CONCLUSIONS
Throughout our lives we are members of different groups or associations, from families, neighborhoods, clubs and work-units to nations and states. In all such associations, from the smallest to the largest, decisions have to be taken for the association as a whole: about the goals to be pursued, about the rules to be followed, about the distribution of responsibilities and benefits between members. These decisions can be called collective decisions and democracy belongs to this sphere of collective decision-making. All its members should have equal rights to take part in decision-making. As such, democracy entails the twin principles of popular control over collective decision-making and equality of rights in the exercise of that control. A democratic state exists when the government is accountable to the people and is established through competitive electoral process. However in practice the two principles of popular control and equality are not realized to the extent that the work of democratization is continuous. This becomes more difficult as the direct participation in present time is not possible.

Because of the impracticability of the direct democracy, the concept of representative democracy was introduced to function on behalf of the populace as a decision-making mechanism. Since an individual in a society can only exercise little public influence, his/her association with others would give greater such impact. Political parties are indispensable in democracy. They serve as a link between the populace and the representatives of the populace. They perform a number of different functions like: for the electorate, they help simplify the electoral choice by offering broad policy positions and programmes between which to choose; for governments, they provide a reasonably stable following of political supporters to enable them to achieve their programmes once elected; and for the more politically committed members in the society, they provide an opportunity
for involvement in public affairs, a means of political education and a channel for influencing public policy. A fair and free electoral system guarantees the success of the political parties to perform these functions. Political parties thus constitute a pivotal mechanism through which popular concerns are made effective in government.

The pattern of interaction between political parties in a democratic polity helps the political process in producing a stable and legitimate government. The type of party system affects the decision making process in such a polity. In a single party system, the political leadership tends to dominate social forces thus in the absence of competition between the elements in the polity leads into an authoritarian system. In a multiparty system, the social forces dominate the political parties where the heterogeneity of forces leads to the difficulty in arriving at a national consensus. A moderate pluralism provides the necessary channels to accommodate the conflicting interests in a heterogeneous society while at the same time effectively functions as a mechanism to arrive at a national consensus. A two-party system maintains a more equitable balance between social forces and political parties thus the possibility of arriving at political stability is greater as compared to the moderate pluralism or the multi party system. The moral acceptance of the subject to the authority of the rulers is very important for the justification of their right to rule. And therefore, in order to create political stability and change in the society, rulers or regimes need to have legitimacy, the moral right to rule, failing of which crisis of legitimacy and stability is the consequence.

The problem of political stability and legitimacy that emerged after the departure of General Suharto and his New Order regime which was the main focus of this research could be traced back in the history of the party system in Indonesia. The pattern of
interaction of political parties has varied throughout the history of Indonesia in different periods producing relatively varied results. The desirability of a multiparty system in Indonesia could be traced back to the history of party formation during the colonial period when parties of different ideologies emerged to voice their concern over the fate of their community in particular and Indonesia as a nation in general. Regionalism, Ethnicity, Religion as well as Nationalism emerged as the bonding force of these groupings. Suppressions and restrictions imposed by the colonial masters did not deter the determination of the leadership of these groups to continue their efforts in achieving Indonesian independence. But when independence actually came, no political grouping was able to withstand the controlling and repressive policy of the colonial master in which it created the problem of stability and legitimacy in the newly formed government in Indonesia. Besides, the absence of political institutionalization and its inability to absorb the increasing political participation and conflicting interests created the political instability and legitimacy crisis. Moreover, the recurring threats from the Dutch forces during the revolutionary period had added to more political instability. The four years of revolutionary period became the witness of frequent changes of cabinets in the wake of parliamentary government exercised.

