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Regime and Opposition

In Indonesia today there are only two real choices: to be a "critical partner" or to be an underground subversive . . . most people choose the former.

Panda Nababan (interview, November 27, 1995)

This senior Indonesian journalist's comment neatly sums up the dilemma facing Indonesians who wanted democratization during the Suharto years. At least for middle-class critics in the big cities, the choice was never a stark one between total submission to the government and conspirational preparation for its overthrow. Instead, many options existed for those who believed that they could pursue change by gradualist and nonconfrontational means and voice criticism of the regime in indirect or careful ways.

This book presents a study of the development of opposition to Suharto's rule and the ways by which opposition undermined the legitimacy of his government, raised the costs of governing, and eventually forced Suharto from office. It is, in other words, a study of the methods used by opponents of Suharto to create political space, test his regime's limits of tolerance, and confront and challenge that regime. As the reader might expect, it is thus in many ways a study of bravery and audacity in the face of intimidation and brutality. Yet, as Panda Nababan's comment above suggests, it is also a study of ambiguity, ambivalence, and compromise.

The argument advanced in this book starts from the proposition that

the mixture of repression and toleration, of coercion and co-optation that the regime used to control dissent had a profound impact on the forms that opposition took. The combination produced an opposition that was eventually very effective at performing some of the tasks necessary to achieve democratization, such as undermining the legitimacy of authoritarian rule. But it was less well-suited to performing others, such as formulating an alternative to the regime's ideology or organizing an alternative to its leadership. The nature of the opposition so produced helps us to understand the sudden and tumultuous way by which Suharto's rule finally ended in 1998, as well as the fact that when Suharto did resign, opposition forces were unable to take control of the government.

Many existing studies of Suharto's "New Order" regime have drawn attention to its reliance on violence. Various authors have emphasized the centrality of the security forces in the structure of the regime, the hegemonic power of the regime's authoritarian ideology, the various techniques of repression it used, and the military's propagation of a culture of violence (see, e.g., Crouch 1988a; Heryanto 1993; Anderson 2001). The brutal effectiveness of the repressive apparatus was an important reason why the Suharto regime survived so long. The use of coercion against opponents, and the tactics which opponents developed to avoid such coercion, receive much attention in this book. Coercion, however, was only half of the regime's winning political formula. It was not repression alone, but rather the combination of repression with toleration for constrained forms of political action that made Suharto's New Order one of the most durable and successful third world authoritarian regimes.

The combination of repression and toleration is a common feature of resilient authoritarian regimes. Regimes that rely on little else but repression to maintain themselves often end up radicalizing society and creating powerful revolutionary oppositions. This is especially the case with "sultanistic" regimes, which are characterized by unrestrained and arbitrary personal rule by the dictator. Such regimes lack significant pockets of pluralism in official structures and do not tolerate even the most temperate of detractors. In such circumstances, even otherwise moderate critics often view regime overthrow as the only realistic strategy (Cuba's Batista and Nicaragua's Somoza are classic examples; see Chehabi and Linz 1998a, 1998b; Snyder 1998; Thompson 1995). For most of its existence, Suharto's was not such a regime. Individuals who held views somewhat at variance with the dominant group in the government were able to fill numerous niches in officially recognized or tolerated institutions, including political parties, religious bodies, student groups, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), so long as they did not threaten the regime's fundamentals. From such institutions, political actors could

make constrained criticisms of the authorities, promote the interests of their constituencies, and try to bring about political change.

Many years ago, Juan Linz argued that such "limited pluralism" could be very debilitating for opposition in authoritarian regimes. He gave as an example Franco's Spain in the late 1960s, where there was a "widespread tone and mentality of opposition" yet a "simultaneous failure of structural or principled opposition" (Linz 1973, 176). He explained: "The semifreedom under such regimes imposes on their opponents certain costs that are quite different from those of persecution of illegal oppositions and that explain their frustration, disintegration and sometimes readiness to co-optation, which contribute to the persistence of such regimes as much as does their repressive capacity" (Linz 1973, 273).

Semifreedom of this sort contributed greatly to the Suharto regime's longevity and effectiveness. The provision of rewards, including material ones, for those who participated in official regime structures, combined with the fear of sanctions applied to those who stepped outside them, produced a great deal of qualified, ambivalent, and hesitant participation-opposition. This was especially so for the middle-class and elite groups who benefited materially from the regime's economic development policies. This combination of rewards and sanctions stifled the emergence of a unified opposition movement possessing a coherent counterideology, common platform, and organized mass base. Whenever there were signs that such an opposition—what I call mobilizational opposition—might emerge, the state swiftly repressed it and oppositional impulses were redirected back toward more ambivalent forms. As a result, division, mutual suspicion, and ideological incoherence predominated. Critics of the regime were scattered through a wide range of institutions. Even the institutionalization of civil society—in the form of NGOs, for example—contributed to the domestication of opposition by providing opponents with strong material and other interests for avoiding confrontation with the state.

