CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF PARTY SYSTEM IN INDONESIA
The development of party system in Indonesian political system is the focus of discussion in this chapter. The long process of this development is divided into six different periods in order to highlight the different stages of the process. These periods are: (i) the Pre-Independence Period; (ii) the Revolutionary Period; (iii) the Parliamentary Democracy Period; (iv) the Old Order or Guided Democracy Period; (v) the New Order or Pancasila Democracy Period; and (vi) the Post-Suharto Period. The inclusion of the development of party politics in the pre-independence period is aimed at highlighting the historical process of the development of party system in the subsequent periods of independent Indonesia. Besides, it will also attempt to provide a picture of the roots of ideological clashes of different political parties in Indonesia.

3.1 The Pre-Independence Period

The development of political parties in Indonesia can be traced back to the pre-independence period. Group political activities in this period were mostly ethno-nationalist which focused more on cultural and educational fields rather than political governance. The formation of Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan (the Chinese Community) in 1900\(^1\) and the Budi Utomo in 1908\(^2\) became the landmark of political movement in Indonesia. The Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan was a reactionary movement established by the Chinese community against the policy of the colonial government that gave an equal status to the Japanese people with the Dutch while discriminating the Chinese. The main demand of this movement was an equal recognition for the Chinese community in the society. At the same time, the Budi Utomo was focusing on the cultural movement of the Javanese community, especially the emancipation of the Javanese priyayi (traditional elite in the Javanese society). These
parties cannot be described as political parties in the modern perspective according to which a political party is an organization formed for acquiring public office through general election. However, their arrival had inspired the later organizations to focus themselves on the fate of Indonesia as an independent nation.

With the formation of the *Syarikat Islam* (SI) by HOS Tjokroamintoto and the *Indische Partij* by Ernest Francois Eugene Douwes Dekker in around 1912 began the era of political organizations in Indonesia during the colonial period. Using Islam as its ideology, the SI focused on the economic improvement of the Islamic trading community. Even though the organization remained exclusive in nature, but its appeal of economic improvement for the local people had attracted other groups of different ideological affiliations like the Marxist as well as the Nationalist, to join the SI. Contrary to the SI, which did not declare itself as a political party, the founder of the *Indische Partij* declared the *Indische Partij* as a political party and formally asked the recognition from the government. The *Indische Partij* was a more open political grouping as compared to the SI in which it put greater emphasis on Indonesia as a whole and not a certain group in the society, opening its membership to all Indonesians regardless of their creed, sex or color. It was a nationalist organization, which put the liberation of Indonesia on its main political agenda. However, the strict prohibition and controlled political movement by the colonial government during this period resulted in the refusal of the Government to recognize the *Indische Partij* as a political party. The formation and the declaration of the *Indische Partij* as a political party were seen as a rebellion towards the Government. Thus, it failed to develop as an umbrella for political movements during this period and forced the party to dissolve after only six months into existence.
The formation of the Volskraad or Dewan Rakyat, a people’s representative body controlled by the Dutch colonial government, in 1916 inspired the Budi Utomo and the Syarikat Islam to declare themselves as political parties. Other political parties like the Partai Kristen Indonesia (Indonesian Christian Party, Parkindo), the Partai Katholik (Catholic Party) and the Partai Sosial Demokratik Indonesia (Social-Democratic Party of Indonesia, ISDV) surfaced on the Indonesian political scene in the 1920s. The heterogenic factions in the Syarikat Islam forced the party to split into two ideologically opposite political parties: the Syarikat Islam Hijau (Si-Green) and the Syarikat Islam Merah (Si-Red). The Si-Red was later known as the Partai Komunis Indonesia (the Communist Party of Indonesia, PKI). This split in 1923 became the starting point of the future political adversary between the Communist and the Muslim groups in Indonesian politics. At the same time, with the growing popularity of the PKI, the Si-Green was further split into Penyedar of Islamic-nationalist group and Komite Kebenaran Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia (Committee of the Truth for the Association of the Islamic Party of Indonesia) of Islamic hardliner. Except for the PKI, other parties coming off from the SI could not play any significant role in the political process during this period and subsequently waned out.

The adoption of a militant policy of non-co-operation with the colonial government by the PKI shown in the failed revolt against the colonial government in 1926 had resulted in its disbandment in 1927. Thousands of its members and the PKI leaders were arrested, imprisoned and even being exiled in Boven Digul. Some of the PKI leaders like Muso and Aidit fled to the Communist countries like the USSR or China to seek for political asylum. The disappearance of the PKI from the political stage prompted the establishment of the
Partai Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Party, PNI) by Sukarno and other young leaders in 1927. The personal charisma and his oratory ability against the policy of the colonial government had boosted the popularity of the PNI. Besides, the arrival of the PNI was in a perfect situation in which the influence of political parties like the SI or other political groupings in the independence movement had started to recede. The nationalist approach adopted by the PNI soon attracted different groups to join its cause. Its cooperation with the SI to form a Federation of Nationalist Politics in Indonesia (PPPKI) to become the common platform for the nationalist movement against the colonial government cemented the agenda of these parties in the effort to achieve Indonesian independence. But the self-help and non-co-operation policy adopted by the PNI resulted in the arrest and imprisonment of its leaders like Sukarno by the colonial government. In 1931 the leaderships of the PNI decided to dissolve the party thus also ending the PPPKI.¹

The dissolution of the PNI and the imprisonment of Sukarno prompted the establishment of the Partai Indonesia (Indonesian Party) by Mr. Sartono, an ex-leader of the PNI, in April 1931 and different other political groupings in the 1930s like the Partai Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia (PNI Baru), the Gerakan Rakyat Indonesia (Gerindo), the Partai Persatuan Indonesia (Parpindo), the Partai Rakyat Indonesia (PRI) as well as the Partai Indonesia Raya (Parindra). The strict regulations from, and a close watch by, the colonial government did not discourage the Indonesian leaders like Sukarno, Hatta, Sjahrir, Tan Malaka or Natsir to form political organizations as a platform to voice their concern over the fate of the nation. Religion (Islam, Christianity, Catholicism), Socialism, Marxism, Communism, Nationalism as well as other ideologies rooted from the local traditions of Javanese culture, Marhaenism, Hinduism as well as Buddhism dominated the political
struggle during the 1920s and 1930s in Indonesia. These ideologies manifested into political parties were in a constant struggle with each other. If the 1920s was dominated by the ideological struggle between Communism and Islam as shown in the split in the SI, the 1930s witnessed the opposition between Islam and the Secular Nationalist group in which they differed on the constitutional basis of an independent Indonesia. However, these ideological differences did not dilute the goal of these leaders of an independent Indonesia. Thus even though a cooperative policy with the colonial government would be more advantageous to the development of their parties, but the choice of a non-cooperative policy was adopted to show their solidarity and united agenda of achieving Indonesian independence. It was this nationalist agenda and the policy of non-cooperation adopted by these parties that led into their dissolution during the arrival of the Japanese forces in Indonesia in 1942. No political party survived the repressive and controlling policy implemented by the Japanese occupation force in Indonesia.