The absence of any election, the growing power of the extra-parliamentary forces in the form of President Sukarno and the Army and the absence of any national leadership capable of forming sustainable government continued to dominate the political process in the following years after the revolutionary period. It was thus perpetuating the political instability. The multi party system adopted during this period in which a number of political parties with their ideologically different affiliation existed had further deteriorated
the situation due to their inability to formulate a national consensus. When finally the long
awaited general election was administered in the hope of producing a stable, legitimate and
performing government, the nation was disappointed with the fact that the result of this
election was a fractured mandate where no political party emerged as a commanding power
in the House thus resulting in the formation of weak coalition government as well as weak
opposition. Although the election succeeded in producing legitimate government but it
failed to produce a strong and stable government because of the ideological rivalry between
the parties that constituted the coalition government. The multiparty system failed to
produce a national consensus and instead it deepened the ideological, regional and ethnic
rivalry in the form of a non-working coalition government and revolts in several regions.
Seeing the danger of disintegration, the President with the support of the military, two
powerful extra-parliamentary forces, imposed a change in the party system to accommodate
their urge to dominate the national politics by establishing a National Front that functioned
as a single party system for the working of the political process.

The change from a multi party system into a single party system produced a
relatively stable government in the sense that no change of cabinet occurred in the period.
The government tightly controlled the political process. At the same time, the legitimacy of
this regime was extracted from the personal charisma of the President. However, this
stability and legitimacy was proved to be only virtual phenomenon when the continuous
power struggle between the Communist groups and the Indonesian Army to dominate the
national politics exploded into a bloody attempted coup in which the Army quickly stepped
in to eliminate it. The severe ideological rivalry and the deteriorating economy as well as
the limited channels for political participation contributed to this crisis. The emergence of
the Army with its iron-hand approach towards the functioning of the political process had introduced Indonesia to the experimentation of an ideological hegemonic party system. With the domination of the GOLKAR as the government party and the imposition of the *Pancasila* as the national ideology along with the improving economic situation, a stable regime controlled Indonesia. The lack of the regime’s legitimacy was nurtured by focusing the attention to improving national development. Besides, regular general elections were successfully administered to add to the legal legitimacy of the regime. However, the improving economic situation in contrast with the limited opportunities for political participation as well as the lack of political institutionalization had created political instability crisis in the regime. The growing demand from the middle class group for a wider political participation and the establishment of a more accommodative political institutionalization had put the military regime under a strong public pressure. The rampant practice of corruption, cronyism and nepotism as well as the declining economic growth in the later years of the regime contributed to the worsening of the situation. With the declining source of political legitimacy, the ideological hegemonic party system failed to sustain the functioning of the decision-making process and finally the ageing regime disintegrated thereby paving the way for a chance to reform and to restructure the political system.

The political euphoria of the post-Suharto Indonesia was translated into the establishment of various political parties with different ideological affiliations. To accommodate the situation, a multi party system was adopted and a general election was scheduled to create a national consensus thus producing a stable, legitimate and functioning government. But instead it resulted into a fractured mandate. As such, coalition government
was expected to function in the midst of a constant struggle for political domination between various political groups. The relatively weak political institutionalization, bad economic situation as well as strong surge for political participation did not help the creation of a stable government. Abdurrahman Wahid’s presidency failed to produce stability in the government and instead it increased political instability. The legitimacy of his Cabinet was also soon deteriorating because of his seemingly erratic leadership, which cost him his presidency. Megawati’s presidency that came up as a replacement of the failed coalition cabinet by President Abdurrahman Wahid enjoyed a relatively stable support and greater legitimacy. Thus, although the government was slow in tackling the economic problems as well as delaying, or rather failing, to deliver its election promises the cabinet continued to enjoy a relative stability until its term was over. Its status as a replacement cabinet meant that its term was the continuance of the previous cabinet of President Abdurrahman Wahid’s thus it had a shorter term than the normal five years. Besides, since election was scheduled to be on time in 2004, political parties were busy with the preparation to win the election thus there their concern over the functioning of Megawati’s cabinet as compared to the one of Abdurrahman Wahid’s was scarce.

