dealignment, ie reforms of formal institutions and social factors, shifts in the relationship between capital and the political class, altered educational patterns, and the rising importance of mass media, will be outlined.

The heyday of *politik aliran* in the 1950s

In the 1950s and 1960s, the deep ideological roots of political parties were conceptualized by Indonesianists with the *aliran* approach. Clifford Geertz (1960) first outlined this model in his main work, *The Religion of Java*. His famous differentiation between *abangan* (syncretists stressing animistic beliefs), *santri* (followers of a purer Islam) and *priyayi* (those mostly influenced by a Hinduist aristocratic culture) had a lasting impact on further studies on Java.² For the purpose of analysing political parties in the 1950s, it is, however, much more practical to refer to a slightly different interpretation made by Geertz himself in *Peddlers and Princes*, in which he conceptualized the four largest parties as the organizational foci of *aliran*:

‘As well as its political organization proper, each party has connected with it, formally or informally, women’s clubs, youth and students groups, labour unions, peasant organizations, charitable associations, private schools, religious or philosophical societies, veterans’ associations, savings clubs, and so forth, which serve to bind it to the local social system. For that reason, each party with its aggregation of specialized associations provides a general framework within which a wide range of social activities can be organized, as well as an overall ideological rationale to give those activities point and direction.’ (Geertz, 1963, p 14)

The *aliran* had evolved over a long period of time, partly in opposition to the colonial power, partly in opposition to each other. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the divide between *abangan* and *santri* was increasingly accentuated. Hindu-Buddhism lost much of its appeal

² The *abangan* cultural variant (Geertz, 1960, p 6), typical of ‘the more traditionalized peasants and their proletarianized comrades in the town’ (Geertz, 1960, p 11), consisted of specific ritual feasts, spirit beliefs, sorcery, magic, etc. and stressed the animistic elements of the ‘over-all Javanese syncretism’. The *santri* sub-tradition was characterized by the belief in a more orthodox Islam and was to be found mainly among traders and some sections of the peasantry. The *priyayi* variant referred mainly to the Hinduist aspects and had a deep impact on the bureaucratic culture of Java.

because of the opportunism of the *priyayi vis-à-vis* the Dutch. Islamic modernist ideas started to pervade the thinking of merchants in the cities. The Sarekat Dagang Islam (Islamic Trade Union) and the reformist Muslim organization Muhammadiyah were founded. In turn, the traditionalist Nahdatul Ulama (NU, Renaissance of Muslim Scholars) came into being in 1926. Other strands in the anticolonial movement were a secular nationalism à la Sukarno, and communism. When after independence the power relations between the new elites had to be rearranged, the formerly illegal parties as well as the huge religious organizations with their widespread networks were able to mobilize their respective followers.

Aliran were based on old forms of social integration with their concomitant world views, but political parties and associated organizations would not form a relatively stable pattern of inter-*aliran* relations until the 1950s. The elections in 1955, particularly the long campaigning period, strengthened identification with *aliran* and often entailed bitter conflicts even in remote villages: for instance between Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI, Indonesian Nationalist Party) secularists and pious followers of the Masyumi (Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia, Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims). Feith notes that:

'[...] electioneering had important effects on the functioning of politics. Whereas alliances had been very fluid earlier, with the major cleavages often within parties rather than between them, the campaign situation produced a closing of ranks in most parties [...]. Ideological campaigning brought to the village level, served to sharpen older communal divisions [...] with newly sharpened communal divisions aggravating the cleavages in the elite.' (Feith, 1963, p 316 ff)

According to Geertz, the resultant *aliran* complexes were as much social movements as political parties. The four most important parties, which obtained four-fifths of the votes altogether in 1955, grew out of and at the same time reshaped and politicized these streams (Feith, 1957, p 31 ff; Feith, 1962, p 125 ff). The nationalist PNI represented those who were still set apart by an aristocratic Javanese culture and earned their living mainly as state employees and civil servants, or were their clients.³ The Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI, Indonesian

³ *Abangan* and *priyayi* orientations soon aligned 'into a unit as opposed to the *santri*' (Geertz, 1965, p 128).

Communist Party) was probably the best organized party with loyal followers among *abangan* workers in urban and rural areas.⁴ The orthodox *santri* comprised modernists and traditionalists. The latter under the NU consisted mostly of Javanese *ulama* (religious scholars) and their followers; the former under Masyumi included urban intellectuals, traders and artisans, many of whom were living on the Outer Islands.

The *aliran* are comparable with the pillars that shaped Dutch society in the 1950s and 1960s. In the Netherlands, this pillarization (*verzuiling*) led to an '[...] interlocking between cleavage-specific organizations active in the corporate channel and party organizations mobilizing for electoral action' (Rokkan, 1977, p 142). Dutch society was for almost a century divided into a national-liberal secular entity, an orthodox Protestant and a Roman Catholic pillar or subculture. The church movements built up schools and youth movements, doctrinally distinct trade unions, sports clubs, leisure associations, publishing houses, magazines, newspapers, and even some radio and television stations. Hence they isolated their supporters from outside influence (Lijphart, 1976). Schrauwers (2000) describes a similar process of institutionalized segmentation or pluralist insulation with reference to the To Pamona in Tentena (Sulawesi). Arguably, the *aliran*-style *verzuiling* was to some extent inspired by the experiences of the Dutch and their objective to divide and rule the colony.

Another reason for the formation of *aliran* was the ambiguous position of the political class *vis-à-vis* the business class. At the time of national independence, there was no properly domestic bourgeoisie, and the ethnic Chinese, nurtured under Dutch colonial rule as middlemen, were still defined as aliens, that is, as *pariah* capitalists, after independence (Robison, 1986, p 27 ff; Sidel, 2006, p 19 ff). They remained outsiders. In the 1950s, the new indigenous elite captured the state apparatus, and political parties offered the principal channels of access to the bureaucracy. Their power was based upon the control of segments of the bureaucracy, the military and state companies. For example, whole ministries were transformed into gigantic stocks of prebends for political parties. The NU held sway over the Department

⁴ The PKI comprised to a large extent non-secularized, ideologically well educated cadres. It had to adjust its revolutionary rhetoric to the religious world views of most of its *abangan* followers from Javanese villages and to construct patron-client relations. In 1964, the PKI had – according to its own figures – around 2.5 million party members (1954: 165,000) and 16 million members in associated mass organizations (Mortimer, 1969).

of Religious Affairs, with 27,000 (1958) and 102,000 (1967) employees respectively. Until 1965, the Ministry of the Interior and the Information Ministry were domains of the PNI, while the PKI controlled large parts of the Ministry of Agriculture. Thus, the political class was defined by educational background and achievement rather than by land titles or entrepreneurial success, and educational institutions became the main conduits for career advancement.⁵ Indeed, the different school networks provided the basis for the formation of the nationalist elite (Sidel, 2006, p 37 ff). Later, the four big political parties had established their own recruitment channels: modernist *madrrasah* for Masyumi leaders, traditionalist *pesantren*⁶ for the NU, secular and Christian missionary schools for the PNI, and for the PKI, the reformist nationalist Taman Siswa schools, as well as their own institutions of instruction.

The existence of *aliran* complexes shows that the political parties were deeply rooted. But they were at the same time elitist. They did not have any strong criteria for membership and were not able to build on a steady flow of revenues (Feith, 1962, p 122 ff). Their leadership mainly comprised politicians with sceptical views on modern liberal democracy at least. Due to the immense fragmentation and polarization of the party system, coalitions were generally fragile and short-lived.⁷ Owing to institutional deficiencies (excessive centralism, for example, which gave rise to regionalist movements from 1956 onwards), the rising power of the military, widespread corruption, the polarization between secularists and Islamists in the Constitutional Assembly (*Konstituante*)⁸ and the fundamental opposition of the PKI to liberal democracy, parliamentarianism slowly lost its backing. In July 1959, Sukarno reintroduced the Constitution of 1945, which gave him wide-ranging authorities as president. Political parties lost most of their clout during this Guided Democracy period (1959–65). In 1960, both the Partai Sosialis Indonesia (PSI, Indonesian Socialist Party) and Masyumi were banned, and most of their top leaders were placed under arrest in 1962. The cabinet and the parliaments were maintained as instruments

⁵ Schrauwers (2000) views the pillars as the product of religious rationalization, and also underlines the essential role of educational institutions.

⁶ Mostly rural, religious boarding schools.

⁷ Usually, NU and PNI or Masyumi and PSI worked together in these coalitions, which always excluded the PKI.

⁸ After the elections of 1955, the *Konstituante* was given the task of elaborating a new constitution, but was eventually dissolved by Sukarno.

of Sukarno and the military leadership. Elected members of parliament were replaced by appointed ones at all levels.