The short Japanese occupation of Indonesia started in 1942 had ended the lifeline of these political parties. The Japanese government replaced the political parties with the *Pusat Tenaga Rakyat* (Center of People’s Power, Putera) in 1943, an organization established by the Japanese government as a preliminary step toward the realization of their promise of self-government for Indonesian people. But the domination of the nationalist leaders like Sukarno. Muhammad Hatta, Ki Hajar Dewantoro and K.H. Mas Mansyur in this organization in which they implicitly propagated the independence of Indonesia without the assistance from the Japanese government had resulted in its dissolution. *Jawa Hokokai* (People’s Obedience Group) was established in its place. Persons regarded to be close to the Japanese government dominated this organization hence the activity of the
*Jawa Hokokai* could be intensively monitored by the Japanese government. At the same time, the Muslim community was also given a chance to group themselves in the form of *Masyumi*, a federation of Muslim organizations consisting of the *Nahdlatul Ulama* (Association of Ulema, NU), the *Muhammadiyah* and other Muslim groups. However, nearing the end of the Japanese occupation in Indonesia in 1945, all these organizations were dissolved and disbanded by the Japanese government thereby there was an absence of political parties in Indonesia at the time of the declaration of Indonesian independence on 17 August 1945. It should be noted, however, that even though there was an absence of any political parties at this time but the seeds for its growth and development in an independent Indonesia were still alive as has been shown in the subsequent process of party politics in Indonesia.

### 3.2 The Revolutionary Period (1945 – 1949)

Having successfully proclaimed the Indonesian independence on 17 August 1945 during the power vacuum in Indonesia due to the Japanese defeat in the World War II, the Indonesian leaders decided to adopt a Presidential system of government for the functioning of the decision-making process in the new Republic. A Constitution designed for the functioning of a Presidential government known as the 1945 Constitution was promulgated to provide the constitutional basis for the new government. But in the absence of any elections, the PPKI appointed the Indonesian President and Vice-President for the first time and the functions of the Parliament were exercised by the President with the assistance from the *Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat* (Central National Committee of Indonesia, KNIP) whose members were nominated by the President and Vice-President
The PPKI formally appointed Sukarno as the President of the Republic of Indonesia with Muhammad Hatta as his Vice-President. At the same time, the KNIP took over some of the MPR’s responsibility in the drawing of the Garis-garis Besar Haluan Negara (the broad guidelines of the State’s policy, GBHN) while at the same time the Badan Pekerja Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat (Working Body of the Central National Committee of Indonesia, BP-KNIP) was responsible for the daily legislative power. On 31 August 1945, the first Indonesian cabinet led by President Sukarno was formed.

In the absence of any political parties in the new Republic due to their dissolution and disbandment during the Japanese occupation in Indonesia, a State party called the Partai Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Party) was to be established by the Government as an umbrella for the various national forces in Indonesia to support the nation-building process. It was a decision taken by the Government as a necessary measure under the revolutionary situation at the time. However, realizing the negative consequence of a single party system in a democratic polity the implementation of the decision to adopt a single party was withheld by the Indonesian Government. It was on 3 November 1945 that the Government decided to issue a Government Act allowing the people to form and create any political organizations on the basis of their beliefs, philosophies and ideologies. This Government Act resulted in the emergence of different new political organizations as well as the re-emergence of the old political parties established during the colonial period thereby formalising the practice of a multi party system in Indonesia. At the same time, this Government Act made the realization of the idea of the Partai Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Party) in this period impracticable.
The adoption of a multi party system in Indonesia following the issuance of this Government Act, a different Government Act was issued on 14 November 1945 to convert the Presidential system into a Parliamentary system of government without amending the 1945 Constitution. The decision to quietly shelve the Republic’s presidential constitution was a part of an effort to achieve recognition from the Allies that the independent Republic of Indonesia was not merely a puppet state that the Japanese government intended to established. As a result, the Presidential cabinet of Sukarno resigned and Sjahrir, the most prominent of the small group of nationalist leaders who had refused to cooperate with the Japanese occupation force, formed his first cabinet where he became the prime minister while the council of ministers was responsible to the KNIP in the absence of MPR/DPR. Sukarno, still held the position as the President of Indonesia, was shunted into more ceremonial duties. From then on until 27 December 1949, a parliamentary system of government was functioning on the basis of a Presidential Constitution of the 1945 Constitution where a prime minister was head of executive while the president merely acted as head of state.

The police actions by the Dutch forces on 17 July 1947 and 19 December 1948 severed the functioning of the government. The Dutch occupation of the provisional capital Yogyakarta on 19 December 1948 and the subsequent arrest of president Sukarno, vice-president Hatta and other cabinet members by the Dutch forced the formation of an Emergency Government of the Republic of Indonesia by Mr. Syafruddin Prawiranegara. However, the guerrilla war in the countryside led by General Sudirman, the leader of Indonesian National Army formed on 5 October 1945 based on Japanese trained Pembela Tanah Air (Defenders of the Homeland, PETA), began to weigh down the Dutch military
machine and forced them to release and restore the President and the Vice President to Yogyakarta on July 10, 1949. Diplomatic pressure from the international community, including an American threat to withhold the Marshall Plan aid for the Netherlands, also played a significant role in pressuring the Dutch government to restart the negotiation process with the Indonesian leadership on 23 August 1949 which resulted in the formal transfer of power and the recognition of the independent sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia. This formal recognition was the first step towards full independence as the recognition came with a condition that the Republic of Indonesia would merely remain a constituent member of a federal Republic of the United States of Indonesia along with fifteen much smaller states created across the archipelago under the Dutch auspices. The members of the Republic of the United States of Indonesia were the Republic of Indonesia (17 August 1945), the East Indonesia State (1946), the Pasundan State, the East Java State (16 November 1948), the Madura State (23 January 1948), the East Sumatera State (24 March 1948) and the South Sumatera State. Besides, several other new states like the West Kalimantan State, the East Kalimantan, the Big Dayak, the Banjar, the Southeast Kalimantan, the Bangka, the Belitung, the Riau and the Central Java were on the process of their formation. This federal Republic was in turn to a part of the Netherlands – Indonesian Union under the Dutch crown. However, the new federal Republic of the United States of Indonesia proved to be short-lived. On 17 August 1950 the government of the Republic of Indonesia, the most powerful of these constituent member states, decided to revert back into a Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia (Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia). For the most part, the dissolution of the federalism proceeded peacefully without any opposition from the constituent states. The adoption of the 1950 Provisional Constitution was the distinct feature of the Republic as compared to the one declared on 17 August 1945.
which had the 1945 Constitution as the national guide. While the 1945 Constitution was clearly designed for a presidential government, the adoption of the 1950 Provisional Constitution in the Republic signified the formalization of a parliamentary system of government in Indonesia.¹³