Summing up the conclusion of the study, different party systems produced relatively different degree of political stability and legitimacy of government in Indonesian polity. The multi-party system with a relatively low level of political institutionalization in contrast with a high level of political participation during parliamentary democracy period had resulted in instability and legitimacy crisis in Indonesia. Although the 1955 general elections produced a legitimate government, but the conflicting interests and ideological differences between political parties led to the failure of this legitimacy to be transformed
into a stable polity. The relatively low level of political participation and institutionalization during Guided Democracy period contributed to the stability to the governing system as compared to the previous period. The charismatic personality of President Sukarno and the functioning of a single authoritarian party system became the other factors contributed to the situation. But the deteriorating economic condition and the slipping balance of power between the President, the PKI and the Army brought instability and legitimacy crisis to the regime. The hegemonic party system and strict control of the military over the decision-making process in the New Order Indonesia created a stable presidential cabinet. But the low level of political institutionalization in contrast with the increasing level of political participation as well as the decreasing economic situation in the later decade of the New Order resulted in the instability and legitimacy crisis. The post-Suharto Indonesia witnessed an increasing degree of political participation with a relatively low level of political institutionalization and a weak economic situation. These factors contributed to a relatively low level of stability. However, the introduction of a direct presidential election in the 2004 general election is likely to give different result. The possibility of the executive achieving more legitimacy through this electoral system leads to the possibility of the transformation of this political legitimacy into some degree of political stability. Nevertheless, unless the pattern of party politics is changed, the possibility of creating a working coalition between like-minded political parties on the basis of common minimum programs will be difficult to achieve thus reducing the chance of arriving at sustainable political stability and legitimacy in Indonesian polity.

Thus the hypothesis proposed in the beginning of this research that a moderate pluralism will provide an answer to the problem of political stability and legitimacy in
Indonesia is answered. During the course of this research it has been observed that different party systems experienced by Indonesia have not been able to give stability and legitimacy to the successive governments. Even though a multi party system is suitable to accommodate the different aspirations as well as different ideologies in a heterogeneous society like Indonesia but the relatively low level of political institutionalization with a high level of political participation led to instability and legitimacy crisis as fractured mandates were the phenomenon during the multi party system, which thereby resulted in instability crisis. One party system with strong government control over the functioning of the political processes is seen as an authoritarian system, which is contrary to the principles of representative democracy that guarantees the basic rights and freedom of the populace. At the same time, the heterogenic nature that prevails in the Indonesian society makes the practice of a two-party system relatively difficult to realize because this system of party politics functions properly in a relatively homogeneous society. Other factor like the importance of the role of the opposition in the effective and successful functioning of a democratic framework is very significant. Thus to accommodate the heterogeneity of aspirations in a young democratic society like Indonesia, a moderate pluralism of party politics is regarded as the most suitable type of party system to be evolved in the post-Suharto Indonesia. A reference to the results of the 1955, the 1999 and the 2004 general elections in which several national parties with different ideological affiliations shared the majority of the total votes cast in the elections can be invoked in support of this proposition.

In 1955 there were the Nationalist-Secular party, the Religious-Nationalist party and the Communist party (the PNI, the Masyumi and the NU and the PKI respectively) that
dominated the elections. In 1999 a similar scenario occurred in which Nationalist-Secular party, Development-oriented-Secular party and Religious-Nationalist party with the absence of Communist party (the PDI-P, the GOLKAR, the PPP, the PKB, the PAN respectively) won the election. In the recently concluded general elections in 2004, a similar pattern was there where the GOLKAR, the PDI-P, the PPP, the Partai Demokrat (Democrat Party), the PKB, the PKS (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, Justice and Welfare Party) and the PAN dominated the election results. These elections were held in a multi party system in which no single political party emerged as a majority power in the parliament. The political legitimacy achieved through these elections failed to be transformed into a stable polity where there were frequent changes of government. The weakness of the political parties to arrive at a national consensus due to their conflicting ideologies resulted in the formation of a weak coalition cabinet and a weak opposition thus contributing to the instability crisis.

The increasing level of political participation in the post-Suharto Indonesia where political institutionalization was established to keep the balance in the polity is necessary to be accommodated through a suitable party system to create the possibility of arriving at a stable polity. Fractured mandate produced by a multi party system must be avoided since it leads to the formation of a weak coalition government as well as a weak opposition. It is in this scenario that a moderate pluralism is proposed to provide a more suitable system of party politics to accommodate the contrasting interests and ideologies in a democratic Indonesia. A moderate pluralism provides a working mechanism to arrive at stable polity as compared to a multi party system. Because with the party system that operates on basis of a limited number of political parties in which ideological differences between these parties
are slight and where there is a general inclination to form coalitions political stability becomes an obtainable target. Besides, fractured mandate, which is the phenomenon in a multi party system can be avoided through a moderate pluralism thus the possibility to create a strong and stable government as well as the establishment of strong opposition as a check and balance to the government is greater than through a multiparty system.