In the final years of Guided Democracy, the fragile regime coalition slowly broke up and social conflicts intensified. The PKI mobilized its affiliated organizations in *aksi sefihak* (unilateral actions), that is, occupation of land in conjunction with the land reform law of 1960. But, as Wertheim (1974, p 92) notes,

‘[...] the Muslim community, including many poor tenants, rallied behind the rich landowners who were the leaders of their *aliran*. The vertical alignment typical of Indonesia during the populist Sukarno régime thwarted the attempts of the Communists to carry on the *aksi sefihak* as a class struggle.’

Moreover, when in 1965 a coup of officers around Colonel Untung failed and Guided Democracy collapsed, Muslim groups took a terrible revenge against members of the *abangan* group, killing at least half a million real or alleged communists.

Erosion of *aliran* under the New Order regime

According to Hindley (1970, p 42 ff), the attack on the PKI in October 1965 was led by army officers, traditionalist and modernist *santri*, Christians and the ‘PSI-type group’, made up of secularized, highly Westernized, usually urban-based people. Protestants and individual PNI supporters assisted, but not their national organizations. The military stood apart from the civilian, *aliran*-based political groupings, although many officers belonged to the modernist, non-*santri* sector of society (Hindley, 1968, p 27).

The anti-communist KAP-Gestapu (Action Front for the Crushing of Gestapu)⁹ was formed by students and youth of *santri* organizations, and Catholics. They were supported by the army central leadership and started to organize public rallies (Hindley, 1970, p 41). The other action front established at the end of October 1965 was Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia (KAMI, Indonesian University Students’ Action Front) whose leaders came mostly from Islamic (HMI and PMII) and Christian (PMKRI) student organizations.¹⁰

⁹ ‘Gestapu’ is the abbreviation for the Gerakan September Tiga Puluh (30 September Movement).

¹⁰ Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam, Association of Muslim Students; Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia, Indonesian Islamic Student Movement; Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Katolik Republik Indonesia, Union of Catholic Students of the Republic of Indonesia.

Although the support of *santri* was key to fighting the PKI and marginalizing the Sukarnoists in 1965/66, in the New Order political Islam was for a long time excluded from power. The new state elite consisted of officers, bureaucrats and entrepreneurs, most of whom were either Christians or *abangan*. The regime even tried to exterminate or at least weaken the *aliran* in order to achieve the ideal of a society consisting of 'functional groups'. These groups theoretically existed under the roof of a 'family state' (*negara kekeluargaan*) devoid of conflicts. According to the integralist state model, social classes did not exist (Bourchier, 1996). Neither did the *aliran* fit into this model, particularly not political parties with their respective affiliated mass organizations articulating specific interests and world views. Thus, the regime tried from the beginning to incorporate and control social organizations. Instead of allowing different trade unions, peasants' associations, etc to compete with each other, these organizations were forcefully unified.

In line with these ideologies, the elites of the New Order regime started to depoliticize society, to centralize the administration and to streamline the political system (Ufen, 2002, p 271 ff). Parties were emasculated and token elections introduced. Political control was complemented by the 'simplification' of the party system in 1973, ie the forced fusion into three parties. This law was based on the assumption that Indonesian voters formed a *floating mass*. Political parties, with Golongan Karya (Golkar, Functional Groups)¹¹ as the only exception, were not allowed to work at lower administrative levels in order to avoid the politicization of a population conceptualized as the 'floating mass'. Golkar, the regime vehicle, was always able to maintain a two-thirds majority in the national parliament, while the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP, United Development Party) and the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (PDI, Indonesian Democratic Party) fulfilled the function of restricted opposition parties. Huge parts of the population were excluded from politics. Conflicts were covered by the ubiquitous discourse of integralism and social harmony.

While the organizational networks of the political parties were destroyed and, thereby, old *aliran* weakened, it did not mean that these 'streams' completely vanished. The huge Muslim mass organizations, NU and Muhammadiyah, still existed, and they were able to retain

¹¹ Golkar was conceived as an assemblage of functional groups, not as a real political party.

relative autonomy, as did student organizations such as HMI, PMII and PMKRI. Indeed, even in the construction of the new party system, regime elites had to make concessions. The PPP was to a certain degree representative of the Muslim community and the PDI functioned as successor of the PNI and some smaller Christian parties. Because of these continuities, it was always possible to analyse election results with reference to *aliran* (see, for example: Mackie, 1974; Liddle, 1978; Gaffar, 1992).

Against the backdrop of relatively stable political power relations, Indonesia underwent a profound economic and socio-structural change. At least until the beginning of the 1980s, the boom was mainly propelled by the sale of petroleum and natural gas. With declining prices on the world market, the government was forced to switch policies incrementally towards an export-oriented industrialization. The rapid development entailed the expansion of a hitherto tiny middle class and the emergence of a substantial stratum of industrial workers. Arguably, this urbanization and individualization and the rising social and geographic mobility have weakened traditional social bonds and milieux. Increasing educational levels and the enhanced availability of political information have spawned an electorate that has become increasingly more independent of the advice of traditional leaders.

The transformation of the New Order economy was accompanied by 'the rise of capital' (Robison, 1986). A fraction made up of ethnic Chinese businessmen became ever more powerful as *cukong* (cronies) of Suharto and his generals and built conglomerates (*konglomerat*). At the same time, the nationalist economic policies generated a *pribumi* ('indigenous') capitalist class. Many of these *pribumi* entrepreneurs were affiliated to the ruling elite by family ties or through personal connections.

The combined effects of mass education, urbanization, social differentiation and the quest for political participation unleashed the emergence of new audiences for Islamic books and newspapers. The pluralization of the 1970s and 1980s resulted in the destabilization of traditional religious authority. Alongside *ulama* populist preachers, neo-traditionalist Sufi masters and new Muslim intellectuals were in evidence (Hefner, 2001, p 495). A new kind of *aliran* became apparent in the university sector. In the 1970s, the so-called *dakwah* (predication, mission) movement (Latif, 2005, p 390 ff) surfaced. It started in Bandung around the campus-based Salman mosque and spread in the following years to other universities. The educational and training methods for its members, ie the formation of small cells (the *usrah* system), were modelled after those of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. The related *tarbiyah*

(education) movement began in the early 1980s at different university campuses (Salman, 2006, p 190 ff). The cells later became the backbone of the Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia (KAMMI, Indonesian Muslim Student Action Union), the powerful student organization in the *Reformasi* era in 1998, and subsequently of the Justice and Prosperity Party (PKS).

Whereas the *dakwah* movement had its stronghold in secular universities, a renewal (*pembaruan*) movement was in particular based at the State Institutes of Islamic Studies (IAIN) and the State Islamic Universities (UIN) (Latif, 2005, p 405 ff). Azra, Afrianty and Hefner (2007) show how the state was not only able to establish a range of influential, essentially liberal Islamic universities with a contextual approach to Islamic knowledge, which today educate ever-growing numbers of scholars working in *pesantren* and *madrasah*, but also to encourage these schools to incorporate general and professional education into their curricula. The IAIN and UIN to some extent began to bridge the divides between traditionalists and modernists.

The *pembaruan* movement ushered in a broad-based reformist ‘civil Islam’ (Hefner, 2000) whose activists later formed one of the pillars of the pro-democratic *Reformasi* movement. The Masyumi *aliran* of the early 1950s slowly dissolved because the PPP was not able to unite the diverse Muslim groups. In 1984, the NU withdrew from the party. Furthermore, in the 1990s, reformist Muslims such as Amien Rais as well as the Islamists of the Indonesian Council for Islamic Predication (Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia, DDII) and the Committee for World Muslim Solidarity (Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam, KISDI) distanced themselves from mainstream Muslim politics. In the final years under Suharto, these latter organizations even sided with the regime elites against whom they had battled for decades.

All these developments were directly connected to a renewed relationship between educational institutions and the reproduction of elites. Under the New Order regime, the recruitment of officers, politicians and bureaucrats was not directed by political parties as it had been in the 1950s, but more by military academies such as the Akademi Militer Nasional in Magelang and secular universities such as the Universitas Nasional in Jakarta, the Gajah Mada University in Yogyakarta or the Institut Teknologi in Bandung. Sidel (2006, p 41) notes:

‘[...] the competition between *aliran* based in different educational institutions and identities became channeled and confined within the

nation's military academies and universities, highly secularized institutions that fed directly into the core circuitries of the New Order state: the military officer corps, the ministries, and national and regional assemblies'.