The declaration of Indonesian independence in August 1945 had opened up a new horizon for the party politics in Indonesia. The decision taken by the Indonesian Government to withhold the adoption of a single party system, and instead adopt a multi-party system, opened up the chance for the various political ideologies and groupings to come up to play important role in the nation-building process of the newly independent Indonesia. Thus the opening up of the valve of political participation had resulted in the rebirth of the various political groupings once prominence during the pre-independence period. Several political parties of national level, which were ideologically related to the old parties in the pre-independence period like the Partai Nasional Indonesia, the Masyumi (7 November 1945) and the Partai Sosialis (December 1945, it was the merger of the Partai Sosialis Indonesia of Amir Sjarifuddin and the Partai Rakyat Sosialis of Sutan Sjahrir), were founded. Other parties of smaller size also came into being like the Partai Kristen Indonesia, (10 November 1945) the Partai Katholik Indonesia, the Partai Komunis Indonesia (21 October 1945), the Partai Buruh Indonesia (9 November 1945) and the Partai Rakjat Djelata (November 1945).¹⁴ These political parties followed different ideological concepts of Religion, Nationalism, Communism as well as Socialism. The Masyumi, the PSII, the Perti were political parties based on Islam whereas the Parkindo and the Partai Katholik were based on Christianity. The PNI, the PIR (Hazairin and Wongsonegoro), the Parindra, the PRI, the Partai Buruh (Labor Party) and the SKI were
political parties based on Nationalism. The PKI, the BTI and the SOBSI were of Communist ideology while the PSI and the GTI were Socialist parties. Other regional parties also came up like the Gerinda – Yogyakarta, the AKUI – Madura, the PRD – West Java, the Gerakan Pilihan Sunda – West Java, the PIR – Nusa Tenggara Barat and the Gerakan Banteng in West Java. The growth of these new political parties, and the revival of other old parties like the PSII, the PNI and the Masyumi, was under a very awkward circumstance of physical revolution for independence that followed the formal transfer of power on 27 December 1949.

3.3 The Parliamentary Democracy Period (1950 – 1959)

The four years of the revolutionary period, 1945 – 1949, had been a very difficult period in the history of the Republic. The presidential system adopted in the early stage of Indonesian independence based on the 1945 Constitution had to be shelved in order to convince the international community of the democratic tradition in the Republic and its disengagement with the Japanese past. A more participatory politics in the form of a parliamentary system of government was then adopted by Indonesia, which made President Sukarno a ceremonial head of state without any significant executive power and the prime minister real executive. Though the Parliamentary system was adopted, no general elections were held during this period to give meaning to the adopted system. During this revolutionary period, the Republic became the witness of different cabinets in the centre and various rebellions in different parts of the country.
With the formal recognition of the Republic by the Dutch and the adoption of the
Provisional Constitution of 1950, the formal conversion into a parliamentary system was
finally completed. The multi-party system introduced in the revolutionary period through
a Government Act continued to be followed in this period. It had provided the chance for at
least 36 different political parties with their different ideological associations, and several
independent candidates, to prepare themselves to compete in the re-scheduled general
elections in 1955.

The 1955 general election was the first ever election held in Indonesia and was
regarded as the most democratically administered election based on a democratic election
laws under the Provisional Constitution of 1950. However, the success of the election did
not guarantee the successful running of the government. No party came up as a single
majority hence forcing the creation of coalition governments. Four parties came up as the
winners in this election: the PNI (22.3%), the Masyumi (20.9%), the NU (18.4%) and the
PKI (16.4%). The long period of fierce political campaign had taken its toll in which no
national consensus was achieved. The coalition government formed by the winners of the
election, the second Ali cabinet based on the PNI – the Masyumi – the NU coalition while
singling out the PKI for its ideological difference, failed to perform. The intense and
irreconcilable differences between coalition partners, especially between the secular-
nationalist dominated PNI and the Islamic hardliners dominated Masyumi, made it
impracticable for the government to govern effectively. The successive coalition
governments formed on the basis of different coalition partners before and after the election
had similar result. They had come and gone during this period, averaging more or less of
eight months in office.
The differences between these ideologically motivated political parties during this period can be explained through the following the diagram:²⁰

In the diagram above, we could find the different ideologies that shape the party system in Indonesia. Two big sources had influenced the development of these parties: the tradition and the Western influence. Five different political ideologies arose from the interaction of these two forces: Communism, Democratic Socialism, Islam, Radical Nationalism and Javanese Traditionalism. Communism was heavily represented by the PKI while the failure
of Democratic Socialism to position itself as a powerful political force in Indonesian politics except the domination of the PSI before the 1955 elections, its influence was found in the PNI and the Masyumi. Islam as a political ideology was represented in the form of two big names: the Masyumi and its breakaway party of NU. While the Masyumi represented a more Islamic political approach, the NU, the more conservative of the two, chose to be relatively secular in its political approach. The PNI was a blend of Radical Nationalism, Communism, Javanese Traditionalism and Democratic Socialism. The ambition of Sukarno to create an Indonesian version of socialism in the form of Marhaenism resulted in the formation of the PNI. The Javanese Traditionalism however, failed to create political domination in Indonesian party politics in this period but the existence of the PNI and the PKI had somehow represented this ideology. Thus, through the diagram above, it was found that most of the political parties in this period had direct political influence with each other except for the Communism and Islam in which they were two different poles though it somehow was distantly connected through Javanese Traditionalism.

The fact that these ideologies were closely intertwined with each other, one would not disagree that there would be a cohesive and working coalition partners in Indonesian party politics. However, this notion of a cohesive party system and a working coalition partners did not exist in the history of party politics in the parliamentary government of Indonesia. The acute differences between these ideologies in their approach on an independent Indonesia during the pre-independent party politics were the reason of this failure. The common goal of Indonesian independence had somehow diluted these differences but once the nation achieved its independence the true ambition of these
political groupings emerged and dominated the power struggle in the young Republic. Thus, this period witnessed acute political rivalry between political parties. The Secular-Nationalist groups could not work together with the Islamic groups due to their differences on the constitutional definition of Indonesia. And since Communism was a sworn adversary of Islam as shown in the history of the split in the SI during the pre-independent days, they were meant to be in different benches. As such, the Secular-Nationalist did not have any interest in taking communist party into their stride to form a coalition government. The party system during this period of parliamentary democracy remained extremely fractured and factionalised.

