# Lost in Translation?

*Redemocratization and Mass–Elite Discrepancies
in Indonesian Politics*

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Party politics in Southeast Asian electoral democracies, that is, in countries such as the Philippines, Thailand (before and in between the last two military coups), East Timor, and Indonesia, is generally characterized by "money politics," clientelism, weak programmatic profiles, and a low degree of party and party-system institutionalization (Johnson Tan 2015; Aspinall et al. 2022; Ufen 2023b). Nevertheless, there are palpable differences. Indonesia's political parties are comparatively better socially rooted. The main reason for this is the establishment of large Islamic and nationalist organizations and parties during the colonial period and after independence, along with their reestablishment after democratization (Ufen 2008; Fossati 2022). The Indonesian party system was exceptional in the 1950s because a few big parties represented clearly definable social milieus. After 1998, and with the institution of free and fair elections since 1999, some cleavages reemerged, but parties are generally much less rooted in society than they used to be. Bread-and-butter issues are very important to voters, but it is almost impossible to link certain parties to specific economic policies. At the same time, Indonesia's populace is more devout than it was 10 or 20 years ago, and around a fifth of voters might vote for a decidedly Islamist party if given the option.

Today, religious issues divide and organize the ideological spectrum of Indonesian parties, but not in the way one might expect. According to Fossati (2020, 12), the religious cleavage "managed to survive almost 40 years of authoritarian rule, was a key driver of voting behaviour in 1999, and

appears to be still influential as a driver of voting behaviour today" (see also Fossati 2019, 2022; Mujani et al. 2018, 199). Thus, a religious cleavage still structures the party system to an extent, but a substantial proportion of voters is only superficially represented by the existing Islamic parties (Pepinsky, Liddle, and Mujani 2018; Kompas 2019). The declining impact of political Islam in interparty relations has been paralleled by a growing radicalization of Islam in general because of global developments after September 11, but also because the democratization after the fall of Suharto opened up new avenues for organizing political activities. Because Islamic parties have moved to the political center since the early 2000s, many radical Muslims, who currently make up approximately 20 percent of the voters, see themselves as hardly represented by the existing political parties. These parties now have restricted capabilities to mobilize supporters, in contrast to religious mass organizations (Tomsa and Setijadi 2018; Nuraniyah 2020; Arifianto 2020).

Ahead of the gubernatorial elections in Jakarta in 2017 and during the presidential election campaigns in 2014 and 2019, conservative Islamic groups mobilized their supporters in large numbers against the Christian candidate in Jakarta and the supposedly more secular Joko Widodo, who has served as the Indonesian president since 2014 (Lim 2017; Tapsell 2020). All these cases were part of an illiberal turn in Indonesian politics (Bourchier 2019; Diprose, McRae, and Hadiz 2019; Power and Warburton 2020), and the discrepancy between a highly politicized civil society, on one side, and political parties and their candidates, on the other, was obvious. Demonstrations were not organized primarily by political parties, but by organizations such as the Front Pembela Islam (Islam Defenders Front), a radical and to some extent militant mass organization. Support for the Front Pembela Islam among Indonesian Muslims has hovered around 20 percent since 2004, reaching more than 22 percent in late 2016 (Mietzner and Muhtadi 2018, 487), resulting in a "mismatch between Indonesia's party system inhabited by moderate parties and the existence of a significant immoderate Muslim voting bloc" (Mietzner and Muhtadi 2018, 490).

This pattern is in line with the two-level survey results presented by Fossati et al. (2020) showing some striking discrepancies between voters and members of parliaments: 10 percent of the politicians think that sharia law should be implemented throughout Indonesia, in contrast to 39 percent of the voters; only 7 percent of politicians think that Islam should become Indonesia's only official religion, in contrast to 36 percent of the voters. Calculating the arithmetic mean of seven items capturing a pro-Islam orientation demonstrates that 46 percent of voters have such a tendency, in

contrast to 35 percent of elites. Moreover, for all 10 compared parties, party supporters exhibited higher degrees of pro-Islam orientation than the parties they support (Fossati et al. 2020). Therefore, it can be said that the masses are more religious than elites and, at the same time, more divided.

This chapter sheds light on these dynamics and examines how key political dimensions are transformed during critical junctures. Indonesia is a particularly interesting case in this respect because, unlike in most other Southeast Asian countries, there are clearly detectable MEDs demonstrating strong variation over time for specific political dimensions.

The main arguments in this chapter are developed in three steps. First, this chapter briefly describes the Indonesian party system of the 1950s—the first critical juncture—and its unraveling and "simplification" under authoritarian regimes lasting until 1998. This part elucidates the unique rootedness of Indonesian political parties after national independence and the surprising ideological congruence of voters and politicians. MEDs were low against the backdrop of a politicized, mobilized electorate and political parties that to a large extent were able and willing to respond to voters' demands. The period of authoritarianism from 1957 to 1998 then served to stifle party and civil society activism.