Before this, political parties had served as channels for recruitment into the political class. Under the New Order, universities, academies and religious networks such as student organizations (HMI, GMKRI, etc) or – in the 1990s – the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI, *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Se-Indonesia*) began to take over this role.

The post-Suharto period

At the height of the Asian financial crisis, the New Order crumbled not because of political party opposition, but in the wake of student demonstrations and as a result of intra-elite conflict and bargaining. After the power transfer from Suharto to Habibie in May 1998, the pressure to reform the polity was immediately huge. The new government had no other choice than to legalize the setting-up of political parties. Crucial legislation on elections, the composition of parliaments, political parties, etc was passed by the New Order parties and MPs from the military without the direct consent of the newly established parties. In many ways it was a transition 'from above'.

A total of 148 parties were officially registered. After a long screening process, 48 of these were eventually allowed to take part in the June 1999 elections (Suryakusuma, 1999; Kompas, 2004a and 2004b). To be successful, parties needed the infrastructure and connections built up during the New Order period (Golkar, PPP and, to a certain degree, PDI-P), the credentials of being decidedly reformist (at that time, especially PDI-P and PAN), the indirect backing of religious organizations (PKB, PAN, PPP, PBB, etc) and grass-roots networks created much earlier (PK).¹²

¹² The 10 largest parties in Indonesia now are: Partai Golongan Karya (Golkar), Functional Groups Party; Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Perjuangan (PDI-P), Indonesian Democratic Party – Struggle; Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB), National Awakening Party; Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP), United Development Party; Partai Demokrat (PD), Democrat Party; Partai Keadilan (PK), Justice Party (since 2004: Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, PKS, Justice and Prosperity Party); Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN), National Mandate Party; Partai Bulan Bintang (PBB), Crescent and Star Party; Partai Persatuan Pembangunan Reformasi (PPP Reformasi), United Development Party Reform (since 2004: Partai Bintang Reformasi, PBR, Star Party of Reform); and Partai Damai Sejahtera (PDS), Prosperity and Peace Party.

In the run-up to the polls, there was a lot of speculation as to whether the *aliran* patterns of the 1950s would re-emerge. In the end, it turned out that *politik aliran* still played a role, but in a different form from that in the 1950s; in addition, some other mechanisms shaped the behaviour of parties and voters.

The results of the 1999 elections (Ananta, Arifin and Suryadinata, 2004; Kompas, 2004a) indicated a victory for moderate Islam and secularism. Parties that advocated a firm stance on Islamic issues with a tendency to support a conservative Islamization of the country, such as the PPP, PBB and PK, performed badly and together received only 14% of the votes. The PKB and the PAN, which had predominantly orthodox Muslim followers, fared not much better and between them gained only a fifth of the votes. Parties with a decidedly Pancasilaist¹³ orientation, such as Golkar and the PDI-P, turned out to be the winners.

In the 2004 polls (Sebastian, 2004; Aspinall, 2005; Hadiwinata, 2006; Ananta, Arifin and Suryadinata, 2005), no more than 24 parties were allowed to participate because of additional legal restrictions.¹⁴ Although the elections were essentially characterized by continuities, some telling shifts occurred that signified an acceleration of *dealiranisasi* between 1999 and 2004. The PDI-P suffered a shocking defeat and lost more than 15 percentage points due to disappointment with the Megawati presidency and the performance of PDI-P politicians in general. The other huge surprise besides the devastating loss of the PDI-P and the sudden rise of Partai Demokrat was the triumph of the Islamist PKS (formerly PK), which won 7.3% of the votes. The party was even able to come first in Jakarta, ahead of the PD.¹⁵ These results revealed widespread dissatisfaction with established parties, particularly in the capital.

¹³ The five principles ('Pancasila', the so-called state philosophy) are: belief in the one and only God; just and civilized humanity; the unity of Indonesia; democracy guided by the inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representatives; and social justice for the whole of the people of Indonesia. The Pancasila still symbolize the acknowledgment of religious freedom.

¹⁴ Only parties with at least 10 MPs in the DPR or with more than 3% of the votes in more than half of the province and district parliaments were allowed to participate in the 2004 elections. Moreover, they had to have branches in at least two-thirds of the provinces and in at least two-thirds of the districts in these provinces.

¹⁵ PKS is an efficiently organized, Islamist cadre party. Breaches of party discipline concerning moral behaviour or corruption are severely punished. The cadres are mostly young, well educated men, and the party combines Western management techniques and Islamist indoctrination in a unique way. In contrast to this, Partai Demokrat is almost completely dependent on Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. He used PD as a vehicle in the first direct presidential elections in 2004.

Golkar, PKB, PPP and PAN each lost votes.¹⁶ Their dismal performance was only overshadowed by the trouncing of the PDI-P.

Although a number of differences exist between the present day and the 1950s, *politik aliran* is still salient.¹⁷ The party system is structured by some of the same underlying conflicts, ie between political Islam and secularism and between traditionalist and modernist Islam. Two of the four big parties of the 1950s (PNI, Masyumi, NU and PKI) have successors today. There is a continuing link between the PNI and the PDI-P as well as between the NU and the PKB. The PKB is based on *pesantren* and their charismatic principals, the *kiai*, and the PDI-P is a secular party thriving on the lasting charisma of former president Sukarno. The Masyumi is now split into a few modernist parties (PBB, partly PPP, PAN, partly PKS), and the PKI simply does not exist any more. Golkar has taken up voters from different sources.¹⁸

Modernist parties were split because of certain shifts: the emergence of the *dakwah* movement, but also the renewal within the *santri* middle class with modernist reformers such as Amien Rais. There are now more orthodox Muslims with a rather liberal agenda stressing morality and piety rather than the politicization of Islam. In contrast, many PPP and PBB activists still stick to the old agenda of Masyumi conservatives such as Natsir.

To sum up, *aliran* nowadays are different and – what is more important – parties are no longer social movements with their own tight network of organizations (Antlöv, 2004a, p 12). They are typically led by very powerful leaders who have successfully centralized decision making. Some of them, eg Megawati Sukarnoputri and Abdurrahman Wahid, enjoy almost cult status.¹⁹ In the 1950s, factional disputes within parties were often ignited by ideological issues, whereas today bickering is more about leadership styles and positions. Parties nowadays control their own militias, and elites distance themselves more often from

¹⁶ PKB is directly connected to the traditionalist Islamic Nahdatul Ulama (NU), which officially has around 40 million members. PAN, in many ways the antagonist of PKB, has strong links to the urban, modernist Islamic mass organization Muhammadiyah, which claims a membership of some 35 million.

¹⁷ See Liddle, 2003; King, 2003; Baswedan, 2004; Antlöv, 2004b; Cederroth, 2004; Turmudi, 2004; Sherlock, 2004 and 2005; Johnson Tan, 2006.

¹⁸ One has to bear in mind that many Golkar voters, members and officials are orthodox Muslims. The former chairman of Golkar, Akbar Tanjung, was part of an influential alumni network of the HMI. The new chairman, Yusuf Kalla, has ties to the NU. Because of this, Baswedan (2004, p 674) speaks of an 'Islam-friendly' party. Even many PDI-P voters, members and MPs are orthodox Muslims.

¹⁹ Cf (on this and the following) Fealy, 2001, p 102 ff.

party politics, *inter alia* because of programmatic shallowness.²⁰ During the elections of 1955, the impact of money politics was much less striking than nowadays. Candidates for party posts and for the legislature probably did not have to pay to be nominated. Although party financing in the 1950s was in many cases tainted by corruption or questionable influences,²¹ politics was not as closely interconnected with business as it is today. Moreover, parties in the 1950s relied on extensive networks at the village level and sought active support from village elites. Today, these networks still exist in different forms, but direct identification with party leaders via the mass media has increased considerably.

These observations are underlined by a number of surveys conducted in recent years.²² They indicate that these transformations have indeed taken place. They illustrate, for example, that as a consequence of eroding social milieux, party loyalties are decreasing. A report by the Asia Foundation (2003), for instance, revealed an extremely high proportion of non-identifiers or 'swing voters' (Asia Foundation, 2003, p 100).

The current debate on *politik aliran*

Depictions of the party system today range from concepts based on *aliran* to those rejecting any meaningful form of it. Hadiz,²³ for instance, interprets post-Suharto politics predominantly as the recapture of the political realm by predatory elites:

'Those with money and those capable of deploying an apparatus of violence are the ones who have done best under Indonesia's new democratic institutions. These institutions have typically been captured by coalitions of social power and interest that were nurtured by the authoritarian New Order within its formerly vast network of

²⁰ 'Almost all civil servants, including the top heads and including judges and public prosecutors, were party members. Only army and police members were forbidden membership in parties. When a prominent person was not formally a member of a party, it was common for him to be labeled on the basis of his personal association and general outlook' (Feith, 1962, p 124).

