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OLIGARCHS, POLITICIANS, AND ACTIVISTS: CONTESTING PARTY POLITICS IN POST-SUHARTO INDONESIA

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In the discussion about the role of the oligarchy in Indonesia, particularly contentious disagreement has focused on the exact extent to which oligarchs dominate the country's political institutions. For example, Jeffrey Winters has conceptualized post-Suharto Indonesia as an "untamed ruling oligarchy," in which senior political office holders are "almost always oligarchs."¹ According to Winters, this is also true for political parties, where top positions are "disproportionately held by oligarchs or by actors who can capture significant oligarchic resources."² While Winters views political engagement as one of many options available to oligarchs, Vedi Hadiz and Richard Robison theorize it as a logical and inescapable consequence of the nature of oligarchy in Indonesia.³ For them, the Indonesian oligarchy *must* exert hegemonic influence through the state and its institutions. It "cannot rule from outside the apparatus of the state [...] in the same way it does in the United States."⁴ As a result, the post-1998 political establishment predominantly consists of a wealthy, rent-seeking mix of "former apparatchiks, military men, entrepreneurs, and assorted political operators and enforcers of Suharto's New Order—at both the national and local level."⁵ Opposition to oligarchic rule in Indonesia is consequently considered weak by these authors: Winters asserts that non-oligarchic elites can challenge oligarchs by mobilizing sufficient social capital, but rarely succeed in doing so; Hadiz and Robison, for their part, have described such opposition as

¹ Jeffrey A. Winters, *Oligarchy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). pp. 181, 189.

² *Ibid.*, p. 190.

³ Richard Robison and Vedi Hadiz, *Reorganising Power in Indonesia: The Politics of Oligarchy in an Age of Markets* (London: Routledge, 2004).

⁴ Vedi R. Hadiz and Richard Robison, "The Political Economy of Oligarchy and the Reorganization of Power in Indonesia," this volume, p. 38.

⁵ Vedi Hadiz, *Localising Power in Post-authoritarian Indonesia: A Southeast Asia Perspective* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010). p. 28.

"piecemeal."⁶ While Winters and Hadiz and Robison are the most important authors representing this view, other writings have echoed their sentiments in analyses of the growing dominance of money politics in Indonesian elections,⁷ the emergence of wealthy political dynasties,⁸ and the exploding costs of politics.⁹

This chapter critically reviews this assumption of oligarchic dominance over Indonesia's political institutions. Using the role of oligarchs in political parties as a case study, the chapter tests the above-mentioned assertion that oligarchs hold an overwhelming percentage of party leadership positions. It argues that while Winters, Hadiz, and Robison describe significant patterns in post-Suharto party politics, they overstate their point. Instead of a clear-cut hegemony of oligarchs over Indonesian parties and their affairs, there is an ongoing and fierce contestation between oligarchs and counter-oligarchic forces, in political parties as well as in other institutions. In this context, I propose an alternative definition of oligarchic actors in order to better grasp the degree of oligarchic influence in Indonesia. This definition also helps to highlight the operations of non-oligarchic forces whose influence is more than just "piecemeal." In doing so, the chapter does not intend to downplay the significance of oligarchic forces and interests. Their power is undeniable. Rather, it delivers a more comprehensive picture of the power distribution between oligarchic and non-oligarchic groups. Based on this picture, I offer an alternative interpretation of post-1998 power relations—one that goes beyond the focus on money as the "most vital power resource in Indonesia since Suharto's removal from office."¹⁰

My analysis is organized around three points. The first section assesses the degree to which Indonesian oligarchs have gained control over political parties. It finds that while a trend of oligarchization has taken place in the top echelons of some parties, the social capital owned by non-oligarchic politicians has prevented a complete oligarchic takeover. In addition, the section argues that intra-party oligarchization trends have been aggravated—if not caused—by Indonesia's dysfunctional party-financing system, which does not provide meaningful public funding for parties. In this sense, the analysis views oligarchization primarily as an institutional design problem rather than a path-dependent destiny for Indonesia. The second section further disaggregates the category of "oligarch." Identifying five different groups and subgroups of oligarchs, this segment pinpoints the diverse motivations that lead oligarchs to join parties—motives that go beyond the often-cited notion of "wealth defense." The third section focuses on the mobilization of counter-oligarchic forces in Indonesian parties. Besides long-entrenched party cadres who continue to challenge oligarchic newcomers, there has been a significant influx of reformist civil society elements into parties since the mid-2000s. As a result, the leadership and organization of Indonesian parties is more heavily contested than an

⁶ Hadiz and Robison, "The Political Economy of Oligarchy," p. 54.