Second, an analysis of party-system development from 1998, when Suharto stepped down, until the second parliamentary and first direct presidential elections in 2004, when the transition toward an electoral democracy ended, explains the path-determining effects of elite agency during this critical juncture. During this second critical juncture, increasing mass-level politicization on religious issues was neglected by elites, and a path toward patronage, or elite-dominated democracy, was chosen. Parties began to form grand coalitions with almost no effective opposition; they formed cartels built around the common interests of emaciating civil society's influence on party politics, decreasing accountability, and sharing in the spoils of office. Interparty competition was toned down until 2004, producing parties tending ideologically toward the center of the political spectrum. Arguably, the main dynamics of party politics were determined during the critical juncture from 1998 until 2004.

Third, since 2004 these dynamics have led to a further dealignment of political parties, also due to electoral reforms; the establishment of a new type of extremely personalized parties; and the growing commercialization of party politics. The 1998–2004 critical juncture has had self-reinforcing effects on intra-elite and mass–elite relations in line with the key path-dependency mechanisms specified in chapter 4.

## 7.1. Low Mass–Elite Discrepancy in the 1950s and the Subsequent Authoritarian Turn

In the 1950s, MEDs were much lower than today. We do not have survey data from the 1950s, and information on the institutionalization of political parties is scarce. But the literature (Feith 1962, 122–45; Hindley 1970; Mortimer 1982; Mietzner 2008) suggests that the party system ahead of and after the first national elections in 1955 was surprisingly strong in terms of the rootedness of political parties. Some even see parallels to the *verzuiling*, or pillarization, of political parties in the Netherlands. Not unlike parties in the Netherlands, Indonesian political parties were almost identical to, or were parts of, so-called *aliran*, or streams (or pillars) (Geertz 1963). Parties were divided by different degrees of religiosity and by their social bases with reference to a class cleavage. Of the four big parties, two were devoutly Islamic. The first was the traditionalist, rural-based Nahdatul Ulama (NU), which was simultaneously a religious organization that had been established in 1926 by religious scholars (*ulama*). These *ulama* were often owners or leaders, or both, of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) that mainly existed in Javanese villages, meaning they had great influence in these religious rural milieus. The formation of the NU had been a reaction against the foundation of the modernist Muslim mass organization Muhammadiyah, which gave rise to the establishment of the second big Islamic party, Masyumi (Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia, Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims). Masyumi was strong in certain so-called Outer Islands (that is, beyond Java), and was more urban-based and dominated by the middle classes, meaning traders and professionals. In contrast to the NU and Masyumi, the two other big parties were either not very much interested in religion—the Communist Party of Indonesia (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI)—or stressed multireligiosity and tolerance—the Indonesian National Party (Partai Nasional Indonesia, PNI). A rather secularist (but not atheist) view was typical for the PNI, which was linked to the first Indonesian president, Sukarno.

The class cleavage particularly pitted the PKI against the NU and Masyumi, but also against the PNI, which had important followers within the powerful state bureaucracy. A strong bourgeoisie did not exist at that time. Even landholders usually owned small plots. Devout Muslims in Javanese villages voted for the NU; poor, nonorthodox Muslims for the PKI or PNI; better-off devout Muslims in the cities for Masyumi, and so forth. Although exact numbers are lacking, the existence of different social milieus and their direct connection to voters' choices is widely acknowledged (King

2003; Ufen 2008; Mietzner 2013). This does not mean that Indonesian parties were as strongly institutionalized as their European counterparts. They were rooted in milieus, but they were weak in terms of developing detailed policy proposals, diversifying party financing, building branches across the archipelago with active members at the grassroots, and in other areas. MEDs were low because the connection between voters and parties was quite strong. Attached to the four big parties was an array of peasant, labor, religious, women's, and other organizations, and ideologies such as nationalism, communism, socialism, and the notion of an Islamic state were very powerful (Feith 1962; Geertz 1963).

The rift between devout Muslims, on one hand, and nondevout Muslims as well as non-Muslims, on the other hand, came to a head in the late 1950s when in a constituent assembly the parties were unable to come to a consensus on the role of Islam to be enshrined in the constitution (Feith 1962). This led to the transition toward an authoritarian system under Sukarno, which lasted until the mid-1960s. After a military coup, a few hundred thousand people (communists or those alleged to be such) were killed by the military, with some support from orthodox Muslims (Hindley 1970). In parallel to the anticommunist massacres, the so-called New Order (1966–98), the military regime under General Suharto, was instituted. The party system consisted of the regime party Golkar (Golongan Karya, Functional Groups) and two smaller, at best half-opposition parties: the PDI (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia, Indonesian Democratic Party), which was to an extent the successor of the PNI and some Christian parties, and the PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembanguan, United Development Party), which represented, if not in name, the Islamic parties of the 1950s. Not just leftist and liberal democratic ideas, but also Islamism in its different versions was suppressed.[1] As specified in chapter 5, the authoritarian turn in Indonesia exemplifies how the process of political cleavage institutionalization often stalls in new democracies. Specifically, high levels of mass–elite congruence in both the economic and religious dimensions disappeared as a result of top-down repression during Indonesia's authoritarian periods.