²¹ The financing of the PNI with its contacts to the state bureaucracy was especially questionable (Rocamora, 1975, p 112 ff). Feith (1957, p 28) assumes that the PKI received foreign donations, whereas Muslim parties used their links with landowners, rubber growers, batik manufacturers, etc. The NU was said to be poor. For its leaders, 'social resources', ie social and political relations in and around the villages, were more important than financial resources.

²² On surveys up to 2002, see Johnson Tan, 2002.

²³ Hadiz, 2003; Robison and Hadiz, 2004; Hadiz, 2004a and 2004b.

patronage. Such coalitions now infest Indonesia's political parties, parliaments and executive bodies, at the local as well as national level.' (Hadiz, 2003, p 130)

From a different perspective, Mujani and Liddle (2007) have also raised serious doubts as regards the *aliran* approach. They have demonstrated that prognosticating an individual's partisan choice in relation to his piousness (as defined by engaging in specific religious practices) is difficult today. They cite new evidence from regression analysis and hint at the importance of the emotional attachment to national leaders. Bivariate and multivariate analyses confirmed the significance of leadership and party identification and the non-significance of variables such as 'religious orientation'. Tomsa makes a similar point when he talks about 'hybrid parties' characterized by mixed sources of 'value infusion', namely personalism and rootedness. Tomsa, who scales down the *aliran* approach to the division between *santri* and *abangan*, argues:

'While loyalties based on *aliran* may not yet be completely irrelevant, the 2004 election marathon has certainly confirmed that the mosaic of present-day Indonesian parties has developed far beyond this dualistic classification scheme [...].' (Tomsa, 2006b, p 130 ff)

Some authors still acknowledge the salience of *aliran*, albeit with certain reservations. Johnson Tan (2004 and 2006) refers to the *aliran* approach from the vantage point of party institutionalization. Although Indonesian parties are in general weakly institutionalized, they are socially rooted. But this is exactly the issue that holds so many dangers due to the fact that the existence of historic tensions has contributed to high levels of instability, as evidenced by the chaos surrounding the impeachment of Abdurrahman Wahid in 2001 (Johnson Tan, 2004). Sherlock (2004 and 2005), not unlike Johnson Tan, underlines this significant rootedness and refers to Indonesian parties in the face of a range of weaknesses as 'paradoxical'. Like Tomsa and Johnson Tan,²⁴ Slater (2004, p 64) posits a process of dealignment in 2004 in comparison with 1999. He acknowledges the impact of *aliran* generally, but highlights the peculiar configuration of the executive and the legislative powers.²⁵

²⁴ '2004 elections and 2005 regional elections represent a step towards further deinstitutionalisation due to the primacy of personalities' (Johnson Tan, 2006, p 88).

²⁵ Referring to O'Donnell and Katz & Mair, he dubbed Indonesia a delegative democracy with a cartel of colluding political parties, because of a lack of horizontal accountability. He saw a structural tension between delegative and collusive democracy. See: Katz and Mair, 1995; O'Donnell, 1994.

The most convincing substantiation of the usefulness of an *aliran* approach is the analysis by King (2003). Using bivariate and multiple regression techniques, he demonstrated the existence of a broad continuity in the election results (1955 and 1999). He correlated support for major parties and found striking similarities at the district level. The results suggest that in spite of socioeconomic shifts, fundamental loyalties to parties, essentially defined in terms of religion, have survived. In particular, a certain continuity of divides between *abangan* and *santri* and between traditionalists and modernists was confirmed.

In summary, the *aliran* approach still seems to be quite a useful analytical tool, as indicated by election results in 1999 and 2004 in comparison with those of 1955. But it would be misleading simply to transfer the Geertzian framework into contemporary party politics and to ignore fundamental social and cultural change. The dividing line between traditionalist and modernist Islam has become somewhat blurred, and even the differentiation between *abangan* and *santri* is questionable because of the expansion of orthodox Islam all over the archipelago (a process referred to as *santrinisasi*). Whereas in the 1950s the proportion of *abangan* was supposedly around half or even two-thirds of the total Muslim population, today the percentage has dropped significantly (Liddle, 2003). The old *priyayi* culture is on the decline, and the radical political left was crushed in 1965/66. Primordial loyalties are weaker now than in the 1950s due to socioeconomic progress, the improvement of educational facilities, urbanization and the impact of the mass media. Parties are far less embedded than in the 1950s and they lack convincing ideologies. Nevertheless, a somewhat nostalgic identification with them has remained (Mujani and Liddle, 2007).

Indications of dealignment

In his article on the 2004 elections, Aspinall (2005, p 121) mentions '[...] the growing atomization of voters, greater fluidity of political affiliation, increasing dominance of a professional political stratum, modern campaigning techniques and big money'. These are some of the key characteristics of a process that can be described as *dealiranisasi*. In the following section, seven features of parties and/or party systems are presented as indications of this dealignment.

The rise of presidential parties and the presidentialization of parties
 Since the constitutional amendments, the introduction of direct presi-

dential elections and the strengthening of the presidency by raising standards for impeachment, the executive has grown stronger in relation to the parliament. Political parties have lost the ability to elect the president in the People's Congress (MPR) as they did in 1999. The MPR elected Abdurrahman Wahid through backroom deals. He was replaced in 2001 by Megawati Sukarnoputri, again by means of intense intra-elite bargaining. The 2004 direct elections witnessed the rise of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who was never affiliated to a political party before his own vehicle, the Partai Demokrat (PD), was established. The direct election of the president has thus facilitated the emergence of formerly insignificant parties as vehicles for presidential candidates.²⁶ Such a presidential party would have been inconceivable under the old system of indirect elections. The PD has no real platform and still lacks a strong organizational structure, especially below the national level. At the Congress in 2005, Kristiani Herawati, the wife of Susilo and deputy leader of the party, reportedly engineered the election of her brother-in-law into the office of party chairman. The PD will possibly just manage to survive as long as Susilo stays in office.²⁷

In addition, one can argue that some of the other parties – such as the PDI-P under Megawati Sukarnoputri, Golkar under Yusuf Kalla, the PAN under Amien Rais and the PKB under Abdurrahman Wahid – are being presidentialized because they are preparing their respective leaders (or their hand-picked candidates) for the next presidential election in 2009 and are organizing the party machinery accordingly.²⁸

Presidentialized parties tend to sacrifice policy concerns, '[...] and

²⁶ The five pairs of candidates for the posts of president and vice-president respectively were (with the nominating party in brackets): Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (PD) and Yusuf Kalla; Wiranto (Golkar) and Solahuddin Wahid; Megawati Sukarnoputri (PDI-P) and Hasyim Muzadi, Hamzah Haz (PPP) and Agum Gumelar; Amien Rais (PAN) and Siswono Yudohusodo. In the second round, Susilo and Yusuf Kalla beat Megawati and Hasyim Muzadi and had a clear majority of more than 60%.

²⁷ *Tempo* (2005), 'National Democrat Party Congress: SBY's chairman of choice', 24–30 May.

²⁸ Moreover, there is a tendency to nominate popular artists such as soap opera actors as legislative candidates. The PDI-P recruited Desy Ratnasari, Marissa Haque, Deddy Sutomo and singer Franky Sahilatua for the 2004 elections. The PKB enlisted actors Rieke Dyah Pitaloka and Ayu Azhari, and Golkar nominated Nurul Arifin. This practice is in part reminiscent of politics in the Philippines, with former movie stars such as ex-president Estrada or presidential candidate Fernando Poe being nominated. See, for instance, Mujani and Liddle (2007) on the huge influence of the variable 'leadership' on party choice. They state that 'Indonesia appears to be a genuine instance of the presidentialization of voting behaviour in a new democracy' (Mujani and Liddle, 2007, p 850).

party organization will be marginalized in setting the party's agenda and establishing the party's ideology' (Samuels, 2002, p 471). The elective presidency, especially with a two-ticket system in two rounds, furthers the blurring of ideological divides. The respective pairs of candidates for the presidency and the vice-presidency represent different levels of religiosity and dissimilar geographical areas. Accordingly, in the two rounds of voting in 2004, all kinds of surprising party coalitions were formed.

Poguntke and Webb (2005) state that presidentialization takes place even in non-presidential systems: first, because of the internationalization of modern politics, which is accompanied by an 'executive bias' of the political process; second, because of the declining stability of political alignments that has reduced traditional party loyalties; and third, because of the increased capacity of political leaders to bypass their party machines and to appeal directly to voters. These factors also have an impact upon parties in new democracies.