Individuals who aspired to bring about the democratic transformation of the political system thus had to make a complex political calculus. They had to balance the very real risks of repression, which they would run if they opposed the regime openly, against the dangers of ineffectiveness, co-optation, and capture if they became ensnared in officially controlled institutions or kept their activities within the limits of tolerated political behavior. As a result, the struggle for political change was marked as much by caution and compromise as it was by confrontation, risk taking, and repression. It was not played out merely between an increasingly assertive and courageous civil society and a coercive state (as some comparative literature in the "civil society versus the state" vein would have

us assume). Instead, a large part of the struggle for political reform was carried on from a "gray area" located between state and society. Some of the most dramatic political conflicts of Suharto's final decade in office were played out for control *within* societal and state institutions. A multiplicity of ties connected actors who were ostensibly in the societal arena with groups, individuals, and factions in the state apparatus.

Despite the weaknesses of principled opposition, the Suharto regime did eventually come to an end. This end occurred by way of a society-initiated transition, involving mass protests and riots, substantial violence and destruction, splits in the army, and the splintering of the upper echelons of the government. Moreover, in the decade preceding the collapse there was an uneven but dramatic increase in societal unrest and opposition, described in this book. Three main processes which contributed to the growth of opposition are examined in this study: (1) changes in Indonesia's social structure brought about by decades of economic growth; (2) disunity within the governing elite; and (3) the ways by which the various opposition groups tested the boundaries of political tolerance, built new alliances, experimented with new strategies, and gradually expanded the political space available to them.

The tumultuous manner of Suharto's final fall was dictated, however, not only by the strengthening of opposition that had occurred in the preceding decade, nor even only by the devastating intervention of the Asian financial crisis. It was also a result of a process of change taking place within the regime itself. By the mid-1990s, Suharto's regime was undergoing a process of late-term "sultanization," in which the dominance of the president, and that of his family and inner circle, became more and more pronounced, more venal and all-pervasive, precisely as tensions related to presidential succession were increasing. From the early 1970s, Suharto had been a dominant force in the regime. By the end of his reign, the regime was more and more resembling a personalist dictatorship. Suharto reduced the scope for factional competition within the ruling elite and, in response to the spread of opposition, closed off some long-standing avenues for semi-independent political action. The gray area between state and society narrowed markedly, setting the scene for a more dramatic struggle between state and society in 1998.

The fact that Indonesia's New Order was becoming more sultanistic when it came to an end, as we shall see, had important implications for the mode of its collapse and subsequent democratization. Opposition in Indonesia in 1998 remained poorly institutionalized, deeply divided, and largely ideologically incoherent, typical of opposition under the "semi-freedom" of classic authoritarian regimes. Yet opposition was forced to the forefront of a turbulent and society-led regime transition in a manner

similar to political transitions in sultanistic or similar regimes where the hard-line element is strong. The result was that when Suharto's government collapsed, principled opposition remained weak, allowing for a rapid reconsolidation of the ruling coalition which had underpinned the New Order, the subsequent blurring of the division between "reformist" and "status quo" forces, and numerous obstructions to democratic transition and consolidation.

Varieties of Opposition in Suharto's New Order

In his classic 1975 study of nondemocratic regime types, Juan Linz argued that authoritarian regimes were to be distinguished from totalitarian ones largely on the basis of their "limited pluralism." While totalitarian systems were dominated by "monistic centers of power," some space always existed in authoritarian regimes for independent political action, so that, as he argued in a slightly earlier article, "there remain groups not created by nor dependent on the state which influence the political process one way or another" (Linz 1970, 255–56). Suharto's New Order was such a regime. Although it had the military, or ABRI, at its core, from the outset the New Order was never narrowly based on the military alone. The chief power centers instead sought to co-opt and incorporate most other social and political forces in subordinate positions.

In contrast, however, to the more or less unconstrained pluralism of liberal democracies, Linz stressed that participation in authoritarian regimes was always fettered by coercion, or the threat of it. There was no place in such a regime for a legally sanctioned opposition that openly competed for political power. This was the case in Suharto's Indonesia. However, there were gradations of coercion. Repression tended to be greater once critics moved beyond simply making criticisms to mobilizing their supporters against the regime. It was harsher against lower-class than against middle-class groups, harshest of all against groups that rejected the regime's ideology. The chief target was the political left. The regime's primary claim to historical legitimacy was that it had "saved" the nation from communist treachery in 1965. It came to power amid one of the late twentieth century's greatest massacres, when an estimated five hundred thousand supporters of the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) were killed. Tens of thousands of PKI prisoners remained in detention until the late 1970s. Anticommunism, expressed by repetitive warnings of the *bahaya laten PKI* (latent danger of the PKI) and *ekstrim kiri* (extreme left), remained central to regime discourse until the very end. The regime also repressed horrifically secessionist movements and

their supporters in East Timor, Papua, and Aceh. From the mid-1970s, tough policies were also applied against activists whom the regime accused of desiring to establish an Islamic state. Typical of authoritarian regimes (Linz 1973, 211), however, under Suharto the boundaries of legality were fluid and unpredictable. Political activities which one day or at one place might be tolerated would at another time or place attract severe repression. The very unpredictability of repression inclined critics of the government toward caution, greatly contributing to its efficacy.