The direct presidential election introduced in the post-Suharto Indonesia added to the necessary level of political legitimacy to the government. The amendment of the 1945 Constitution and the strengthening of the national ideology added to the legal-constitutional framework for the functioning of a representative democracy in a moderate pluralism. The high degree of political legitimacy achieved by the executive through a direct electoral system, and more so, a possible domination of his/her party in the parliament, might result in authoritarianism in the absence of a strong opposition. The dominations of President Sukarno and General Suharto in the Indonesian politics for more than three decades proved this proposition. With limited national parties operating in the polity moderate pluralism helps in the formation of strong government as well as a responsible opposition. It thus serves as the best possible solution to the problem of political instability and legitimacy crisis in a heterogeneous society like Indonesia. The fact that three to four ideologically different political groupings emerged as the major parties during the democratically administered elections in Indonesia where multi party system was practiced further supported the proposal of the possibility of evolving a moderate pluralism in the post-Suharto Indonesia. The domination of the Nationalist-Secular party, the Religious-Nationalist party and the Communist party during the 1955 elections and the Nationalist-Secular party, Development-Oriented-Secular party and Religious-Nationalist party in the
post-Suharto party politics fits to the idea of a moderate pluralism. With the evolution of a moderate pluralism fractured mandate could be avoided and more so, there is greater possibility of creating strong opposition to act as a balance to the strong, democratically elected government. At the same time the role of the political elites to realize this proposition is very important in which their consensus to creating a stable Indonesia will strengthen the functioning of this type of party system. However, even though a moderate pluralism helps in arriving at a stable and legitimate polity, the possibility of the functioning of a two-party system in the distance future cannot be ruled out. The capability of a two-party system to maintain a more equitable balance between social forces and political parties in a representative democracy provides a greater opportunity of arriving at a stable polity. A relatively stronger government with a strong opposition as a check and balance to the government is more achievable in a two-party system scenario. Moreover, a two-party system is likely to produce more effective chance for a competitive party politics in a democratic polity.

A possible scenario of a two party system would be the alliance, and the possibility of a natural merger, between the PDI-P, the GOLKAR, the Partai Demokrat (Democrat Party) and other smaller parties of similar ideological tendency to form a coalition of a Nationalist-Secular Front and at the same time, the PPP, the PKS, the PKB, the PAN and other smaller parties of similar ideological tendency form an alliance of a Religious-Nationalist parties in the form of a Progressive-Nationalist Front thus creating the situation of a two-party system in Indonesia. In a modernizing society like Indonesia in which modernization tends to create instability in the polity, a multi-party system with the high level of political participation and institutionalization only results in fractured mandate thus
resulting in a weak government and a weak opposition. Besides, in a multiparty system, strong parties are normally more coherent, more complexly organized but less flexible and less autonomous than are strong parties in a moderate pluralism or in a two-party system. Moreover, a two-party system is capable of assimilating rural masses into the political system and thus produces the bridge between rural and urban areas, which is key to political stability in modernizing societies. This second scenario, however, is difficult to realize if the history of party politics in Indonesia is observed.

The proposition of a moderate pluralism as the solution to the process of creating a stable polity in Indonesia is possible to be evolved when there is a national consensus among the party elites in the necessity of creating stability in the Indonesian polity. A natural process of party coalitions in the form of pre-poll or post-poll alliances on the basis of common minimum programs as well as their ideological affiliations will further accommodate the political processes. The heterogeneity of interests in Indonesia will be effectively accommodated through this moderate pluralism and at the same time there is greater possibility of creating strong government as well as strong opposition thus creating a balance of equilibrium in a democratic polity. Thus even though a two-party system can provide a more equitable balance between social forces and political parties in a democratic polity as compared to other types of party systems but the heterogenic nature of interests that prevails in the Indonesian society will be more effectively and successfully accommodated through a moderate pluralism.