3.4 The Old Order or Guided Democracy Period (1960 – 1965)

The inability of the political parties to create a stable and functioning coalition government at the Centre and the spread of various rebellions in different parts of the country had forced President Sukarno to declare national emergency with the support from the military. It virtually put the power in the hands of President Sukarno, leaving the DPR dysfunctional. The Konsepsi Presiden, a political concept introduced by President Sukarno on 21 February 1957 which contained the idea of creating Kabinet Gotong-Royong (Coalition Cabinet) and Dewan Nasional (National Council), a council headed by the President to replace the function of the DPR in advising and recommending the government from a broad national perspective and to accommodate all dynamic elements in the society not represented through the already available institution, the DPR, became the landmark of Demokrasi Terpimpin (Guided Democracy). Besides, during this period, the role of the military was ever increasing due to their disappointment over the running of the nation by
their civilian counterparts. This disappointment was one of the reasons for the military to back the Presidential Decree issued in July 1959.

The deadlock in the Konstituante (Constituent Assembly) in formulating a new Indonesian constitution had prompted President Sukarno to issue a Presidential Decree on 5 July 1959, for the revival of the 1945 Constitution while disposing the Provisional Constitution of 1950. The Decree also formalized the demise of the parliamentary democracy in Indonesia and the beginning of the Guided Democracy formulated by President Sukarno. With the re-promulgation of the 1945 Constitution, President Sukarno regained his full executive power over the government and not merely became the nominal head of state as was prescribed under the 1950 Provisional Constitution. A Presidential cabinet headed by President Sukarno was formed with a number of uniformed men as members of the cabinet and at the same time, the civilian cabinet members were requested to dissociate their party affiliations and high civil servants were forbidden from joining parties.\(^{23}\) A Presidential Legislation Number 7/1959 on special requirements for establishment and simplification of political parties was issued by the Government which was followed by another Presidential Legislation Number 13/1960 on recognition, control and dissolution of political parties.\(^{24}\) The issuance of these legislations was a step further in the process of discharging the fragmented multi party system for the smooth functioning of the Guided Democracy where the emphasis was on the leadership and musyawarah mufakat (agreement through deliberation), not on basis of the majority rule. The presidential legislation annulled the Government Act issued in November 1945 on the freedom of establishing political organizations. Only 10 political parties left in Indonesia as the result of this new regulation: the PNI, the NU, the PKI, the Partai Katholik, the Partai Indonesia,
the Partai Murba, the PSII – Arudji, the IPKI, the Parkindo and the Perti. Other parties, the
PSII – Abikusno, the PRN – Bebasa, the Partai Rakyat Indonesia and the PRN – Djody,
failed to qualify as national parties. At the same time, the Government outlawed the
Masyumi and the PSI for the alleged involvement of some party leaders in the
PRRI/Permesta rebellion in Sumatra in 1958 through Presidential Decisions No. 200 and
201.

Having successfully reduced the number of political parties from more than 27
political parties into 10 legally recognized political parties, the Government decided to
introduce a National Front through another Presidential Legislation No. 14/1959 as the
backbone for the functioning of the Guided Democracy.\textsuperscript{25} It was an organization formed by
the Government as a representative body for all political groupings in the society headed
directly by the President. While the Dewan Nasional was established as a representative
body for the functional groups, later it was known as Golongan Karya, the National Front
was meant for the representative of both the functional groups as well as the political
parties. The functioning of Guided Democracy with a limited number of political parties
fused into a single platform in the form of a National Front had virtually made Indonesia
exercised a disguised authoritarian one-party system.\textsuperscript{26}

The imposition of the Guided Democracy by President Sukarno in which political
leadership was the main focus of this system failed to answer to the problem of political
instability during the parliamentary democracy period. With the extraordinary power in his
hands, President Sukarno acted beyond the expectation of the popular belief. Sukarno, a
man who had been hailed as the true leader of Indonesia failed to deliver the expectations.
His conception of a democracy with a leadership had gone wrong in which the democratic principles had been neglected and leadership, a dictatorial leadership, dominated Indonesian politics during this period. Political parties, which enjoyed full freedom in determining the course of political process in Indonesia during the parliamentary democracy period, lost their privileged to exercise this process under the Guided Democracy of President Sukarno. The domination of President Sukarno was so strong that once powerful political parties like the PNI, the Masyumi, the PSI or the NU could not do much to influence the decision making process. However, one exception has to be retained here that during this period, the PKI rapidly grew into the most powerful political party under the auspicious blessing of President Sukarno. The PKI used the National Front to mobilize supports and organize itself as the most popular political party of the day.27 At the same time, President Sukarno cut himself out of his long association with the Nationalist PNI and was leaning more towards the Communist PKI. Besides, the military, especially the Army, rose into the centre stage of power politics due to its displeasure over the functioning of political process run by their civilian counterparts. The middle way concept introduced by General A.H. Nasution became the justification of the Army’s increasing socio-political role in Indonesian politics.28 Thus, besides the emergence of a disguised single party system in the form of the PKI’s domination in the National Front, the Army’s political grip over Indonesian politics was ever increasing. It created two opposing poles in which President Sukarno stood at the centre. The mastery of a balancing act by President Sukarno over the two opposite forces of the PKI and the Army dominated the political stage during Guided Democracy period. His failure to keep this balance had led into his departure in a bloody coup in late September 1965. The aftermath of the coup saw the repositioning of the military in the centre stage of national politics.
3.5 The New Order or *Pancasila* Democracy Period (1966 – 1998)