## 7.2. Redemocratization and the Increased Mass–Elite Discrepancy: 1998–2004

### 7.2.1. The New Party System and the Religious–Secular Political Dimension

After the fall of Suharto in May 1998, a "protracted transition" (Malley 2000) toward electoral democracy began. It ended with the second parliamentary

election (the first one was in June 1999) and first direct presidential election, both in 2004. In 2004, the military no longer enjoyed reserved seats in the national parliament, the People's Representative Council of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR) (see table 7.1), and most constitutional reforms were completed. During this critical juncture from 1998 until 2004, political parties abstained from offering strong programmatic incentives to voters and slowly agreed to build an informal cartel including moderate reformers and conservatives. Programmatic weakness and cartelization are still major characteristics of the Indonesian party system today.

From May 1998 until early 1999 approximately 200 new parties were established that had to connect themselves to the available political ideas at that time. One of the easiest ways to mobilize supporters was a revitalization of old legacies. Yet the major dynamics of the *aliran*-based or cleavage-based system of the first Indonesian democracy surfaced (Mujani, Liddle, and Ambardi 2018, 36–37). The annihilation of the political left during the New Order, the persistence of a deep suspicion toward leftist ideas even after the fall of Suharto, the fragmentation of the trade union movement, and the domination of most parties by New Order elites led to an under-representation of lower-class groups. Only a few very small labor parties lacking roots within the working class emerged, and they had no success in the 1999 elections.

In recent years, the discrepancy between existing social inequalities and the lack of political articulation has been due to the incapability of the myriad of trade unions to translate grievances into party politics. The labor movement has had an impact on certain policies (Caraway and Ford 2019) and has been at times quite active, but it is fragmented and lacks close links to political parties (Lane 2019). Since the class cleavage has been blurred or almost annihilated, what has been left is the politicization of religious identities.

Religion is still a kind of overarching cleavage, whereas economic and social dimensions are relatively weak (Mietzner 2013; Fossati 2019; Fossati et al. 2020). In the 1950s, two major parties (NU and Masyumi) campaigned on an Islamist platform, and the downfall of the first democracy in Indonesia was also due to the stalemate in the Constitutional Assembly (Konstituante) of the mid-1950s that pitted Islamists against secularists. The suppression of Islamism during the New Order in combination with a general taming of political Islam effected the rise of a range of Islamic parties that refrained from radically politicizing religious issues. Though voting patterns still indicated the perseverance of certain voter milieus connected to specific regions and ethnic and religious groups, the deep-seated division of

these milieus along *aliran* had been substituted by weaker allegiances of voters to parties. The elections in 1999 indicated a continuity of *aliran* politics, though in a significantly altered way. Comparing election results from 1955 and 1999, King (2003) found substantial continuities.

Yet most major parties did not politicize religious issues. Although a majority of Indonesians were Muslims, it is striking that the biggest parties in Indonesia were by name and with regard to their platforms rather secular in 1998–99. They were still religious but referred primarily to the "state philosophy" of Pancasila[2] and tended to respect the peaceful coexistence of different religions in the country. The PDI-P (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan, Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle) was the successor of the PNI, and its chairwoman, Megawati Sukarnoputri, the daughter of Sukarno, was the towering figure in the party. The PDI-P had many non-Muslims among its cadres and supporters and was the most obvious propagator of the Pancasila. Golkar, the somewhat reformed successor of the New Order regime party, also adhered to the Pancasila, but in terms of its orientation was less rooted in specific milieus or ideological traditions.

Political parties that existed during the New Order and profited from name recognition were most successful in 1999 (see table 7.1). Together, Golkar, the PDI-P, and the PPP gained 67 percent of the votes. Golkar and the PPP were perceived as rather conservative (together with the military faction that was given 38 seats in the DPR without taking part in the parliamentary elections). Islamic parties could have revived the legacies of political Islam in the 1950s. But major Muslim leaders decided to establish moderate—to an extent even secular—parties such as the PKB (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa, National Awakening Party) and the PAN (Partai Amanat Nasional, National Mandate Party).