Authoritarian personalism and factionalism

Authoritarian personalism is to some extent a heritage of the political culture of the New Order.²⁹ Party organization was as centralized as the whole polity, and intra-party decision making as opaque and undemocratic as the authoritarian system in general. The oppression in the 1990s gave rise to charismatic, supposedly pro-democratic political leaders such as Megawati, Abdurrahman Wahid and Amien Rais. After 1998, the personalism was further reinforced by the mass media, the presidential system and party laws benefiting central executives in Jakarta. Party executives have banned individual or non-party candidatures.³⁰ Regional parties are not allowed, with Aceh being the only exception. Law 31/2002 states that the Central Leadership Board (DPP, Dewan Pimpinan Pusat) of a party must be located in Jakarta. The whole system of proportional representation strengthens the hold of central party leaderships. The newly introduced partially open-list proportional representation system is flawed so that it is unlikely that any one candidate will be elected according to this mechanism. Moreover, Indonesian parties adamantly defend their power to select presidential candidates. As stipulated by Law 23/2003, only political parties or coalitions of

²⁹ The personalization is further boosted by the institution of direct presidential elections (cf Mujani and Liddle, 2007).

³⁰ Only recently, a Constitutional Court ruling allowed independent candidates to run in local elections: 'Calon Independen Kemenangan Parpol', *Jawa Pos*, 24 July 2007.

political parties that obtained a minimum of 3% of the seats in parliament or 5% of the votes in the 2004 parliamentary elections were allowed to nominate pairs of candidates. In 2009, the minimum will be 15% of the seats and 20% of the votes.

In most parties today, crucial decisions such as the nomination of candidates (Haris, 2005, p 9 ff) are made by a few core executive members who are usually loyal to one charismatic leader. The decision-making process is almost fully orientated from the top down to the branches.³¹ Furthermore, the statutes of most parties do not clearly regulate how party congresses and elections should be organized (Notosusanto, 2005). Sometimes these regulations are altered even at the beginning of conventions – notorious examples being the recent congresses of Golkar and the PDI-P.³²

Almost all parties have their power centre in Jakarta and chastise recalcitrant members. Intra-party opposition is marginalized in the PDI-P and the PKB in particular, sometimes by disregarding official party statutes. Noted PDI-P members such as Sophan Sophiaan, Indira Damayanti Sugondo, Meilono Suwondo, Arifin Panigoro and Haryanto Taslam were all sidelined as party critics, or resigned as an expression of their disappointment with Megawati's leadership. One means of penalization is to recall³³ parliamentarians, ie to terminate their mandate and replace them.³⁴ The right to do so, a typical New Order brainchild, was reintroduced in 2002. Furthermore, Megawati still has the right to decide on vital matters without consulting the executive council (*hak prerogatif*). The congress in Bali in 2005 was characterized by the sole candidacy of Megawati and limited time for debating her accountability speech. Party critics were systematically silenced ahead of and during the convention.³⁵

³¹ In August 2005, the notorious businessman Fuad Bawazier quit the PAN because it 'had violated its own democratic principles' after its central board issued a decree on 22 July banning provincial chapter members from electing regional executives who had contravened Jakarta's policy ('PAN split wider as co-founder tenders his resignation', *Jakarta Post*, 15 August 2005).

³² *Jakarta Post* (2005), 'End of family feud caps rift-ridden PDI-P congress', 2 April.

³³ Article 12 of Law No 31/2002 on political parties states that party members who are elected legislative members can be dismissed from the legislative body if they lose their membership in their respective political parties.

³⁴ Some MPs ask to have a district system put into practice in order to bolster the position of single parliamentarians and to counterbalance regional and national party leaderships. At the same time, the notorious recall mechanism is harder to apply.

³⁵ *Kompas* (2005), 'Megawati Terpilih Aklamasi, Guruh Ikut', 1 April; interview with Sukowaluyo, PDI-P, 4 October 2005. See also Gerakan Pembaruan PDI Perjuangan, 2005.

In the PKB, the Advisory Board (Dewan Syuro) stands above the Executive Council (Dewan Tanfidz) in many respects. Even candidates for the Dewan Tanfidz have to obtain the acknowledgment of the Dewan Syuro beforehand (Notosusanto, 2005). Major disputes in the PKB have been solved in a problematic way, to say the least. A long-simmering internal conflict between 'PKB Kuningan' around Abdurrahman Wahid and Alwi Shihab and 'PKB Batu Tulis' led by Matori Abdul Jalil crippled the party for months. Matori was eventually sacked, and Alwi Shihab was declared interim party chairman. In 2004, Alwi Shihab and Syaifullah Yusuf, then Chairman and General Secretary respectively, were on the side of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono during the presidential election campaign, and were later rewarded with ministerial posts. Afterwards, however, they were sacked and not invited to the party congress in Semarang in 2005. Abdurrahman Wahid was elected chief patron of the Dewan Syuro by acclamation and not in accordance with party regulations. His nephew, Muhaimin Iskandar, was elected the new party chairman – again by acclamation and without opposition.³⁶

At the congress of the PAN in Semarang in April 2005, long-time chairman and *spiritus rector* of the party, Amien Rais, stepped down, officially to promote rejuvenation. But again, Amien continues to serve as a 'party adviser', which means in actual fact that he decides on salient issues. He picked little-known businessman Sutrisno Bachir as new party chairman after having 'convinced' other candidates not to compete. Sutrisno is a long-time admirer of Amien and financier of the PAN.

Some of the examples above indicate that factionalism is widespread and often a direct result of intra-party authoritarianism. In many cases even new parties are formed. The PBB was shaken by disputes between two of its founders, Chairman Yusril Ihza Mahendra and Hartono Mardjono, the latter becoming chairman of the Indonesian Islamic Party (PII).³⁷ Around the same time, PAN faced a similar crisis.³⁸ The PBR, formed by popular preacher Zainuddin MZ, is a splinter group of the PPP and has itself been shaken by internal clashes. The PPP is again in danger of being divided by competing cliques. In the PDI-P, Dimiyati

³⁶ *Tempo* (2005), 'Wahid's way', 19–25 April; *Kompas* (2005), 'Muktamar Dinilai Tak Demokratis, Rekonsiliasi PKB Makin Sulit', 20 April.

³⁷ *Republika* (2001), 'Hartono Mardjono Dipeecat PBB', 24 February.

³⁸ *Kompas* (2001), '16 Anggota DPP PAN Resmi Mengundurkan Diri', 22 January.

Hartono and Eros Jarot, two Megawati critics, established a new political party, as did the rebels of the 2005 PDI-P party congress.³⁹

Money politics

Most political observers are particularly interested in institutions such as party or electoral laws, and tend to assess the political future of Indonesia rather optimistically, especially when they are funded by foreign organizations working to improve the quality of democracy in Indonesia. In contrast, those analysing Indonesian politics from a neo-Marxist political economy standpoint take issue with mainstream functionalist approaches:

‘[...] most of these parties are not “natural” political entities, carrying out “aggregating” and “articulating” functions, but constitute tactical alliances that variously draw on the same pool of predatory interests. Notwithstanding certain ideological schisms within and between parties, their function has primarily been to act as a vehicle to contest access to the spoils of state power.’ (Robison and Hadiz, 2004, p 228)

To Robison and Hadiz (2004, p 258), politics in Indonesia nowadays is ‘[...] driven increasingly by the logic of money politics’. Indeed, parties need financial support from private entrepreneurs. Membership fees are mostly insignificant, as is public funding. The reduction of state subsidies in 2005 has increased the damaging effects of financial weakness on the functional capacity and legitimacy of political parties. According to Mietzner (2008), these subsidies have recently been cut by approximately 90%, whereas in the period from 2001 to 2005 they provided a huge part of campaign expenses. In order to mollify the parties that intended to impeach him, Abdurrahman Wahid had issued the ‘Government Regulation on Financial Assistance to Political Parties’ (PP 51/2001). From 2001–2004, the PDI-P, for example, received an estimated US\$47m in state funding at the national, provincial and district levels. But in 2005, with its Government Regulation 29, the Yudhoyono government turned to a seat-based funding formula, which resulted in a sharp decline in state subsidies. The reasons for this policy

³⁹ Oil businessman Arifin Panigoro, former Investment Minister Laksamana Sukardi, Roy B.B. Janis, Didi Supriyanto, Muchtar Buchori, Sukowaluyo Mintohardjo, Potsdam Hutasoit and others. They founded the Democratic Renewal Party (Partai Demokrasi Pembaruan, PDP).

shift are unclear, although it seems that well-meaning opponents of public party funding were behind the regulation and that a majority of parliamentarians were not able to foresee the consequences. Nevertheless, in order to appease shocked party functionaries, the government later issued the regulation PP 37/2006, thereby raising the allowances for legislators at all levels by up to 300%. Only after sharp criticism by the public was the regulation revoked and replaced by a less controversial one.