Most of the Indonesians enthusiastically welcome the arrival of Guided Democracy in the hope that the new system would eventually bring about some improvements to their lives after their miserable experience with the liberal democracy. However, the high expectation put on President Sukarno and his Guided Democracy proved to be in vain since neither President Sukarno nor his Guided Democracy was able to turn the table around. Even though President Sukarno was partially successful in creating a stable political order in the period in the sense of the absence of any change of government by forcing the diverse political elements under his control and removing those who opposed him, but the ideological fragmentation and economic life remained in a bad condition. Besides, the ever-growing bitter rivalry between the Army and the PKI worsened the situation. And it was in this complicated situation that in September 30, 1965 a movement known as G/30S/PKI made a surprised and dangerous action for the nation where some members of the military associated closely with the PKI kidnapped and killed seven Army generals suspected of advocating the creation of the Council of Generals (*Dewan Jenderal*), as oppose to National Front, in the hope of controlling the country. However, this deliberate coup attempt was easily out manoeuvred by the Army under the command of Major General Suharto, head of the *KOSTRAD* (Army’s Strategic Reserve Command). The failure of the G/30S/PKI movement and the successful counter act launched by the Army to restore law and order became the landmark of what was later known as the New Order, as oppose to the Old Order under Sukarno.
The official banning of the PKI, arrest of the leftist ministers and the installation of an altogether new anti-communist cabinet by General Suharto made the Army the victor in the power struggle that followed the failed coup and further inserting the role of the military in politics. In a special MPR(S) meeting in March 1967 General Suharto was appointed as the acting president, relieving President Sukarno of his political responsibility as the Head of Executive. At the same time, Sukarno was forbidden to engage in any political activities thereby virtually curtailing his control over the government. The ageing Sukarno died on 21 June 1970 under house arrest while General Suharto continued to hold on to the office of President for the next three decades under the banner of the New Order and its Pancasila Democracy.

Having assumed full control over the government and making himself the President of Indonesia, General Suharto and his New Order had to overcome three different key problems: (i) to strengthen his own position in the political system; (ii) to decide on a political format for the New Order; and above all, (iii) to rehabilitate the economy, an issue that would legitimate or break his regime. The first problem was solved very quickly when in another MPR(S) session in March 1968, he was elected as a full president. This constitutional backing from the MPR(S) was not enough and had to be followed by acquiring the loyalty from the Indonesian military. To do this, General Suharto had to clean up the military from all Leftist or Sukarnoist leaning officers. With the power and position he had acquired, it did not take much time for General Suharto to successfully acquiring the support from the military thus giving him immense political support to continue his political agenda.
Having successfully completed the steps in asserting his position in the new political system, General Suharto embarked on resolving the second problem only realizing that an extra effort was necessary to press the new political format. The inability of the previous systems to provide improvements to the Indonesian people forced the New Order to offer its own concept of democracy that worked and that was capable of fulfilling its core objectives: a stable political order, socio-economic change and progress and an enhanced national unity. The political conflicts stemmed out of extreme polarization of political ideologies in the earlier periods forced the new regime to try to tighten its control over these diverse political forces by introducing a new system dubbed as Pancasila democracy based on the Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. It was hoped that the new system offered by General Suharto would work in preventing political polarization, disunity and conflict in Indonesia and finally would deliver the objectives of the New Order. The Pancasila Democracy to be created would be a democracy that is limited and that works.

Realizing the importance of political parties in playing a role as the facilitator in the acceptance of the polity by the people and by referring to the MPR(S) guidelines of 1966 which included the holding of elections and a “simplification” of the party system, the New Order found its way in securing more legitimacy and a democracy that worked while avoiding extreme political polarization, disunity and conflict. In his book, *The Army and Politics in Indonesia*, Harold Crouch argued:

... the government could operate more smoothly with the support of the party leaders, whose participation in Jakarta politics, it was hoped, would persuade
their supporters in the regions that their interests were not being neglected. By ensuring that the main political groups felt represented within the system, the government hoped to avoid the possible consequences of the alienation of important sections of the national community.33

While a one- or no-party system was regarded to be undemocratic, and a multiparty system was demonstrably polarizing the Indonesian party politics, the only choice left was to set up a two-party system consisting of a government party and a loyal opposition. The think tank of the New Order had floated this idea but the government rejected this radical change of a two party system.34 One primary reason of this rejection by the government was to avoid the possible head-on clash between the military and the political parties. Thus the Government finally decided that the electoral and party systems were to remain similar to the one in the Guided Democracy period of a limited party system. At the same time, the functional groups would work side by side with the political parties as stipulated in the 1945 Constitution while taking strong measures in keeping out the party leaders from indulging in adversarial politics that would threaten the political legacy of the New Order.

In view of the importance of political parties in securing legitimacy of the government, the Government decided that the functional groups, now known as the GOLKAR, to become the government ‘party’.35 Besides, in order to appease the Muslim community for their role in defeating the communist power the government decided to revive the Masyumi in the form of the Parmusi while taking a very close look on its leadership by not allowing the possibility of any traditional Masyumi leaders to hold any high party command. The Murba Party banned by President Sukarno was also resurrected.
The new policy proved to be very effective for the new government that when in the long delayed elections in 1971, the GOLKAR, along with nine political parties, the Partai Katholik, the PSII, the NU, the Parmusi, the Parkindo, the IPKI, the PNI, the Perti and the Murba, participated and subsequently won the elections with a massive number of 62.80% of the total votes, partly, but not only, because of government interference in the nomination process of party candidates and intimidation tactics. Yet, the NU, appealing to a clearly defined Muslim electorate, was not only able to maintain its following but even slightly to increase it, securing 18.68% from 18.4% in the 1955 general elections. Meanwhile, the PNI became the biggest loser in this election, securing only 6.93% from 22.3% in the 1955 elections. The Parmusi, the new face of the Masyumi but lacking of its traditional Masyumi leaderships, also lost miserably in this election with 5.4% from 20.9% in the 1955 elections. The loss of these political parties against the GOLKAR indicated the diminishing role of political parties in the New Order politics and the beginning of the dominating role of the GOLKAR in Indonesian politics.

With the massive win in the elections and the possible danger in sight that in the future elections the secular parties might be wiped out altogether leaving GOLKAR to face the Muslim parties in a two-way contest thus creating an automatic two-party system, the government decided in 1973 to implement the 1966 MPR(S) stipulation to “simplify the party system”. It urged the four Muslim parties (the Parmusi, the NU, the PSII and the Perti) to merge into a single party called the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (Development Unity Party, PPP), while the three secular parties (the PNI, the IPKI and the Murba) and the two Christian parties (the Parkindo and the Partai Katholik) formed the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (Indonesian Democratic Party, PDI). Thus even before the introduction of the
Political Law number 3/1995 on GOLKAR and political parties, the New Order government had succeeded in limiting the number of political parties into two, the PPP and the PDI, and one service group, the GOLKAR. This successful party fusion was the landmark of the New Order's quest of a limited and controlled party system.