The PKB and the PAN were still linked to religious mass organizations (NU and Muhammadiyah, respectively). However, the respective names of the PKB and the PAN referred to a "national awakening" and a "national mandate"; in this way, they abstained from using the symbols and narratives of political Islam. Both the towering figure within the PKB, Abdurrahman Wahid, who belonged to the most prominent *ulama* family within the NU and was Indonesian president from 1999 to 2001, and Amien Rais, the former chairman of Muhammadiyah and then a major leader of the PAN, pursued a strategy of orientation toward a Pancasila-based religious tolerance. Wahid was a so-called neomodernist who had long promoted a prodemocratic, inclusive Islam. Amien Rais was a modernist Muslim who in 1998–99 was also among the prodemocratic Muslims. Thus, the PKB and the PAN, together with the NU and Muhammadiyah, were instrumental in bridging divides between political Islam and secularists.

Table 7.1. Results of Parliamentary Elections since 1999

| Party | 1999 Votes (%) | 1999 Seats | 2004 Votes (%) | 2004 Seats | 2009 Votes (%) | 2009 Seats | 2014 Votes (%) | 2014 Seats | 2019 Votes (%) | 2019 Seats |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PDI-P | 33.8 | 153 | 18.5 | 109 | 14.0 | 95 | 18.9 | 109 | 19.3 | 128 |
| Golkar | 22.5 | 120 | 21.6 | 128 | 14.4 | 107 | 14.7 | 91 | 12.3 | 85 |
| Gerindra | — | — | — | — | 4.5 | 26 | 11.8 | 73 | 12.6 | 78 |
| PKB | 12.6 | 51 | 10.6 | 52 | 4.9 | 27 | 9.0 | 49 | 9.7 | 58 |
| NasDem | — | — | — | — | — | — | 6.7 | 39 | 9.1 | 58 |
| PD | — | — | 7.5 | 57 | 20.8 | 150 | 10.2 | 61 | 7.8 | 54 |
| PK/PKS | 1.4 | 7 | 7.3 | 45 | 7.9 | 57 | 6.8 | 40 | 8.2 | 50 |
| PAN | 7.1 | 34 | 6.4 | 52 | 6.0 | 43 | 7.6 | 47 | 6.8 | 44 |
| PPP | 10.7 | 58 | 8.2 | 58 | 5.3 | 37 | 6.5 | 35 | 4.5 | 19 |
| *Total* | | 500 | | 550 | | 560 | | 560 | | 575 |

*Source:* Data from Election Commission.

*Note:* Only parties represented until 2019. In 1999, 38 seats were reserved for the military. Party acronyms are as follows:

PDI-P = Partai Demokrasi Indonesia—Perjuangan (Indonesian Democratic Party—Struggle)
Golkar = Partai Golongan Karya (Party of Functional Groups)
Gerindra = Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya (Great Indonesia Movement Party)
PKB = Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (National Awakening Party)
NasDem = Partai Nasional Demokrat (National Democratic Party)
PD = Partai Demokrat (Democratic Party)
PK/PKS = Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (Prosperous Justice Party); 1999: PK = Partai Keadilan (Justice Party)
PAN = Partai Amanat Nasional (National Mandate Party)
PPP = Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party)

To be sure, some less moderate Islamic parties also arose. In the first few years after the 1999 elections until around 2004, the PPP, the direct successor of the New Order party of the same name, and the PBB (Partai Bulan Bintang, Crescent Star Party), which defined itself as the successor of Masyumi, were perceived as Islamist (Slater 2004, 308). The PPP and the PBB advocated for the inclusion of the so-called Jakarta Charter in the constitution. This is a short passage demanding the introduction of Islamic law, which means in this case a sharia-based penal code. Debates about the Jakarta Charter had been ongoing since 1945, but in 2002 a great majority of members of the MPR (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat, People's Consultative Assembly) voted against its inclusion, and since then the issue has been mostly considered settled. The PBB was not able to enter Parliament after the introduction of a minimum threshold, that is, 2 percent, and the PPP has since become a more moderate party.

The PK (Partai Keadilan [Justice Party]; since 2004, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera [Prosperous Justice Party, PKS]), founded by Islamist students

previously belonging to a grassroots opposition movement under the New Order, became an example of a party directly representing a new urban middle class and conservative or even reactionary Muslim clientele. But over the years the PKS has become part of the cartel and moved toward the center of the political spectrum (Tomsa 2012, 2019).

All in all, the moderation of the religious–secular political dimension in party politics has been evident. To a certain extent, this can be attributed to the fragmentation of political Islam due to traditional rivalries and decades-long enfeebling by New Order authoritarianism. But, more fundamentally, it had to do with the decisions made by major Muslim leaders not to stress exclusivism. The subsequent section expounds on how key political actors in Indonesia decided to mute the mass-level politicization demand on religious issues during its redemocratization period.

### 7.2.2. The Transition and the Formation of a Cartel

Critical junctures can be characterized "by the adoption of a particular institutional arrangement from among two or more alternatives. These junctures are 'critical' because once a particular option is selected it becomes progressively more difficult to return to the initial point when multiple alternatives were still available" (Mahoney 2000, 513). The contingent historical events are followed by path-dependent sequences and "cannot be explained on the basis of prior historical conditions" (Mahoney 2000, 507). The end of an authoritarian system and the rapid installation of an electoral democracy is such a critical juncture, during which political actors dispose of a range of viable options not fully determined structurally (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, 54; Peters, Pierre, and King 2005, 1276).