Defining and categorizing opposition behavior in a nondemocratic regime presents many difficulties. One way to begin is suggested by Detlev Peukert (1991) in an article on working-class resistance under the Third Reich. Peukert proposes a scale, sliding from "non-conformist behavior," through "refusal," "protest," to "resistance." Criteria for locating particular behaviors on the scale are the extent to which they involve *public* and *intentional* challenge to the authorities. Peukert's scale is useful for reminding us that while one end of the opposition spectrum is represented by organized, collective, and public action, the other dissolves into a range of more individual, private, and equivocal acts. These might range through satire and jokes, refusal to participate in regime programs, and other forms of passive resistance and nonconformity. This study is primarily concerned with the more "public" and "intentional" end of the spectrum, obviously a much larger space in a regime like Suharto's than under the Third Reich. It is important to remember, however, that publicly articulated opposition always overlies a wellspring of more private resentments and insubordination.

Building on Linz's own typology of organized opposition under authoritarian regimes, this study identifies four main responses to the mixture of repression and tolerance under New Order authoritarianism. It must be stressed that these are ideal-types and, as with any typology, there is always much overlap between the various categories.

First, there was *mobilizational opposition*, namely those groups that explicitly expressed a desire to replace the regime with another system and which tried to organize and mobilize a support base to achieve this aim. Such opposition was by its nature illegal and repressed. Under normal conditions it could exist only in underground form, emerging into the open during abnormal conditions, such as the relatively liberal atmosphere of *keterbukaan* (openness). Chapter 5 looks at the emergence of the mobilizational trend among student activists.

Semiopposition, by contrast, was defined by Linz (1973, 191) as comprising "those groups that are not dominant or represented in the governing group but that are willing to participate in power without fundamentally challenging the regime." In Indonesia, this form of political

activity was characterized by participation in the formal structures of the regime—legislatures, parties, and the like—and was associated with "work-from-within" strategies of political reform, as well as compromise, partial and often unclear goals, and the utilization of regime language and ideological formulas to argue for political change.

Semiopposition was by far the most common of our four categories. This was largely because it became the primary political expression of the three major mass-based *aliran* (political streams) which (along with the communist left) had dominated Indonesian political life between 1945 and 1965. These three *aliran*—modernist Islam, traditionalist Islam,[1] and Sukarnoist nationalism—were not eliminated by the New Order regime, unlike the communist left. Instead, the regime tried to circumscribe and control them. It channeled their chief political expressions into the two surviving parties, the PDI (Indonesian Democracy Party—the subject of a case study in Chapter 6), which became the chief political vehicle for Sukarnoists, and the PPP (Development Unity Party), which incorporated both modernist and traditionalist Islamic interests. These parties were subject to many explicit constraints (e.g., they had to formally pledge their allegiance to the regime's guiding Pancasila ideology and accept its "Broad Outlines of State Policy"). Most important, however, the government constantly intervened in their internal affairs, especially in the selection of leaders. There were also many *ormas* (societal organizations)—religious organizations, student groups, and the like—which traced their origins to the pre–New Order *aliran* and which maintained varying degrees of independence. However, the regime tried to confine these organizations to a strictly defined "social" sphere, separate from the world of *politik praktis* (practical politics). Some such organizations, especially those representing lower-class groups like peasants and workers, were forced to merge into state-controlled corporatist bodies like the Federation of Labor Unions and enjoyed little autonomy.

The rewards for those willing to cooperate with official programs and offer the government political support could be substantial. Prominent party or *ormas* leaders could gain access to patronage in the form of contracts, company directorships, or more straightforward kickbacks. Other rewards for participation were direct subsidies and other concessions for the organizations concerned, their social programs, and their constituencies. For example, the major Islamic organizations such as the modernist Muhammadiyah and the traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) ran networks of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) and other institutions that received substantial government largesse. Even so, from time to time, vehicles of semiopposition could become sources of open challenge to the regime.

Falling between the two extremes of semi- and mobilizational opposition is *alegal opposition*. In Linz's (1973, 191 n35) terms, this refers to "opponents whose activities, without being strictly illegal, have no legal sanction and run counter to the spirit if not the text of the Constitution and laws of the regime. They are outside the law: alegal."