The political legitimacy achieved by the New Order through general elections (1971 and 1977) further cemented their aims to create a new political system for Indonesia. Having successfully simplified the party system through the process of party fusion, the Government introduced a political law number 3/1975 on political parties and GOLKAR in the guise of accommodating the political participation of the masses. But instead of giving more freedom to the masses to participate in the political process, this law was full of discriminatory characteristics towards political parties while giving much favour to GOLKAR. The floating mass, the excessive power of the President over political parties, different status given to GOLKAR vis-à-vis the PPP and the PDI, the limitation on the rights of individuals to join political parties and the impossibility of any party formation in the future were the key characteristics of this political law. It gave a very limited room for the parties to act as agent of democracy. Besides, this political law formalized the regulations thus making it virtually impossible for the parties to win in the election.39

One room that was left open in the political law of 1975 was, however, that the political parties were given a freedom to adopt any political ideology except Communism. The PDI and the GOLKAR chose Nationalism as its core ideology while on the other hand, having different Islamic political parties as its constituent members and as an effort to gain the support from the Muslim community, the PPP chose Islam as the party ideology. It was
only after the Malari incident and the Tanjung Priok affairs in 1984 that the government decided to tighten its control over political ideologies. The New Order government that had launched itself in 1966 as an administration of non-political managers now began seeking to shape Indonesian society to match its own ideological vision. Having successfully presented the *Pancasila* as a framework for holding the country together and protecting the political status quo from the pressures of the extremes of militant Islam and Communism in the last few years, the Government decided to implement the MPR’s legislation in 1978 through a Political Law number 3/1985 that required all political parties and all mass organizations to adopt the state ideology, the *Pancasila*, as their sole ideological foundation, to reflect this in their party symbols, and to open their membership to all Indonesian citizens irrespective of their religion. The PPP, the only political party that chose Islam as its ideology and which had acted as the only real opposition to the government, affected the most by this Government ruling. With its party ideology and symbols neutralized, its role as an opposition to the government was circumscribed. This Government ruling further resulted in the homogenisation of the political ideology in Indonesian party politics in the form of the *Pancasila* democracy. Thus, the PPP membership, as well as that of other parties, was thrown open to any Indonesian.

The key difference between the 1975 law and the 1985 political law was that the political parties, and all mass organizations, had lost their privilege to adopt any ideology they liked and were forced to submit themselves to the will of the government by adopting the *Pancasila* as the *asas tunggal*, the sole ideology. Because opposing the adoption of the *Pancasila* as the ideology meant the dissolution of the parties and the organizations. The law indicated the end of ideological pluralism in Indonesian politics leading into a possible
one party domination in a homogenous political environment, an ideological hegemonic party system. Raj Vasil wrote in his book *Governing Indonesia* that the New Order, through its party restructuring programme and other actions related to political parties, was able to secure certain critical purposes as in the following:

a) It was able to severely limit the role, status and influence of political parties in politics and the polity;
b) It was able to secure the disbandment of political parties that had been driven mostly by the divisive and damaging forces of ideology, religion or regionalism;
c) It was able to dispense with the multiplicity of political parties and, for the future, to limit their number to a maximum of three – the GOLKAR, PPP and PDI;
d) It was able to ensure that political parties were led only by persons who were willing to cooperate with the government, administer their parties based upon the norms and priorities of the New Order and not attempt to involve themselves in mass political actions; and
e) It was able to make political parties depend substantially on government largesse for their financial resources.\(^{43}\)

The departure of Sukarno and the demise of the PKI for its alleged involvement in the failed coup in 1965 followed by the emergence of the Army as the victor of the power struggle during the Guided Democracy period brought Indonesia into a military dominated politics. The ascendance of General Suharto into the highest political office in the country marked the beginning of the New Order era in which development became the key word. The increasing role of the military, especially the Army, through the GOLKAR in the day-
to-day socio-political life in the Republic and the limited role of political parties in the
decision making process added to the bleak picture of party politics after its vibrant life in
the parliamentary democracy period. Following the concept of democracy with a leadership
introduced by President Sukarno in the form of Guided Democracy, the New Order with its
Pancasila democracy was the perfected form of this concept. Whereas President Sukarno
allowed the ideological pluralism, the General forced the ideological homogeneity in
Indonesia in the form of the Pancasila in order to avoid the experience of acute ideological
adversaries in the previous period. It was this decision to further limit the number of the
political parties into two, the PPP and the PDI, with one service group, the GOLKAR,
dominated by the Army that the New Order regime succeeded in curbing the freedom of
political participation and the creation of political stability in Indonesia for more than three
decades.

The New Order, besides relying heavily on economic performance, political
repression, managed political participation and ideological control in order to sustain its
growth while keeping the regime's legitimacy and stability, also rallied behind the
successful leadership of General Suharto. It was only in the 1990s, almost three decades
of its successful control over Indonesian politics, that the sign of a regime fatigue came into
sight. With the growing number of the young educated middle class started to question the
repressive nature of the regime over their political rights as well as the ageing leadership, a
wave of change became inevitable. The growing discontent among the middle class group
in the early 1990s, which led into the formation of two 'outlawed' political parties, Partai
Rakyat Demokratik (People's Democratic Party, PRD) and Partai Uni Demokrasi (Uni
Democratic Party, PUDI) was a proof of the weakening control of the regime over its polity.
The economic crisis in the late 1990s became the turning point of the situation. Economic development, which was the regime's foremost important source of legitimacy eroded quickly. Domestic unrest and sustaining public opposition towards the regime continued to escalate thus creating an unavoidable domino effect into multidimensional crises. Various safety measures had been taken by the regime to preserve its continuance in power but to no avail. Thus, failing to keep hold on the regime he had nurtured for over three decades, General Suharto finally bowed to the popular pressure by relinquishing his presidency in 1998 thereby paving the way to the building of a new Indonesia. With his resignation on 21 May 1998, the New Order regime, which was started in 1966 finally came to an end in 1998 after more than three decades of domination of Indonesian politics.

3.6 The Post-Suharto Period (1999 – Present)

According to the Constitution, if the President fails to continue his stay in office due to physical problem or other circumstances, the Vice-President should take over the position, assuming the role of head of executive. B.J. Habibie was the Vice-President when General Suharto stepped down from the presidency thus making him automatically the president of Indonesia. The change of guard in the regime, however, did not reduce the high public demand for reformasi (political and economic reform) in the form of a clean and democratic government based on the 1945 Constitution that would deliver economic improvement and welfare to the Indonesian people. Under this enormous public pressure, President B.J. Habibie was expected to deliver more changes in the government as well as political institution and participation. The result was the dramatic re-politicisation of Indonesia through greater freedom of speech and assembly, a thing of a dream for the past
three decades or more. New legislation allowing the formation of new political parties, promise of early general elections, alterations to the composition of the parliament as well as limiting the role of the military in the Indonesian politics were some important development in the new Indonesia beyond Suharto.