Reflecting the top-down democratization process often observed in new democracies (see Bornschier in this volume, chapter 5), in Indonesia the transition was pacted and based on compromises from the beginning. A pact is defined as "an explicit, but not always publicly explicated or justified, agreement among a select set of actors which seeks to define (or, better, to redefine) rules governing the exercise of power on the basis of mutual guarantees for the 'vital interests' of those entering into it" (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 37). The pacted transition in Indonesia was helpful in avoiding a sudden breakdown of social order, preventing nationwide violence, and not deepening existing social and religious cleavages within the emerging party system. In this sense, similar to the Tunisian case described in the previous chapter, the pacification of the religious–secular political

dimension by Indonesian party elites can be understood as an attempt to stabilize the political order in the middle of an uncertain political landscape. But O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986, 43) warn that pacts are typically negotiated by "established and often highly oligarchical" groups seeking to "limit accountability to wider publics" (see also Karl 1990 and Hagopian 1996). And, indeed, the transition in Indonesia was to a large extent steered "from above": "The groups which were strongest organizationally were those which had flourished by working within or around the New Order's rules. They tended to be the most risk-averse, the most likely to accept compromise with the regime, and the least likely to have clear democratic goals and ideology. Groups that possessed clear democratic goals, and were prepared to mobilize their followers to realize them, were fragmented, suppressed, and marginalized" (Aspinall 2005, 240).

Therefore, civil society did not play a large role after the fall of Suharto, and old elites cooperated with new emerging elites to bring about a smooth, but not radical democratization (Ufen 2023c). Arguably, those promoting much more fundamental democratic reforms soon realized that they had to be part of the cartel in order to succeed. Only some minor parties without the organizational, financial, and name-recognition advantages of older parties had clearer platforms.

Rather than competing with clear policy alternatives over issues resonating with voter demand, party elites took the path of forming a political cartel—a state of interparty collusion in which key parties utilize state resources to maintain their position within the political system (Katz and Mair 1995). An elite cartel came into existence step by step. In November 1998, long before the foundational elections in June 1999, the main opposition party leaders Megawati Sukarnoputri, Abdurrahman Wahid, and Amien Rais (as well as the sultan of Yogyakarta), pressured by student activists, issued the moderate reformist "Ciganjur Declaration" (Horowitz 2013, 46–48). In general, they supported President B. J. Habibie, but shied away from radical Reformasi demands directed against Suharto, the generals, and their cronies. The military under Wiranto successfully mediated between Habibie and the Ciganjur group. The next step, after rather conservative or moderate parties had succeeded in the June 1999 parliamentary elections, was the creation of a very broad coalition in favor of Abdurrahman Wahid in October 1999. After the parliamentary elections, there were no clear majorities and it turned out to be very difficult to forge coalitions. There was a rivalry between traditionalist and modernist Islam (Abdurrahman Wahid from the NU versus Amien Rais from Muhammadiyah), and between conservatives and reformers, but also between supporters of a stronger role for political

Islam and secularists (in Indonesian parlance also often denoted as "nationalists"). The complex power negotiations in 1999 that led to Abdurrahman Wahid being elected the Indonesian president finally gave rise to an oversized coalition incorporating as many forces as possible. The seemingly only solution to the problem of the lack of a clear majority was to create a broad coalition in the DPR and MPR that also included status quo forces such as Golkar and the military factions. Slater (2014, 306) concludes: "Ironically, strenuous party-led mobilization along the regime and religious cleavages in the 1999 national election and MPR session had produced a ruling coalition utterly devoid of clear convictions, or even leanings, on either the regime or religious divide."

In 1998–99, most MPs were soft-liners leaning toward reforming the New Order and manufacturing a form of democracy, but not one that would radically change Indonesia. Therefore, they tried to restrain trade unions, radical reformers within civil society, and Islamists from influencing politics. And, indeed, after the 1999 elections, the new political elite had nothing to fear from the radical student movement and, in general, an opposition that had been able to play a decisive role in 1998 in bringing down the Suharto regime. Planned reforms of the military, initially strongly pushed by Abdurrahman Wahid, were watered down. Widespread corruption, which even intensified after the breakdown of the closed authoritarian New Order, was not forcefully fought against, and the bureaucracy with all its inbuilt conservatism remained more or less the same as under Suharto.