"Alegal" opponents tended to make more fundamental criticisms of the regime than did semiopponents. They generally evaded severe persecution by refraining from mobilizing or organizing a mass base against it. In New Order Indonesia, as in many other nondemocratic regimes, alegal opposition was frequently associated with bold and outspoken "exemplary individuals," especially artists, intellectuals, student activists, religious leaders, and the like. The most characteristic form of alegal opposition, especially in the early stages of opposition activity, is *dissidence*.[2] Dissidents are frequently disillusioned supporters of or participants in the regime or the coalition that established it. Accordingly, dissidence is characterized, first, by professions of loyalty to foundational regime ideology and, often, calls to "return" to the regime's original laudable aims. Dissidents can frequently secure a measure of protection from repression on the basis of a history of personal involvement in the regime or ideological affinity with it. Second, and most characteristically, dissidents rely on moral suasion; they tend to address those in authority and appeal to them to initiate reform rather than calling on society to take action or organizing their supporters behind a reform platform. The major Indonesian dissident groups discussed in this book (the Petition of Fifty and Forum Demokrasi) were frequently highly condemnatory of the regime. Security forces monitored their activities and curbed them by selective police action. But they were not driven to extinction by persecution, partly because of the prominence of many of the individuals involved, partly because they did not endeavor to mobilize a mass base.

A fourth category was *civil society organizations*, or what I label *proto-opposition*. Since the 1980s, there has been tremendous academic interest in the concept of civil society, and it has emerged as a central and ubiquitous analytical tool in the literature on democratic transitions. In some literature, it appears as a synonym for "society" and is pictured as an undifferentiated force engaged in a heroic zero-sum conflict against the state. Other definitions are cast at a higher level of abstraction, such as those that emphasize rule setting and legitimation functions (e.g., Harbeson 1994, 4). For present purposes, it is sufficient to note that most contemporary usage of the term centers around phrases like a "sphere of autonomy," "independent public space," or "free public sphere," located between private or family life and the state, where citizens are free to pursue their joint interests. A key feature of this dominant liberal-pluralist

definition is that civil society organizations pursue limited goals. They do not aim to acquire political office, but instead they "seek from the state concessions, benefits, policy changes, relief, redress or accountability" (Diamond 1994, 6).

Civil society organizations are thus to be contrasted to alegal and mobilizational opposition by their pursuit of strictly limited and partial aims, while they may be distinguished from semiopposition by their relative independence from state structures. As noted above, in New Order Indonesia many interest groups, especially "sectoral" organizations representing lower-class groups, were incorporated into state-controlled corporatist bodies. But there were also a variety of bodies that maintained a degree of independence from state interference. As the New Order regime consolidated through the 1970s and 1980s (and as in many other authoritarian regimes in Southeast Asia), there was a startling proliferation of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). NGOs, which constitute the focus of Chapter 4, endeavored with varying success to maintain autonomy from state interference while promoting particularistic policy reform rather than total regime change. The civil society model of opposition to authoritarianism, in Indonesia as elsewhere, was thus characterized by incrementalism rather than confrontation. Even so, despite their partial aims, civil society organizations can become a refuge for many and varied oppositional impulses during repressive conditions (Bratton 1994, 57). They can harbor individuals who aim to transform, even overthrow, the authoritarian regime. During more liberal political conditions such aims could, and in Indonesia in the 1990s did, become explicit—hence the term *proto-opposition*.[3]

Despite the emphasis in some democratic transitions literature on the struggle between civil society and the state, the preceding observations suggest that in nondemocratic systems like Indonesia's New Order there could often be a fluid boundary between semioppositional participation within the system and more fundamental opposition from the outside. This accords with observations made by other observers of democratic movements. X. L. Ding, for example, challenges the state-civil society framework for understanding the political crises experienced by many communist governments in the late 1980s, including the emergence of mass protest movements. He argues that much opposition to Dengist rule in China was initiated by a "counterelite" operating from within official or semiofficial academic institutions, rather than from an autonomous zone outside the state (Ding 1994a, 1994b). He labels this phenomenon "institutional parasitism" or "institutional amphibiousness." The discussion of Indonesian opposition in the following pages similarly suggests

that significant challenges to authoritarian rule may originate from institutions located in the blurred "gray area" between state and society. Opposition groups that appear at first sight to be located in the societal domain may likewise maintain a range of ambiguous ties within the state. The vague boundaries between state and society in New Order Indonesia also meant that the growth of opposition frequently took the form of battles for control *inside* organizations endeavoring to shrug off state control (the discussion of the PDI in Chapter 6 particularly illustrates this point).

Another recurring theme in the following chapters is that the New Order's combination of repression with toleration for limited forms of political action had debilitating effects for all manner of opposition. Challenging the regime openly, in the mobilizational pattern, ran a great risk of repression. It was made even less attractive by the possibility of pursuing alternate avenues of more constrained opposition. In contrast, trying to manipulate the regime's rules of the political game and working within official and state-controlled structures like the parties could be unproductive, frustrating, and demoralizing. It also exposed many semiopponents to accusations that they had been co-opted or bought off (and such accusations were often quite true). Meanwhile, the leaders of civil society organizations like NGOs, in order to safeguard their institutions and constituencies, quickly recognized the boundaries of tolerated political behavior and engaged in various forms of self-censorship and self-limitation to avoid suppression. Alegal opponents over time came to inhabit a kind of "dissident niche" from where they could criticize the regime, but they lacked access to a wider constituency.