Freedom of speech and assembly enjoyed by the people after a very long period under repressive regime proved to be euphoric. With a new legislation on party formation and a scheduled early general election in sight, a legal basis was prepared for the people to form any political organization they like to express their political aspirations. In a very short period, after having only three political organizations for more than two decades, over 100 political parties had come up throughout the country. The formation of these political parties showed the emotional outburst, a political euphoria, of the people after being controlled under a very strict rule of a military regime. Since the *Pancasila* was no longer made to be the sole party ideology anymore, parties with different ideological affiliations came up and created a pattern similar to the party politics in the era of parliamentary democracy in the 1950s. Socialism, Nationalism, *Marhaenism* (Indonesian version of Socialism invented by Sukarno) and Islam dominated the party ideology. Communism, however, remained kept under the closet. Limited party system, and a possible domination of a hegemonic party during the later period of the New Order, was a thing of the past when these various parties surfaced. Thus forcing the government to adopt a multiparty system in Indonesia to accommodate these various aspirations.

The desirability of a multiparty system in the new Indonesia was very much in line with the norms of representative democracy where political parties become the agents.
Ideological pluralism in the heterogeneous society like Indonesia became the important phenomenon necessary to be accommodated. The 1999 general elections witnessed 48 different political parties competed against each other in the second most democratically administered election, the first to be the 1955 general elections where a number of political parties as well as individuals participated. The multicolour of Indonesia was represented in this general election where the result showed some similarity with the result of the 1955 general elections in which the Nationalist parties dominated the political stage while the Religious parties came close from behind. The only difference was the absence of the Communist party as another dominant player in Indonesian politics due to its disbandment in 1966. Two Nationalist parties, the PDI-P and the GOLKAR, secured big wins with 33.76% and 22.46% respectively, while three Religious leaning parties, the PKB, the PPP and the PAN, came not very far behind securing 12.62%, 10.72% and 7.12% respectively. Two smaller Muslim parties, the PBB and the Partai Keadilan (Justice Party, PK), and other fourteen parties shared the remaining of the votes. However, the absence of a clear majority in this election contributed to the speculation in the run up of the presidential election.

The general elections in Indonesia elected members of the DPR that automatically became the member of the MPR, the supreme political body in Indonesian politics responsible to elect the President, establish the broad direction of policy and change the constitution. Beside consisting the members of the DPR (500-member), the membership of the MPR (700-member) also came from the Armed Forces (38-member), the regional representatives (135-member) and the appointed group representatives (65-member, proposed by organizations representing religions, economic groups, ethnic minorities,
veterans, women and others). In contrast to the MPR during the Suharto regime in which half the members were directly appointed by the President, the new MPR was a much more representative body. Thus, although the PDI-P secured more than 33% of the total votes in the elections but lacking clear majority in the House, 185 seats, the door for the highest political office in Indonesian politics was still widely open for any candidate. And it was after some lobbying, negotiations, promises and double crosses, Abdurrahman Wahid (popularly known as Gus Dur), whose party, the PKB, secured only 12% of the votes and 51 seats in the Parliament, came from behind to gather the support of the Poros Tengah (Central Axis of Muslim Parties) and the GOLKAR, to capture the presidency, leaving Megawati Sukarnoputri of the PDI-P and her supporters disappointed.

The possibility of a similar scenario in the future election of the Indonesian president had prompted the idea of a direct presidential election. The proposed idea would direct parties participated in the parliamentary election to propose their presidential and vice-presidential candidates in a direct presidential election to be held after the parliamentary election. This idea was formalized in the amendment of the 1945 Constitution where it is stipulated that the president and the vice-president would be elected through a direct presidential election while at the same time, limiting the term of a president into two terms in the office in order to avoid similar experience of Sukarno and Suharto presidency where they had been elected as the President as long as they received the support from the House. Multiparty system and direct presidential election are two most important changes in the post-Suharto period as long as party politics in Indonesia is concerned. The Indonesian people are given choices to express their political participation
through available political institutions in a new democratic environment in Indonesia based on the *Pancasila* and the 1945 Constitution.

The long period of political oppression had finally over when General Suharto stepped out of his presidential office amidst loud protest and popular pressure from his people. The wave of change finally knocked on the door and a new Indonesia with a vibrant democratic life is spread ahead. Bowing to the popular pressure and as an effort to acquire legitimacy from the people, B.J. Habibie who replaced General Suharto as the Indonesian President, decided to open up the political valve for more freedom of participation by allowing the people to associate themselves into various political parties and organizations. The spirit of democracy has been brought back to life, reminiscence to the early experience of the Indonesian people with democracy. The multi-party system once experienced by the Republic in its early days has been re-introduced in an effort to revive the democratic principles. Besides, a directly elected head of executive will give more legitimacy to the government. These two features of a multi-party system with a directly elected head of executive become the most important development in the Indonesian party politics.

The introduction of a multi-party system in the post-Suharto period witnessed the revival of the political ideologies that long have been dormant during the three decades of the New Order rule in Indonesia. The following diagram explains this pattern of political current.\(^{49}\)
The above diagram explains the slight change that occurred in the current interactions of different political ideologies in the post-Suharto Indonesia as compared to the one occurred during the parliamentary period. The most striking difference was the absence of Communism and the emergence of Developmentalism as the political ideology in Indonesian party politics. Besides, whereas in the parliamentary Indonesia in the 1950s the political ideology in Indonesia was the melting pot between the tradition and the western influence, it is the exposure to the development in the international community that brought globalism as the common source of inspiration for these ideologies to flourish.

The development of party system in Indonesia has not been uniformed and smooth. There took place several changes in the party system throughout the history of the Republic. The struggle between political ideologies during the Dutch colonial period in the 1900s was disrupted by the short period of the Japanese occupation in 1942 – 1945. The absence of any political parties at the time of the proclamation of Indonesian independence
in 1945 due to the limitation of political movement and organization during the Japanese period resulted in mix responses from the Indonesian political elites. Sukarno responded with an idea of a single, revolutionary party system while the majority power in the new Republic preferred a more democratic flavour through a multi party system. At the end, the majority power in the new Republic won this struggle in which a multi party system was adopted in order to provide wider chances for political participation for the people in the decision making process. Besides, the idea of a single party system was in contrast with the spirit of democracy as stipulated in the Constitution, which guaranteed the freedom of political participation and assembly. Thus, the new chapter of a vibrant party politics in the history of an independent Indonesia began. Various political parties with their different political ideologies were revived. Religion, Nationalism, Communism as well as Socialism, which dominated the political movement in the 1920s and 1930s, re-appeared to play an active role in the struggle of power during the early years of an independent Indonesia.