After 1998, all presidents were directly involved in party politics; they needed strong partisan support in order to be elected by the MPR (Abdurrahman Wahid and Megawati) or to be selected as a presidential candidate by coalitions of parties (since 2004). Indonesia exhibited a strange form of presidentialism. Under the New Order, Suharto was elected by the MPR, that is, indirectly, but because the DPR was almost powerless, the system was similar to a form of super-presidentialism. After 1998, the DPR and the MPR gained enormous power, whereas the role of the president was not well defined. Actually, the first president who was elected by the new MPR in 1999, Abdurrahman Wahid, perceived his role as that of a strong president, but in reality he was accountable on a yearly basis to the MPR (Horowitz 2013, 99–108). Wahid's own party, the traditionalist Muslim PKB, had only 51 out of 500 seats in the DPR. Moreover, his role and his power as president were ill defined by the constitution. This as well as his at times stubborn behavior (and his downsized second cabinet from 35 to 26 minister positions in August 2000) enraged a great majority of MPs who viewed the cartel as being in danger. This led to Wahid's ouster by the MPR in 2001.

His successor, Megawati Sukarnoputri from the PDI-P, was aware of her precarious position and also established a rainbow coalition. Megawati needed a broad coalition because her rather secular party had to hedge against an Islamic coalition that could potentially form to oppose her at a time when a president was not constitutionally secured against impeachment. During these years, a specific pattern of coalition-building was established. The ensuing cartel has been characterized by the openness of every significant party to share power with every other one "even when those parties have profound ideological differences" (Slater 2018, 29). The whole cartelization process vindicates the observation that "the salience of particular dimensions of competition are shaped not only by competition *between* parties, but also by ongoing processes of coalition formation and maintenance that dictate processes *internal* to parties and *among* party elites, which can be significantly shaped by historical patterns of party formation and original coalition construction" (Riedl 2016, 230).

Slater points to informal norms that arose within a "small and familiar handful of party and military elites" settling "their respective fractions' recurrent distributional disputes entirely in opaque rather than transparent settings" (Slater 2004, 73) in order to reduce "pressure on the government to respond to societal pressures." This "promiscuous power-sharing primarily arose from 1999 to 2004 because parliamentary parties had the power to demand it; it has persisted since 2004, even while evolving and abating, because strengthened presidents have had a strategic interest in maintaining it" (Slater 2018, 32).

From 1998 until 2004, party elites were able to centralize decision-making and to build elite-centered party apparatuses with weak links to civil society (at least much weaker than in the 1950s). However, was the political cartelization bound to happen? By no means. Critical junctures are not deterministic but open a window of opportunity for political agents. During the 1998–2004 critical juncture, other options were available to political elites in Indonesia. Specifically, if civil society activists and politicians, for example the Ciganjur Four, had worked closely together, their influence on the transition would have been much stronger. If Abdurrahman Wahid had been more accommodating as president, there would not have been an impeachment, and a different relationship between government and the opposition might have been institutionalized. Furthermore, even with a pacted democratization driven by elites, the MED observed on the religious–secular dimension was not destined to occur. Another Muslim-majority Southeast Asian country, Malaysia, can serve as a counterfactual in this case. In the 1970s, the National Front (Barisan Nasional), a multiethnic

and multireligious coalition of political parties led by the United Malays National Organization, included many former opposition parties and tried to subdue religious and ethnic conflicts after so-called racial riots in 1969. But in contrast to Indonesia, this led more and more to a politicization of religion and ethnicity in party politics, especially when the Islamist Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS, Islamic Party of Malaysia) decided to leave the National Front after a few years (Ufen 2009). The National Front obviously did not have the capability to set in motion self-reinforcing processes to bind together the coalition member parties for a long time.

Despite other alternative choices, Indonesian elites decided upon a cartelized coalition, and party elites learned to overcome internal ideological divisions. The supposedly reactionary Golkar stressed its democratic credentials as did the PKB and the PAN. But the coalition-building brought all these parties closer to each other, and the existing ideological differences, which were already not very strong, weakened even more. When the prodemocratic party elites realized that radical reforms led to strong resistance by conservatives, they moderated their stances. In the same vein, their opposition to introducing the Jakarta Charter, combined with their need to become part of the coalitions at different levels in order to get patronage, led parties such as the PPP and the PKS to tone down their Islamist platforms (Buehler 2013; Tomsa 2012, 2019). The result was a centripetal party system in contrast to the centrifugal one of the 1950s (Mietzner 2008).

The path of forming rainbow coalitions and of moderating party platforms has been pursued ever since. In 2004, the Partai Demokrat immediately won 7.5 percent of the popular votes (see table 7.1). When Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono won the direct presidential elections against Megawati a few weeks later, he again resorted to extensive power-sharing, thus cementing the party cartel. In the following years, the PDI-P turned into a hesitant opposition party, although Susilo tried to bring the party into the cabinet. Yet this PDI-P opposition was modest and mostly based on Megawati's disappointment in Susilo, whom she perceived as a traitor because he had left her cabinet in order to become a presidential candidate.