Accounting for the structural weaknesses of opposition might help to explain why a regime such as the New Order can last so long. It tells us little, however, about how oppositions can grow and mount a sustained challenge to the regime. For this to occur, opponents need to recalculate their possible success, take novel risks, and experiment with new forms of political action. This is what happened during the final decade of Suharto's rule. New forms of mobilization emerged, previously passive social groups (such as labor) began to mobilize, even semiopponents like the PDI, which had previously been derided by political observers as thoroughly compromised, managed to challenge the regime. Eventually, albeit after a catastrophic economic collapse, opposition became so great that Suharto was forced to resign.

The growth and escalation of opposition was an enormously complex process and no single study can attempt to encompass the full range of factors that contributed to it. To cite just one example, this study pays little attention to the influence of global changes, such as how critics of the

Suharto regime drew inspiration and learned lessons from other "third wave" democratizations (in part this omission is because studies by Anders Uhlin [1993, 1995, 1997] deal with this theme). Instead, this book focuses on three main processes.

The first process was internal to opposition itself. Much of this book is dedicated to studying the diverse strategies and techniques used by various opposition groups to bring about political change. The sum product of all these activities was a multifronted battle along the boundaries of permissible political action, in which critics and opponents of the regime constantly tried to probe regime weaknesses, exploit divisions, and expand the political space available to them. In this process, opposition groups would learn from, and compete with, one another (the more radical and risk-taking groups, such as students, played a particularly important pioneering role). Indeed, the spread of opposition was as much a competitive enterprise as it was a cooperative one; time and again groups were motivated to take political action by the fear that they were losing ground to their ideological rivals. The processes by which opposition grew, learned lessons, competed with one another, experimented with new tactics, and forced open new political space are very much the bread and butter of this study, especially the case studies in Chapters 3 to 6. By the steady accumulation of experience, the slow and arduous building of networks, and the compounding of minor victories, opposition could grow.

The second and third processes look beyond developments internal to opposition to broader factors. Among the massive political science literature on democratization, two main theses account for the growth of opposition to authoritarian rule. The first is that oppositions grow, and regimes are transformed, in response to socioeconomic change. The second is that splits within ruling elites provide the crucial impetus.

Opposition, Social Change, and the Middle Class

There is, of course, a long tradition in political science literature of seeking the origins of democratic impulses in economic and social changes. After all, a large body of quantitative, cross-national studies reveals a positive relationship between higher levels of socioeconomic development and liberal democracy (Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992, 26ff). Economic growth, in this view, is the chief motor of political change, producing or strengthening social classes that demand greater representation, and eventually transforming the political structures created during an earlier stage of development. In particular, many writers

in both liberal-modernization and Marxist-derived structuralist traditions have long identified the middle classes as being chief agents of democratization.[4]

Middle classes are typically ascribed a democratizing function because they are attributed with interests in democratization (including interests in limiting capricious state interference in their own affairs and encouraging social stability) as well as greater resources for achieving their aims (for one thing, as Tun-jen Cheng [1990, 10–11] notes, middle-class protestors are less likely to be shot at than are the lower orders). This view retains considerable currency in recent democratization literature. According to Samuel Huntington (1991, 67), for example, "Third wave movements for democratization were not led by landlords, peasants, or (apart from Poland) industrial workers. In virtually every country the most active supporters of democratization came from the urban middle class."

This study is primarily concerned with various forms of middle-class opposition (although it will become apparent that I do not subscribe to a simple version of the "middle-class-as-agents-of-democratization" thesis). The groups studied in the following chapters—NGOs, student activist organizations, dissident groups, and political parties—were mostly led by those who, by dint of relatively privileged social and educational backgrounds, had the resources and the capacity to devote themselves to the grand political project of democratization.

When Suharto came to power in the 1960s, Indonesia was an overwhelmingly agrarian society. The urban middle classes formed a tiny and fragile social layer, squeezed economically by the hyperinflation of the final years of Sukarno's rule and threatened politically by the rising tide of communism. In this context, a good part of the nation's most prosperous urban groups allied with the military in 1965–66. By the mid-1990s, Indonesia's social landscape had been transformed after three decades of sustained economic growth under the New Order. Real per capita gross domestic product had tripled between 1965 and 1990 (Hill 1994, 56). The proportion of the workforce employed in agriculture had dipped below 50 percent. The middle class, however measured, had become a much larger, more amorphous and confident entity than it had been three decades earlier.

Change in political structures did not match the transformation of society. Once the basic outlines of the regime were established in the early 1970s, they were not altered. President Suharto remained firmly in control and grew increasingly inflexible with age. The contradiction between an increasingly vigorous and assertive society and a rigid political structure provoked much of the social and political unrest of the 1990s.