Other regulations on party financing exist, but violations are hardly ever punished (Hadiwinata, 2006, p 106). Entrepreneurs presumably dictate (or 'influence') the stance of parties on specific issues. In recent years, some businessmen have become party heads, eg Yusuf Kalla (Golkar) and Sutrisno Bachir (PAN).⁴⁰ Financiers such as billionaire Aburizal Bakrie are even rewarded with ministerial positions. According to Bima Arya Sugiarto,⁴¹ 39.8% of members of the national parliament have business backgrounds, and the number of former military officers, bureaucrats and nationalist political activists, as well as people with backgrounds in Islamic mass organizations, has fallen.

Furthermore, there are countless indications that candidates are chosen simply with regard to their financial weight. This is in contrast to the situation in the 1950s. 'Money politics' in different forms was not unknown at that time, but the elections in 1955 were characterized by '[...] remarkably little emphasis on money [...]' (Anderson, 1996, p 29).⁴²

It is no secret that before the 2005 introduction of direct elections at the provincial, district and municipal levels, when the respective parliaments had the sole power to determine who became governor, *bupati* or mayor respectively, most of these competitions were decided by the disbursement of huge amounts of money to councillors (Rifai, 2003). The institution of direct elections at these levels did not erase 'money politics', but transferred it. In the *pilkada*,⁴³ the pairs had to pay their

⁴⁰ *Kompas* (2004), 'Penguasa dan Pengusaha Kuasai Golkar', 22 December; *Kompas* (2005), 'PAN Dipimpin Pengusaha', 12 April.

⁴¹ See: 'Political business. Entrepreneurs are transforming political parties', in *Inside Indonesia*, Vol 87, 2006.

⁴² Anderson mentions photographs of cabinet ministers before 1949 'in shorts and sandals' in contrast to the congressional opulence of the Philippines. The revolutionaries '(...) were not at all sharply distinguished from one another in social origins or economic resources (...)' (Anderson, 1996, p 28). Part of this ethos of simplicity still imbued politicians in the 1950s.

⁴³ Short for *pilihan kepala daerah* ('election of regional heads'), ie the first direct elections of governors, district chiefs and mayors.

respective parties for the candidacy and they had to shoulder the campaign costs. They spent an average of US\$10 million at the provincial level and US\$1.6 million at the municipality/regency level (Rinakit, 2005). The latest example was the race for the governorship in Jakarta.⁴⁴ To obtain the nomination as official candidate, one had to spend around US\$20 million, plus the campaign costs. This huge amount of money is the minimum a governor will have to earn once in office just to compensate for his initial investment.⁴⁵

That investments necessitate rent-seeking activities is accepted as a widespread phenomenon in parliaments too. In the DPR, the situation is as gloomy as at lower levels. In its corruption barometer report for 2004, for instance, Transparency International Indonesia (TI Indonesia) ranked the House of Representatives and political parties first in the corruption index (categorized as 'very corrupt'), followed by the customs and excise office, the judiciary, the police and the tax office.⁴⁶ TI Indonesia's Secretary General Emmy Hafild listed various manifestations of corruption that included the bribery of House members who planned to scrutinize entrepreneurs on their dubious activities, the activities of MPs as brokers to help private companies win government contracts, and financial rewards from public officers in 'fit and proper tests' before parliament. Furthermore, political parties were used by corrupt individuals from the previous regime as safe havens from corruption litigation.⁴⁷

In early October 2006, the DPR working group on law enforcement and regional administration recommended that the government should rehabilitate the names of regional heads and council members implicated in corruption cases. Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) states that at least 55 corruption cases involving 350 public officials and lawmakers were filed with district courts from January 2005 to June 2006, and about 1,200 regional council members were named as suspects, charged and convicted of corruption between 1999 and the end of 2004.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ *Tempo* (2006), 'The lure of the governorship', 5–11 September.

⁴⁵ Out of 10 governors in Sumatra, seven are businessmen. If the candidates themselves are not wealthy, they have to be backed by investors who are usually members of so-called success teams (*tim sukses*) during campaigns (see, for instance, Vel, 2005, p 84).

⁴⁶ *Jakarta Post* (2004), 'House, parties "most corrupt"', 10 December.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Jakarta Post* (2006), 'Govt told to get tough on corrupt lawmakers', 7 October; *Jakarta Post* (2006), 'House calls for halt to graft trials of local leaders', 11 October.

Parties with vague platforms

Out of the 48 parties that were officially accepted in 1999, eight were Islamic by their own definition, five were based on the Pancasila and Islam, 31 solely on the Pancasila, two on the Pancasila and other teachings (social democratic or Marhaenist) and two exclusively on other teachings (PUDI on 'religious democracy' and the PRD on 'people's social democracy')⁴⁹ as their ideology (Suryakusuma, 1999, pp 592, 596). Six parties had a bull on a red background as their symbol, denoting a Marhaenist, ie Sukarnoist platform, but they preferred to be seen as Pancasilaist. In 2004, out of the 24 parties contesting the parliamentary elections, 13 opted for Pancasila as their core ideology, five for Islam, two for Marhaenism, and the other four small parties for a combination of Pancasila with the UUD 1945 (Constitution of 1945), for Pancasila with 'justice and democracy', and for Pancasila based on the 'family principle' (*kekeluargaan*) and 'mutual help' (*gotong royong*) respectively (Djadijono, 2006). Even a devoutly Christian party such as the PDS does not refer to Christianity, but to the Pancasila.

Consequently, the main parties in Indonesia are essentially either Islamic or secular (ie based on the Pancasila) with regard to their ideology. But even the Islamic parties in general do not oppose the principles expressed by the Pancasila formula, which is hazily phrased and hardly adequate as a platform. The Sukarnoist parties add 'Marhaenism' to their main agenda, which denotes – again in very general terms – a commitment to represent the 'little people' (as epitomized by Marhaen, supposedly a peasant whom Sukarno once met). Most parties are thus engaged in a fight for the middle ground. Essentially Islamic parties such as the PAN and the PKB have chosen a neutral platform in terms of religion; even an Islamist party such as the PKS is not willing to play the Islamic card during elections, but rather focuses on issues such as the fight against corruption.

The fact that programmes are shallow is not surprising in the light of global developments. Ideologies of the 1950s, eg Sukarno's populist left-wing nationalism, communism and Islamism have lost their status as convincing alternative social models in the face of capitalist globalization and liberal democracy.⁵⁰ Therefore, the stability of traditional

⁴⁹ Partai Uni Demokrasi Indonesia, United Democratic Party of Indonesia; Partai Rakyat Demokratik, People's Democratic Party.

⁵⁰ Contrary to the usual perception, political Islam is in many respects in decline (see Kepel, 2002). Even the PKB and the PAN are now (in terms of *shari'a* introduction and the establishment of an Islamic state) essentially secular. The popularity of certain models of political Islam is mainly confined to attempts to enforce public morality.

political loyalties is on the wane. Since the collapse of communism, during a profound crisis of social democracy and decreasing political polarization in many Western countries, party programmes have been losing their clear contours. In Europe, the typical characteristics of catch-all parties are still salient: a drastic reduction in the party's ideological baggage, the strengthening of top leadership groups, a downgrading of the role of the individual party member, a de-emphasis of the specific social-class or denominational clientele, with the objective of securing access to a variety of interest groups (Kirchheimer, 1966). In Indonesia, Golkar and the PDI-P are the most obvious versions of catch-all parties.

Diminishing party loyalty

Weak platforms indicate that the link between parties and voters is loosening and that the rootedness in milieu is decreasing. In a national survey, the Asia Foundation found that linkages between voters and parties were mainly 'emotional' and were not based on meaningful knowledge of the specific platforms of parties:

'The widespread lack of party preferences, other than those based on emotional identification, can largely be explained by the fact that most Indonesians are unaware of differences among the political parties. Two-thirds of the voters (66 percent) say they do not know what differences exist among the parties or that there are none.' (Asia Foundation, 2003, p 100)

These observations of an increasing dealignment are corroborated by a number of surveys conducted in recent years.⁵¹ In a nationwide survey carried out in 2004, the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) found that 40.2% of those who had voted for Golkar in the 2004 parliamentary elections had opted for Susilo and not for the official candidate of their own party, Wiranto, in the first round of the presidential elections. It found that 23.7% of PDI-P voters chose Susilo by ballot, and 22.7% of PPP voters cast their ballot for Amien Rais and not the party's candidate, Hamzah Haz; 40% of PBB electors, supposedly Islamists, supported Susilo (IFES, 2004b).