The adoption of a multi party system in a parliamentary democracy Indonesia did not yield into a realization of a stable, legitimate and performing government. On the contrary, Indonesia witnessed the frequent changes of government at the Centre. The absence of a single major party to form a government and the failure of political parties to form a working coalition government due to their ideological adversaries became the major factor of this continuous problem of political instability. The democratically administered 1955 elections failed to deliver a responsible government at the Centre and on the contrary, it further widened the political gap between these political parties. The elections resulted in a weak government as well as weak opposition. The failure to create a stable, legitimate and performing government at the Centre resulted in the disappointment in the regions...
where various rebellions erupted and further disrupted the equilibrium of stability. At the same time, the military, especially the Army, felt totally disgusted with the behaviour of their civilian counterparts in managing the Republic. The elevation of President Sukarno as the head of state in a parliamentary democracy contributed to his disappointment over the system for his inability to control the functioning of the government. This complicated situation brought President Sukarno to make a drastic decision by declaring a national emergency in 1957 thus giving him the power to run the government with the full support from the military.

The declaration of national emergency in 1957 followed by the issuance of a Presidential Decree in 1959 brought an end to the parliamentary politics and the beginning of an era of domination of certain personal figures in Indonesian politics. During the 1959–1965 period, Indonesia witnessed the domination of President Sukarno whereas from the 1966 to 1998 General Suharto dominated the Indonesian politics. The issuance of the Presidential Decree in 1959 marked the beginning of the Guided Democracy period, a political concept introduced by President Sukarno to assert his personal ambitions in the national politics. With the military fully supporting him, he implemented his *Konsepsi Presiden* in which a democracy with a leadership was practiced while at the same time a different political game for political parties was played. Whereas the previous period witnessed the domination of political party in a multi-party system, the Guided Democracy under President Sukarno practiced a limited party system. Only ten political parties were recognized while the remaining political parties existed during the Parliamentary period were either to be outlawed or failed to qualify from the strict screening by the Government. Apart from the limitation in the number of political parties during this period, one
important development was the establishment of a National Front, a national body established by the government to accommodate the representatives of the various political elements as well as the functional groups in the society. And it was through the effective use of the National Front that the PKI, having enjoyed the blessing of President Sukarno, successfully organized its party structure and thus dominated the party politics during this period. Thus, the idea of a democracy with a leadership, which was initially meant to create a working democracy in Indonesian plural society, was trapped in the domination of the PKI in the national politics, making the limited party system into a disguised one party system. At the same time, the Army was constantly demanding a greater socio-political role in the national politics hence making it the sole opposing power to the PKI. This situation had created an atmosphere of a constant power struggle between the PKI and the Army. Meanwhile, President Sukarno was forced to play the balancing act to keep the stability in the government.

The increasing leniency of President Sukarno over the PKI proved to be a liability for his leadership. His failure to keep the balance resulted in the army take-over after the failed coup by sections in the military associated with the PKI on 30 September 1965. However, Sukarno’s departure did not bring to an end the idea of a democracy with a leadership. Although Sukarno failed to deliver his Konsepsi Presiden, his successor, General Suharto, was successfully perfecting the model and thus he enjoyed a long period in the office, 1966 – 1998.

One of the key failures in the implementation of President Sukarno’s Konsepsi during the Guided Democracy period was his inability to prevent the persisting ideological
conflict in the National Front. His idea of a NASAKOM (a blend of Nationalism, 
Communism and Religion) as the ideological foundation of the regime failed to take off. 
Thus, realizing the importance of an ideology capable of uniting the diverse political 
organizations in Indonesia, General Suharto decided to turn into the Pancasila as the sole 
ideological source for all political organizations. It was the success of this implementation 
of the national ideology and the strict control of the military over the functioning of the 
political process that General Suharto was able to control the functioning of the political 
system his regime had created. Besides, further limitation of political parties into two, the 
PPP and the PDI, with one service group, the GOLKAR, prevented the possible return of 
the political parties in dominating the national politics. The New Order under General 
Suharto created a perfected version of the Guided Democracy. The creation of an 
ideological hegemonic party in the form of a service group, the GOLKAR, cemented the 
control of the regime over the political process in the country. Besides, the increasing 
political legitimacy achieved by this regime through economic development further 
prolonged the lifeline of this New Order regime.

The economic crisis in the late 1990s and the increasing demands for wider political 
participation from the increasing number of the middle class group proved to a liability to 
the New Order’s reign over Indonesian politics. Besides, the reluctant approval from the 
military over General Suharto’s choice of a civilian vice-president in the sixth term as 
Indonesian president was an important factor to consider in relation to the departure of the 
New Order regime. Thus with key sources of regime’s legitimacy slowly eroding, the 
beginning of a new political order gathered a momentum. The domination of the GOLKAR 
as an ideological hegemonic party system during the three decades of the New Order was
finally over and an experimentation of a multi-party system in a democratic Indonesia began. The 1999 general elections gave an ample explanation to the nature of party politics in the post-Suharto Indonesia. With the opening of the political valve, various political groupings that long been oppressed by the New Order regime have re-emerged and re-dominated the political process in Indonesia.

The changing pattern of party system in Indonesia shows the delicate process of this nation in arriving at a democratic society. From an idea of a single party to a multi-party dominated politics in the early days of the parliamentary democracy of the Republic to a single party authoritarian and an ideological hegemonic party during the long reign of a civilian and a military regimes from 1959 to 1998, and then a return to a multi-party system in the post-Suharto period have shown the various stages of party politics in Indonesia. The important role of political parties in shaping the future course of the nation is unparallel if Indonesia determined to achieve a democratic society. The experience of opposing rivalry between political ideologies in the Republic as have been shown during the parliamentary democracy period should not be perceived as the factor that would lead into the breakdown of the nation but as a process to achieve maturity and political stability and legitimacy.
Notes:


22. Ibid, p. 94.

23. Yasunaka, op. cit., p. 35.

24. Kantapawira, op. cit., p. 96.


29. Ibid., p. 438.


32. Sundhaussen, Indonesia, p. 438


44. Crib, op. cit., p. 100.

45. Pasal 8 UUD 1945 yang belum diamandemen (Article No. 8 of the original version of the 1945 Indonesian Constitution). See Annexure – III for details on the roles of President and Vice-President.


49. Dhakidae, Daniel, Partai-partai Politik Indonesia (Indonesian Political Parties), Kompas, Jakarta, 1999, p. 36.