The "middle-class-as-agent-of-democratization" thesis has been much criticized in comparative literature. It is obvious that in many actual historical cases middle-class groups have supported, or have been ambivalent about, authoritarian rule. Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyne Stephens, and John Stephens, in their major comparative historical study of democratization, have this to say on the role of Latin American middle classes:

The middle classes played an ambiguous role in the installation and consolidation of democracy. They pushed for their own inclusion but their attitude towards inclusion of the lower classes depended on the need and possibilities for an alliance with the working class. The middle classes were most in favor of full democracy where they were confronted with intransigent dominant classes and had the option of allying with a sizeable working class. However, if they started feeling threatened by popular pressures under a democratic regime, they turned to support the imposition of an authoritarian alternative. (Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992, 8)

Thus, middle classes were important in the coalitions that founded authoritarian regimes, including Indonesia's New Order. In many developing countries, such as Singapore, they have long coexisted comfortably with nondemocratic rule. During the late New Order many authors argued that significant sectors of the Indonesian middle classes, such as state bureaucrats and businesspeople dependent on patrimonial links to the state, continued to support the regime (Robison 1990; Chalmers 1993). During the 1990s, feature writers in the Indonesian press often derided the middle classes as either politically apathetic pleasure-seekers obsessed by consumerism or conservative supporters of the political status quo.

Middle-class support for democratization is often conditional and hesitant, and most often forthcoming for only limited democracy. In countries recently undergoing democratization, middle classes have frequently supported political reform and then pulled back at the threat of lower-class unrest.[5] Initial democratic breakthroughs have often combined electoral democracy with continued restrictions on political, social, and economic claims by subordinate groups. By extension, I suggest in this book that the hesitant and often ambivalent nature of much middle-class semi-, alegal, and proto-opposition in authoritarian regimes may reflect structural weaknesses and ambivalent middle-class attitudes about political change. Time and again, desire for political reform combined with deep insecurities about potential unrest from below and the risks of losing the continued benefits of New Order economic growth to produce many erratic and irresolute forms of opposition.

It is necessary to carefully assess middle-class relations with other so-cial groups and the state. The middle class cannot be viewed in isolation from the wider historical, political, and class context. Even setting aside the tremendous social and political heterogeneity of the middle class,[6] the middle class cannot be reified as a consistently democratic force, nor as a consistently illiberal one. This is the core of the argument made by Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens: the political weight and attitudes of the different classes are themselves historically structured by a partic-ular country's path to industrialization and by an array of other factors. It is particularly important to examine "the *structure of class coalitions* as well as the *relative power of different classes*" in each historical case (Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992, 6; italics in original). Changing middle-class relations with the lower classes (are these seen as a threat or a possible ally?) and with the ruling elite (oppressor or pro-tector?) are especially crucial for understanding middle-class attitudes to-ward democracy.

In Indonesia, it was not only the middle classes that became more po-litically restless during the 1990s. Parts of the rural population also mo-bilized, especially in conflicts over land. In the new factories on the out-skirts of major cities, an industrial working class emerged and flexed its muscles with an unprecedented strike wave early in the decade. There were also many signs of discontent in the *kampung* that housed the amorphous mass of the urban poor, who had flooded into cities like Jakarta throughout the New Order period. Detailed studies of political action in these social sectors are already being written (see, e.g., Hadiz 1997; Kammen 1997; Lucas 1992, 1997; Ford 2003). The present study will not reproduce this literature. It will, however, pay attention to how middle-class political leaders and activists oriented and reacted to signs of political unrest in these other groups. What emerges is that much of the impetus for the revitalization of middle-class opposition through the late 1980s and 1990s derived from rather lower down the social hierarchy, both indirectly and via putative cross-sectoral alliances pioneered by NGO and student activists, as well as by the reinvigoration of older ve-hicles for populist alliances, such as the PDI.

Opposition and Regime Disunity

Much of the literature on democratic transitions produced in and since the 1980s is marked by a deliberate turn away from class and structural explanations, toward an emphasis on the unstructured and indeterminate nature of transitions and the crucial role played in them by the choices

made by state and opposition elites. One recurrent theme in this "contingent choice theory," as it has been called (Zhang 1994, 110), is the importance of divisions inside the ruling bloc. Such divisions are viewed as being especially important for the first phase in the democratization sequence, namely "liberalization," when the authoritarian government tolerates previously suppressed forms of political expression. In Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter's (1986, 19) oft-quoted formulation, "there is no transition whose beginning is not the consequence—direct or indirect—of important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself, principally along the fluctuating cleavage between hard-liners and soft-liners." Similarly, Adam Przeworski (1986, 56) suggests,

Where some perspectives of an "opening" (*apertura*, "thaw") have appeared, they have always involved some ruling groups that sought political support amongst forces until that moment excluded from politics by the authoritarian regime. This is not to say that once liberalization is initiated, only such chosen partners are politically mobilized: once the signal is given, a wave of popular mobilization often ensues. But it seems to me that the first critical threshold in the transition to democracy is precisely the move by some group within the ruling bloc to obtain support from sources external to it.