## 7.3. The Glaring Islamism MED in Recent Years

MED persisted even after the critical juncture period in Indonesia. Here, I will explain the reinforcement path of the cartelized political dynamic, which increasingly has become intertwined with a personalistic, oligarchic, and commercialized form of politics.

The protracted transition in Indonesia guaranteed the lasting impact of old elites such as the military, the bureaucracy, big business, and New Order politicians (Malley 2000; Aspinall 2005; Buente and Ufen 2009; Horowitz 2013, 89–92). These old elites were strong enough to stave off radical civil society demands. Yet they also realized that the system of government was still imperfect, and in 2002 they voted for a much more candidate-centered electoral system. Thus, since 2004, presidents have been elected directly, and impeachment has been made very difficult. Since 2005, mayors, district heads, and governors have also been elected directly.[3] The regime elite had to institute reforms after the standoff between Wahid and the political parties and parliaments in 2001. The constitutional amendments and the introduction of a full presidential system were a reaction to the highly problematic and undefined relation between president and parliament, but also to the growing MEDs (Horowitz 2013, 108–22).

The first directly elected president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, was highly popular and easily won a second term in 2009. The second directly elected president, Joko Widodo (Jokowi), was, arguably, even more popular. But did his presidency help to decrease MEDs? It did so with reference to voters who felt better represented by somebody who was not a member of the old New Order elites (such as Habibie, Wahid, Megawati, Susilo, and so forth), but had a lower-middle-class background and spoke the language of ordinary Indonesians (Mietzner 2015; Bland 2020). Still, Jokowi's party, the PDI-P, supported him, but he was not very closely linked to party elites. Thus, presidentialism links voters to the president, but not necessarily to political parties. However, presidents cannot be completely detached from the influence of parties. For instance, the selection of presidential candidates has guaranteed the enduring hold of political parties on this process. Under the 2008 Presidential Election Law, a candidate pair must be nominated by a party or coalition that won at least 25 percent of the popular vote or 20 percent of seats in the DPR. In 2004 there were five pairs of candidates for the direct presidential elections (with two left in the second round), and in 2009 there were three pairs (with Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono winning outright in the first round); today, the number of candidate pairs is usually reduced to two contenders (Prabowo Subianto and Jokowi in 2014 and 2019).

Reflecting the influence of parties, minimum winning coalitions have not been viable choices for presidents. Before Joko Widodo won the 2014 presidential elections, he announced he would end the tradition of horse-trading and large coalitions, but after his victory he included some controversial former generals in his cabinet and inner circle. In 2016 he reshuffled his cabinet and widened his coalition. After his victory in 2019, again

against Prabowo Subianto (Gerindra), the Partai Demokrat made overtures to be included in his new cabinet; and even with Gerindra and Prabowo, his staunch and populist adversary only weeks before, he started to negotiate about power-sharing agreements. Prabowo attended the PDI-P congress in August 2019 together with Jokowi and Megawati in a peaceful atmosphere, and a new power-sharing agreement was possible.

The path of cartelization, very weak opposition, and patronage sharing was somewhat shaken by full presidentialism, which enabled a connection between voters and a directly elected president. Yet political actors immediately conformed to new electoral circumstances (Ufen 2023a) and muted the potential MED-decreasing effect of the new electoral rules. Adaptations encompassed the formation of a new type of personalistic, oligarchic, and programmatically shallow party. What have emerged are these presidential vehicles with vague platforms that are totally dependent on powerful, usually rich, men at the top. These vehicle parties are also outgrowths of the general dealignment of political parties (Fossati 2020; Gethin and Thanasak 2021). The Partai Demokrat was established ahead of the 2004 elections in order to give Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono the opportunity to take part in the presidential polls. Other such parties are Partai NasDem under media mogul Surya Paloh, Hanura under former general Wiranto, and Gerindra under Prabowo Subianto.

Direct elections and elections of MPs via open candidate lists, a system that was fully established in 2009, together with the rise of pollsters, have dramatically increased costs (Mietzner 2013, 207–33). Different forms of patronage and vote-buying have become obvious (Shin 2015; Aspinall and Sukmajati 2016; Aspinall and Berenschot 2019). Every third Indonesian was personally exposed to vote-buying in 2014, whereas this practice did not play a palpable role in 1999 (Muhtadi 2019). After often difficult negotiations, parties are paid *mahar politik*, or a "political dowry," by candidates who want to be nominated. Legislators can intervene in tendering processes and can impact budgets, and in some cases they may use so-called aspiration funds to deliver pork-barrel projects to voters in their constituencies. Patronage goods and services such as welfare programs "remain largely outside the control of political parties, but are instead distributed at the discretion of bureaucrats, community-level elected officials, or by politicians whose party links are weak" (Aspinall and Berenschot 2019, 13). The growing commercialization and dealignment is well reflected by weakened party identification, which was measured at a rate of almost 90 percent in 1999, fell to approximately 30 percent two to three years later, climbed to 50–60 percent in 2004, and fell to less than 20 percent in 2014. In addition, party

membership has declined from about 10 percent to around 5 percent in recent years (Kenny 2018, 39).