Another IFES survey revealed that 84% of those who had voted for the PBB, the PBR, the PKB and the PAN voted for Susilo Bambang

⁵¹ On surveys up to 2002, see Johnson Tan, 2002.

Yudhoyono and Yusuf Kalla in the second round of the presidential elections, and that 82% of Golkar voters in the 2004 national elections voted for Susilo and Yusuf Kalla in the second presidential ballot, although the central leadership officially supported Megawati and Hasyim Muzadi (IFES, 2004c).

Obviously, the attachment to parties and the identification of politicians with their parties is low. Therefore, after elections, voters in Indonesia are hardly interested in everyday party work and are generally ill-informed on policy issues. Campaigning lacks content. Voters largely do not elect parties along the lines of their platforms.

The collusive relationship between parties

In a widely quoted article, Katz and Mair (1995) outlined how Western European catch-all parties had been transformed into parties constituting a cartel. Cartel parties are related to the state symbiotically; they are estranged from society and are dominated by public office-holders. Party activists have only marginal influence upon internal decision-making procedures, and election campaigns are organized by professional experts. These parties together form a cartel in that they fend off new competitors and share the spoils of office. Slater (2004) sees a parallel phenomenon in Indonesia. The existence of cartels is among other things indicated by rainbow coalitions (*koalisi pelangi*), the lack of an organized opposition in most parliaments, the evasion of open voting and the lack of willingness to crack down on corruption. When – according to Slater (2004, p 75 ff) – the cartel was endangered by the elusive policies of President Abdurrahman Wahid, who started sacking ministers and finally even tried to ban Golkar, the colluding political elites reacted by impeaching and ousting him.

Cartels are in some measure a result of a fragmented party system with unclear majorities.⁵² Abdurrahman Wahid was forced to form a grand coalition in October 1999 because his party had received only 12.6% of the votes.⁵³ After the overthrow of the Abdurrahman Wahid

⁵² Conceivably, the fragmentation of the party system in Indonesia is not the result but the cause of the proportional system. The choice of this system after independence and again in 1998/99 was due to the high number of relevant political actors. The introduction of a majority system seems to be more likely if there are just two major players (Nohlen, 2004, pp 408 and 415 ff).

⁵³ Coalitions are not generally based on well defined contracts outlining government objectives and the peculiar interests of political parties as members of this coalition. Cooperation among parties is fluid and strongly dependent on the outcome of power struggles in these parties.

government in July 2001, Megawati herself depended on the support of a range of parties, which then were rewarded with cabinet positions. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono did not have the backing of a strong party since his PD received just 7.5% of the ballot.⁵⁴ Only when Yusuf Kalla became Golkar chairman in December 2004 and steered the party towards the Yudhoyono government did the president gain a sufficient majority in the DPR.

Difficulties of inter-party coalition-building often arise in presidential systems, especially when combined with multiparty elections. Executive/legislative deadlock can sometimes be the result (Mainwaring, 1993). In Indonesia, these tendencies brought the parliament to a virtual standstill in 2001 during the prolonged impeachment process against Abdurrahman Wahid, and this happened again in late 2004. But these phases of immobility gave way to new coalitions formed to rescue the underlying logic of cartelization.

The sudden change of guard at the top of Golkar in late 2004 can be interpreted as a manoeuvre to secure the benefits of governing in Jakarta, ie ministerial posts.⁵⁵ The move by party delegates to vote for the incumbent vice-president, Yusuf Kalla, and sideline Akbar Tanjung testifies to the strength of directly elected politicians. Only now a supposedly strong president with a parliamentary majority has emerged. A stable pattern of 'government' *versus* 'opposition' has not yet developed, however.⁵⁶ In many regional and provincial assemblies too, opposition to the cartels is organized by only a handful of councillors.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ He therefore tried to co-opt other parties. But ahead of the second round of presidential elections, Golkar, under the leadership of Akbar Tanjung, decided to side with Megawati, although Yusuf Kalla was Susilo's running mate. After the victory of Susilo and Yusuf Kalla, a marked polarization occurred between Susilo's 'People's Coalition', which comprised the PD, the PAN, the PPP, the PKS as well as other small parties grouped in the 'Democratic Pioneer Star' (BPD) faction, and the 'Nationhood Coalition', which was made up of the PDI-P, Golkar, the PDS and the PBR with the support of the PKB. The main issues were the installation of the 11 parliamentary subcommittee chairmen and the appointment of the chief of the armed forces. Some of the ministers in Susilo's cabinet were not acknowledged by their own parties. In October 2004, the PPP also left the 'Nationhood Coalition', *inter alia* because two PPP members – Suryadharma Ali and Soegiharto – were accepted as ministers by Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

⁵⁵ On the whole episode, see Tomsa (2006a, p 17 ff).

⁵⁶ Recently, in view of the 2009 elections, a kind of informal coalition between Golkar and the 'opposition party' PDI-P came into being: 'Mega-Kalla Tidak Hadir' (*Jawa Pos*, 24 July 2007).

⁵⁷ Interview with Anang Rosadi Adenansi, PKB, member of the provincial parliament of South Kalimantan, Banjarmasin, 1 September 2005. See also Slater (2004, p 63).

The clearest indication of a cartel-like organization of political parties is the peculiar decision-making mechanism called *musyawarah dan mufakat* ('deliberation and consensus'), which predominates in Indonesian parliaments. Consistent with the Rules of Procedure of the DPR (Peraturan Tata Tertib DPR-RI, 2001), most decisions in commission and plenary meetings of the legislatures are taken consensually and without voting. This causes delays and makes it extremely difficult for the public and even for political observers to trace back the initial stance of particular parties on particular political issues (Sherlock, 2005). Even if parties express their views publicly from time to time, they often switch unexpectedly to contrary positions. In the national parliament, for example, the fuel subsidy cuts were initially resisted by the PPP, the PKS, the PAN and the PKB, but finally they all backed down. This tactic of first opposing and finally cooperating was repeated many times, as in the case of the planned probe into rice imports from Vietnam, with the PKS being the only exception, and in the case of the purchase of 32 French-made armoured vehicles without public bidding. 'The Forum of Citizens Concerned about the Indonesian Legislature' (Formappi) thus stated that parliamentarians favoured lengthy debates, posturing rather than action, and speaking out against government policies, but generally supported the criticized bills after backroom deals.⁵⁸

The upsurge of new local bosses

The collapse of the New Order, in which regional heads were appointed by the Minister of Domestic Affairs, plus administrative and political decentralization, have strengthened local elites. The devolution of political power to the district (*kabupaten*) level and the concomitantly increased budgets have made local politics more competitive and political positions more attractive. The centralized neo-patrimonialism of the New Order with Suharto as the highest patron has given way to a decentralized neo-patrimonialism with a range of interwoven national and regional patron–client networks. Local politics, tightly controlled by the military regime under the New Order at least until the early 1990s, is increasingly marked by 'predatory networks' (Robison and Hadiz, 2004) and may evolve into outright 'bossism' (Sidel, 1999). Although the central leaderships of political parties can dictate most decisions on policy issues and are able to push through their candidates for the national parliament and for their respective central

⁵⁸ *Jakarta Post* (2006), 'House faces criticism for bowing to government', 28 September.

executives, a tug of war between Jakarta and the regions is usual at lower levels.⁵⁹ Clientelist relationships that more often than not exist on a purely monetary basis predominate.

Even before the introduction of the *pilkada*, which started in 2005, political thuggery and ‘money politics’ were on the rise (Choi, 2004).⁶⁰ What is more, the *pilkada* have demonstrated that the selection of candidates by political parties, the decisions of voters, and the partisan coalition building were in most cases not the result of long-term loyalties in specific social milieux, but of pragmatic decisions. Many coalitions were formed just for the sake of winning. In Maluku, even the PKS and the PDS, ie Islamists and supposedly fervent defenders of Christianity respectively, formed a coalition (Rinakit, 2005). At the grass-roots level, political parties frequently did not have adequate, ie popular candidates. The *pilkada*, thus, were an arena for well connected bureaucrats and wealthy businessmen, who both profited from candidacies auctioned off by weakened parties (Mietzner, 2005 and 2007; Buehler and Johnson Tan, 2007).⁶¹ Often, candidates were not initially party members, or they belonged to party A, but ran for party B. At this level, popular candidates look around for those parties offering them the best opportunities, and party institutionalization at the local and regional level is much weaker than at the national level in Jakarta.