The emphasis on regime soft-liners partly derives from the view that successful democratization necessitates, at least, acquiescence by sections of the old regime: "No transition can be forced purely by opponents against a regime which maintains the cohesion, capacity and disposition to apply repression" (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 21). As the above passage from Przeworski shows, divisions in the government are also considered crucial because they may open new space for initiative by nonstate actors. One or more of the competing elite factions may decide it is advantageous to seek support from the broad political public, or from particular constituencies, by making concessions in the form of greater toleration for public dissent or particular policy reforms. Alfred Stepan describes this process as the "courtship of civil society" or the "*downward reach* for new allies in civil society" (Stepan 1988, 7; italics in original).

Many writers note that after the original gesture toward political liberalization, the process may quickly escalate. Often, a snowballing of opposition and protest occurs. During this period, all varieties of political opposition may endeavor to transform themselves from the debilitated forms they represented under consolidated authoritarianism. Elite factions are then forced to adjust to the new realities, and the process may proceed far beyond what its initiators contemplated (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 26–8, 48–56; Mainwaring 1989, 196–97). Conversely,

depending on the shifting balance of forces within the regime and elite threat perceptions, escalated opposition can trigger a retreat to repression.

In Indonesia, analysts have long drawn attention to the interaction of regime disunity and opposition activity. In the early 1970s, for instance, the upsurge of student and intellectual protest that culminated with the Malari riots of January 1974 coincided with considerable tension within both army and cabinet. Over subsequent decades, observers of Indonesian politics, including the New Order's domestic critics, spent much time trying to identify hairline cracks in the regime. Whenever outbursts of opposition occurred, it was a common practice to search for the *dalang* (the puppet master of the Javanese *wayang* shadow theater) in the political elite whose hand was behind it. By the late 1980s, however, would-be democratizers had long confronted a relatively unified state apparatus. This changed in the late 1980s, and the initiation of *keterbukaan* was preceded and accompanied by significant friction between elements in the army on the one hand and President Suharto and his closest followers on the other. Amid numerous signs of growing dissatisfaction in ABRI, the president and his supporters took the unprecedented step of cultivating a new Islamic support base, a move marked by the formation of ICMI (Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals' Association) in 1990. As the discussion in Chapter 2 indicates, many analysts of Indonesian politics argued that it was this tension inside the regime that motivated the tentative steps taken toward liberalization from the late 1980s and the attendant energization of opposition.

There are reasons, however, to question the way in which regime disunity is treated as a key determinant of political change. Michael Bratton, for example, argues that African case studies suggest that the logic frequently operates in the opposite direction to that suggested by O'Donnell and Schmitter:

This formulation depicts the relations of civil society to the state as being far too passive and reactive. Undoubtedly, opposition actors in society stand ready to exploit any divisions that emerge in the state elite and to expand any political opening provided by official concessions. But civic action, especially in the form of mass political protest, commonly comes first, precipitating splits within the ruling group and causing the government to concede reforms. (Bratton 1994, 63; see also Adler and Webster 1995; Collier 1999)

In the first instance, Bratton's comment suggests that it is important to look at how opposition can affect the calculations made by regime actors. Just as regime disunity can prompt energization of opposition, greater opposition can deepen dissension within a ruling bloc and induce some

regime leaders to initiate liberalization. Even if we accept, however, that internal regime friction may trigger liberalization and energize opposition, it is still not enough to focus exclusively on the "courtship of civil society" by regime elements. The courtship metaphor suggests that societal actors submissively wait to be wooed. It is just as important to explain how opposition actors respond to such overtures, as well as to more vague hints of discord within a regime. The present study aims to do this by looking at the complex and active processes by which Indonesian opposition actors made "readings" of regime-level conflict, analyzed the opportunities so presented them, and tried to make use of them.

In Indonesia from the late 1980s there was a vigorous debate among civilian groups which had long been excluded from power about how to respond to the new cracks in the regime. One response was simply to increase mobilization, hoping to raise the costs of governance, exacerbate internal tensions, and pave the way for the regime's overthrow. More moderate critics of the government used more persuasive methods, relying on lobbying, moral appeals, and force of argument to try to build links with, and stiffen the resolve of, regime soft-liners. Others (remembering the frequency of semiopposition and "institutional amphibiousness") tried to build alliances with patrons in the state who they viewed as supportive of their agendas and to penetrate sites within the state apparatus itself.