During the aforementioned elite-level lock-in process, the three elite-level lock-in mechanisms analyzed by Shim (chapter 4) were all present: the pre-election deliberate selection of candidates, who were forced to play by the rules of the cartel because they needed money to finance their candidacies and campaigns; postelection socialization within a culture of decision-making behind closed doors, avoiding open conflict, excluding civil society activists, and finding compromises to further encapsulate the elite; and the marginalization of opponents within political parties and society at large—whistleblowers and fundamental reformers are isolated, and electoral reforms result in the reduction of the number of political parties.

## 7.4. Concluding Remarks

During Indonesia's first critical juncture—in the 1950s—religious MEDs were low because the NU and Masyumi directly translated traditionalist and modernist ideas and sentiments into their party systems. Although they were also partners in coalitions with non-Muslim partners, each clung to its platform and both parties advocated for the Jakarta Charter in the constituent assembly in the mid-1950s. Therefore, it seems reasonable to state that discrepancies between party leaders and the grassroots, and between parties and voters, were low at that time. After redemocratization, MEDs between voters and political parties in the parliamentary elections were not low like in the 1950s. Because some major Islamic parties started to stress their Islamic credentials much less, catch-all parties like Golkar had emerged, and the linkages between parties and voters via mass organizations were much looser than in 1955. Subsequently, the rise of a new type of vehicle party, the commercialization of party politics, clientelism, and vote-buying contributed to dealignment and increasing MEDs.

Political parties represent certain social milieus, but coalition-building is determined by power-sharing and (from the perspective of the president) by the attempt to preclude the emergence of a very strong opposition that could derail the government. This does not mean that political parties do not differ in terms of ideology, especially with respect to religious issues, but this plays a role only from time to time, leaving many orthodox and conservative Muslim voters disillusioned. There is a conspicuous and growing MED related to radical Islam. Particularly in recent years, this has had a marked influence on the outcome of direct local and presidential elec-

tions. These Islamists have an impact via street demonstrations on direct elections—and to an extent also on party politics—but the cleavage between a more moderate and a radical Islam is only tentatively translated into party politics. This was not the result of a "natural" process. The comparison with parties in the 1950s shows that rooted parties with close links to civil society existed before.

During the second critical juncture of transition and the formation of the new party system from 1998 until 2004, a cartel was built based on the willingness to share patronage. The early formation of a cartel-like pact has set in motion self-reinforcing sequences, as oligarchs have taken power within political parties (Robison and Hadiz 2004; Winters 2013). Oligarchs were able to do so not only because they had the money, but because political parties adapted to the clientelistic, money-driven, and cartelized environment. Once a cartel has been formed, actors develop an interest in pursuing this path. Although at times partisan opposition in parliament arose, this was only temporary or was rather shallow; examples include the personal rivalries between Megawati and Yudhoyono, or the period before Jokowi reshuffled his cabinet from 2014 until 2016.

Especially with the introduction of direct elections at the local level and of a presidential system with direct presidential elections, but also due to other factors, a dealignment has progressed. It has led to much stronger MEDs between voters and parliamentary elites than before. Direct elections at all levels have led to rising costs. This again has elevated the role of the oligarchs. The direct elections also triggered a much more central role for surveys and have forced politicians to directly respond to voter demands ahead of and after elections using clientelistic means. In Indonesia, party cartelization is still predominant and has a deleterious effect on vertical accountability. Even after the highly polarized presidential elections in 2019, President Jokowi offered to share power with Prabowo, who had been his greatest adversary. Meanwhile, Joko Widodo further broadened his grand coalition. With the entry of PAN, the coalition expanded its majority from 74.3 percent, or 427 seats, to 81.9 percent, or 471 seats in the DPR (Supriatma 2021). The cartelized political elite had no difficulties in rushing the controversial Job Creation Act, or Omnibus Law 2020, through parliament without adequately consulting the public. It contains revisions to 79 existing laws and has sparked unprecedented nationwide protests (Lane 2021). In this case, the cartel was again firmly united, civil society was marginalized, and protesters were ruthlessly silenced.

## Notes

1. Islamism is defined here as the attempt to establish an Islamic state, including a penal code based on sharia law. This is in contrast to Islamic parties that take a much more moderate approach.

2. The Pancasila ("Five Pillars") were devised by Sukarno and respect several religions that are defined as monotheistic and equal. Even today, Indonesia is not an Islamic state, but it is also not secular. Atheism and adherence to unrecognized religions are banned.

3. Moreover, the introduction of electoral thresholds has reduced the number of parties in parliament from 21 in 1999 to 9 in 2019.

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