⁵⁹ ‘Around the country, local party branches erupted in furious conflicts as would-be candidates struggled to get winnable positions on party lists. Sometimes, the tension was between local party activists and national headquarters. More frequently, these were “horizontal” conflicts between local would-be candidates, each with their own clientele of supporters. In some places, there were angry demonstrations and confrontations between rival mobs: in East Kalimantan, it appeared for a time that the PDI-P would not be able to field any candidates because an internal schism meant it had not submitted a valid list of candidates’ (Aspinall, 2005, p 146). See also Choi, 2004.

⁶⁰ “Islamic” militia groups have been at least as ubiquitous in Yogyakarta as the notoriously chaotic and brutal satgas (paramilitary wing) of the now powerful PDI-P. Such Islamic-oriented militias include the Gerakan Pemuda Ka’bah (Ka’bah Youth Movement), loosely linked to the United Development Party (PPP) [...] and the Islamic Defence Front (FPI), itself allegedly associated with a number of Islamic political groupings. [...] In North Sumatra, racketeering is largely the domain of old New Order “youth”/crime organizations like the Pemuda Pancasila (Pancasila Youth) – originally set up to help the military confront the Indonesian Communist Party in the 1960s – and its powerful local rival, the Ikatan Pemuda Karya (IPK; Functional Youth Group). A number of members from such organizations currently occupy local parliamentary seats across the province. Two have won post-Soeharto elections for bupati and mayor in North Sumatra’ (Hadiz, 2004b, p 715). See also on these new local elites: Widodo, 2003.

⁶¹ According to Rinakit (2005), 87% of regional elections in 2005 were won by the incumbents, local bureaucrats and military personnel.

Party offices, for example, are generally inactive in between elections.

Any tendencies of *dealiranisasi* and of entrenching newly emerging local oligarchies are strengthened. New local and regional political elites have been formed. To some extent they are checked by politicians in Jakarta, and are often not identical to well established local or regional party leaders. Local or regional elites do not have a decisive impact on national politics in the DPR or in the central executives of political parties; and the Dewan Perwakilan Daerah (DPD, or House of Regional Representatives) is insignificant in comparison with the DPR. Moreover, its delegates are not allowed to be members of political parties. Nevertheless, local strongmen have emerged. In some regions, an explosive mixture of decentralization, the opening-up of new avenues to government spoils, and the re-accentuation of regional or cultural identities has evolved.

Conclusion

Politics nowadays is different from that in the 1950s. After more than 40 years of authoritarianism and a long period of rapid socioeconomic development, social milieu and political parties have basically been transformed. They are no longer social movements with their own solid network of organizations. This dealignment is *inter alia* indicated by seven features: first, the rise of presidential or presidentialized parties with weakened political machines, the stimulation of populism and the surging impact of mass media and modern campaign techniques; second, the authoritarianism and personalism within parties with powerful 'advisers' and executives that punish unruly members, marginalize internal opposition and increase factionalization; third, the dominance of 'money politics' with bought candidacies, MPs acting as brokers for private companies, businessmen taking over party chairmanships, and billionaire financiers determining policies behind the scenes; fourth, poor political platforms centred on very general ideologies; fifth, decreasing party loyalties with only 'emotional' linkages between voters and parties; sixth, the cartel-like cooperation of parties as indicated by rainbow coalitions, an unorganized opposition, the *musyawarah dan mufakat* mechanism and the collusion in tolerating corruption; and finally, the formation of new, powerful local elites, stimulated by the decentralization and invigorated by the *pilkada*.

To produce this dealignment, formal institutional arrangements and the effects of socioeconomic change are combining. As demonstrated

above, reforms of formal institutions have accelerated some of the processes leading to an erosion of parties and the party system. The introduction of direct presidential elections and the *pilkada* has engendered a de-linking of candidates and political parties. According to Sherlock (2005), direct presidential elections had two important effects in 2004: they personalized the campaign and they forced the electorate into a binary choice:

‘The system encouraged voters to assess the standing, policies and promises of individual national-level leaders rather than responding to the more parochial or proximate (in both a geographical and social sense) appeals of party organisations.’

Therefore, parties ‘[...] were less able to rally electors behind them and to deliver votes to particular candidates’. The *pilkada*, moreover, have further loosened the relationship between parties and candidates. According to Buehler and Johnson Tan (2007, p 69):

‘[...] Indonesia’s system has gone from one in which parties were seen to have a stranglehold on politics to one in which, at least in the regions, they were significantly weakened, reduced to service providers for local powerholders’.

The second set of factors is the outcome of social change, that is, shifts in the relationship between capital and the political class, altered educational patterns, and the rising importance of mass media.

In the 1950s, the elite’s power was directly political in derivation. Foreign companies, largely Dutch, controlled capital-intensive sections of the economy. Chinese enterprises were politically vulnerable, and indigenous businessmen were not able to ‘[...] exercise much influence on governments beyond the eliciting of immediate favors’ (Feith, 1962, p 105). State companies were dominated by bureaucrats and political parties. Only in the New Order a powerful class of *pribumi* and ethnic Chinese businessmen arose. The result was a shift in the relationship between politicians and capital after 1998. In some respects, this relationship has been turned upside down. After initial insecurity with respect to their fate under the new form of government, big business quickly recovered and dictated the terms of rehabilitation. Whereas under the New Order they had to bribe the upper echelons in the neopatrimonial system, they now deal with parliamentarians during the

law-making process and approach bureaucrats and politicians at all levels (Chua, 2008). Therefore, the symbiosis of entrepreneurs, politicians and state officials seems to be a direct result of the New Order and its coalition of rent-seeking military, administrative and political elites. In this vein, Hadiz interprets post-Suharto politics predominantly as their recapture of the political realm:

‘Indonesia’s new democratic institutions [...] have typically been captured by coalitions of social power and interest that were nurtured by the authoritarian New Order within its formerly vast network of patronage. Such coalitions now infest Indonesia’s political parties, parliaments and executive bodies, at the local as well as national level.’ (Hadiz, 2003, p 130)

Another salient social factor exacerbating the dealignment is the shift in educational patterns (Sidel, 2006, p 37 ff). Because of the specific characteristics of the political class in the 1950s, education was of the utmost importance. The *aliran* were closely connected to and were reproduced by certain educational institutions. Traditionalist Muslims had their networks of *pesantren*, modernists their *madrasah*, and secular forces their national and Christian missionary schools. Under the New Order this linkage was partly broken. The IAIN and UIN, as well as the secular universities with their reformist agendas, mixed students with different social backgrounds, eg traditionalist and modernist Muslims. Religious education at state schools in connection with the nationwide *santrinisasi* narrowed the divide between secularism and Islam; and religious schools, even the once backward *pesantren*, accepted and introduced the official national curricula. Today, the close connection between *aliran* and educational institutions is rather tenuous.

All this has to be analysed against the backdrop of a pluralization and individualization of knowledge. New communication technologies combined with expanded education ushered in new techniques of interpretation of holy scripts, new public spaces, a heightened contest over religious authority and the blurring of divides between laypersons and experts. Voters today are much less tied to brokers who mediate between them and, for instance, the *ulama*. Eickelman and Piscatori (1996) denote this process as the erosion of religious authority.

All these factors are intertwined and often hardly distinguishable. Today, the ability to control the media is at least as important as political networking at the grass roots. This, again, is in contrast to the 1950s

when the parties hoped '[...] to contact the villager through mass media, [but] were quite unsuccessful – even where they had considerable financial resources and the advantages of occupancy of government power' (Feith, 1957, p 26).

This has completely changed. Most of the attention of political parties is devoted to a professionalized form of campaigning through the media. Ahead of the polls in 2004, TV was for 83% of the electorate the most important medium for obtaining information (IFES, 2004a). Mietzner (2008, p 255) estimates that at least 30% of political parties' campaign funding was set aside for television, radio and print media advertisements. Furthermore, opinion polls increasingly shape the behaviour of political party elites, and election campaigns are organized by professional experts or spin doctors.⁶²

The development of the party system is a cause for concern. Indonesian parties may evolve into political machines like those in the Philippines. It is also possible, though, that new ideologies will appear, taking the form of either a leftist neo-populism as in Latin America, or as a revived Islamism. Because of the decline of *abangan* orientations and the impact of Western secular ideas, new religious divides are being constructed. Religion is repeatedly politicized for this reason. In parliament, religious issues set heated discussions in motion, the latest examples being the debates on the pornography bill and on the introduction of *shari'a* laws at the local level. Certainly, this does not outweigh the illustrated erosion of traditional loyalties and party structures.

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⁶² The latter point is well illustrated by Mietzner (*Jakarta Post* [2006], 'Opportunities, pitfalls of RI's new democracy', 16 October). See also Aspinall, 2005, p 143.

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