These debates were complicated and intensified because they became entangled with long-standing conflicts about the role of Islam in political and social life. The Suharto group's attempt to cultivate a more Islamic image prompted many previously critical Muslim activists to join ICMI. They sought to achieve some long-standing Islamic political and social goals by closer cooperation with government. Some critics of the government attacked this not only as an instance of co-optation, but also as a dangerous attempt to mix religion and politics and promote Islamization of the regime.

The dilemma of cooperation versus confrontation faces opposition groups in any authoritarian regime. The relative weight of moderate versus confrontational approaches will largely be shaped by the regime's history, structure, and internal cohesion. The greater the element of pluralism and semiopposition, the greater the willingness for compromise and negotiation. In such circumstances, many critics of the government will be used to dealing with regime officials. They will not believe in an unbridgeable divide between state and society. Where at least semiopposition is relatively institutionalized, societal leaders will also be more able to enforce restraint on their followers (Zhang 1994, 112). The opposite situation will obtain in regimes where the reactionary "standpatter" ele-

ment is strong (Huntington 1991, 144–5; O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 34–5). This is especially so in sultanistic regimes, where personalistic dominance by the ruler and widespread use of terror preclude the emergence of reformers within the regime or moderate opposition outside it. Here, as noted above, even groups instinctively inclined toward moderation will often believe that they have little choice but confrontation.

Indonesia is an instructive case study on this score because it combines elements of both patterns. When the first signs of internal conflict within the regime became apparent in the late 1980s, the legacy of previous decades of semipluralism meant that regime critics were well versed in moderate and gradualist approaches. Many prodemocracy activists viewed the tentative signals of support for reform within the ruling elite with great hope. They tried to build links with potential reformers within the state and hoped for a gradual and negotiated process of political transition. However, as we shall see in later chapters, a process of "sultanization" in the later years of Suharto's rule imparted elements of the confrontational pattern to the Indonesian transition. By the mid-1990s, the regime was deep in the midst of a transition toward an increasingly personalized form of rule. Suharto was taking action to reimpose his authority in the ruling elite and to reinstate hard-line policies against opposition. Ultimately, Suharto's dominance of the ruling elite impelled Indonesia on the path toward a sudden, society-initiated process of regime change.

Structure of the Book

Chapter 2 presents background material on the origins of the New Order regime and opposition to it. It also provides an overview of the transformation of the regime by the late 1980s, the initiation of its *keterbukaan* policy, and political dynamics during the first part of the 1990s. The core of the study comes with Chapters 3 through 6, which present detailed case studies of the various forms of opposition introduced in this chapter. They are dissident groups (alegal opposition), nongovernmental organizations (proto-opposition), student dissent (mobilizational opposition), and the PDI (semiopposition). Chapter 7 returns to a wider focus and comprises an analysis of the political crisis triggered by the government's removal of Megawati Soekarnoputri as leader of the PDI in 1996. Chapter 8 analyzes the dramatic upsurge of opposition that led to Suharto's resignation in 1998. Chapters 9 and 10 conclude by revisiting the general questions raised in this chapter.

This book is the product of about ten years' research, being a revised

version of my doctoral dissertation that was completed at the Australian National University in 2000. Beginning with a sixteen-month visit to Indonesia in 1993–94, I made one-to-two-month return visits to the country in each succeeding year. During that period, I had the privilege to meet many members and leaders of the groups whose activities are discussed in the following pages. As well as gaining much material from publicly available sources, I obtained access to the archives of papers, pamphlets, magazines, and other ephemera held by many groups and individuals. I conducted over 150 interviews with critics and opponents of the Suharto government, as well as a smaller number with government officials. Most important, I was granted the opportunity to participate in and observe many meetings, workshops, and other activities and to learn from countless informal and private conversations with political activists. Without the great generosity of the participants in Indonesia's struggle for democracy this book would not have been possible.

   Some disclaimers are in order. Some will object to my choice of case studies. The choice does not imply that I necessarily found the groups I focus on to be the most important political actors in late Suharto Indonesia. Rather, they represent a cross-section of oppositional responses to New Order authoritarianism. For reasons of space alone, I was obliged to be ruthless. As explained above, my interest is primarily in middle-class forms of political action and in those groups which called for democratization of the regime's political structures. We shall see, however, that debates about strategies for democratization inevitably became intertwined with other debates, notably on how to respond to social inequality and on the proper place for Islam in the political order. I have deliberately excluded secessionist movements (most prominently in our period, those in East Timor, Papua, and Aceh), which sought not merely to reorganize the Indonesian nation-state but to break away from it. These movements proceeded on the basis of very different political logics than did the groups which constitute the focus of this book. Similarly, I have not devoted a separate chapter to "Islamic" forms of opposition. In part, this was for practical reasons; balanced treatment of Islamic politics in our period would have required a separate book-length study, and accounts are already available (e.g., Hefner 2000; Porter 2002). In part, however, this was because the Suharto government pursued a policy of rapprochement with political Islam from the late 1980s. This meant that questions about the proper role of Islam infused all opposition debates. These debates are considered in following chapters.