⁷ Nankyung Choi, "Democracy and Patrimonial Politics in Local Indonesia," *Indonesia* 88 (October 2009): 131–64.

⁸ Michael Buehler and Paige Tan, "Party–Candidate Relationships in Indonesian Local Politics: A Case Study of the 2005 Regional Elections in Gowa, South Sulawesi Province," *Indonesia* 84 (October 2007): 41–69; Okamoto Masaaki and Abdul Hamid, "Jawara in Power, 1999–2007," *Indonesia* 86 (October 2008): 109–38.

⁹ Bima Arya Sugiarto, "Political Business," *Inside Indonesia* 87 (2006), at <http://www.insideindonesia.org/weekly-articles/political-business>

¹⁰ Winters, *Oligarchy*, p. 181.

exclusive emphasis on oligarchs would suggest. The chapter concludes by introducing an alternative paradigm of post-authoritarian politics in Indonesia that highlights the continued and multi-layered contestation for politico-economic power and remains inherently skeptical of accounts that prematurely declare victory for the oligarchic forces.

OLIGARCHS AND POLITICAL PARTIES IN INDONESIA

Any assessment of the extent to which oligarchs "rule" or dominate Indonesia's political parties is highly dependent on how "oligarchs" are defined. According to Winters, oligarchs "are actors who command and control massive concentrations of material resources that can be deployed to defend or enhance their personal wealth and exclusive social position."¹¹ Importantly, Winters clarifies that these resources do not necessarily have to be personally owned. Under this definition, popular politicians who attract sizeable donations from sponsors could also be classified as oligarchs, although they may not be themselves massively wealthy. Hadiz and Robison, on the other hand, describe oligarchs as actors who operate "as a system of power relations that enables the concentration of wealth and authority and its collective defense."¹² This definition is even less precise than Winters's, and leads them to describe the entire socio-political system as being collectively involved in oligarchic wealth politics. I propose to address this problem of terminological elusiveness by defining oligarchs more narrowly than either Hadiz and Robison, or Winters, as *actors whose primary power resource is the personal and direct possession of large amounts of capital*. This capital, in turn, is deployed to seek political and/or economic benefit. This definition captures the material privileges of oligarchs in political competition in a more succinct and effective manner, allowing us to focus on personal wealth—as opposed to the financial resources conventional politicians can attract when seeking or occupying public office—as the main political instrument of oligarchs. It also makes it possible to separate analytically personal control of material resources from other political resources, such as social capital, popularity, dynastic lineage, and intra-institutional connectedness.

The problematic nature of imprecise definitions of oligarchic actors is palpable in Winters's analysis of the Indonesian case. The main example he gives in *Oligarchy* for the power of oligarchs in Indonesian party politics is the rise and fall of Akbar Tandjung, the chairman of Suharto's former government party, Golkar (Golongan Karya, Functional Groups), between 1998 and 2004. According to Winters, Akbar was an oligarch who eventually lost out to an oligarch with more resources (Jusuf Kalla). Tellingly, however, even Winters appears doubtful about whether Akbar truly was an oligarch. At the beginning of his discussion, he refers to Akbar as a full "*pribumi* [indigenous Indonesian] oligarch."¹³ But as his analysis progresses, Akbar is first downgraded to a "middle oligarch" and, ultimately, to a "minor oligarch."¹⁴ Using the revised definition developed above, Akbar was no oligarch at all. He was affluent, but his wealth was too small to be a decisive political resource. He relied on his unrivaled political connections within Golkar instead. In fact, Akbar felt a deep

¹¹ Ibid., p. 6.

¹² Hadiz and Robison, "The Political Economy of Oligarchy," p. 37.

¹³ Winters, *Oligarchy*, p. 182.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 187, 189.

aversion towards oligarchs such as Kalla. Akbar lamented that "I have attended Golkar congresses since 1973—I have never seen Kalla at any of them."¹⁵ Rather than deploying his own limited wealth for party activities, Akbar "collected funds from sponsors, and when I traveled, I distributed them to the branches."¹⁶ Thus, Akbar's connectedness within Golkar was his primary political resource, which allowed him to attract funds that further consolidated his power. In other words, access to sponsorship funds was the product—rather than the source—of his political influence. In Winters's own terminology, Akbar is, therefore, more appropriately described as an elite actor than as an oligarch.

The classic archetype of an oligarchic party leader is Aburizal Bakrie, the current chairman of Golkar. In the early 1970s, Bakrie had joined the company founded by his father, and he managed to turn it into one of the country's largest conglomerates.¹⁷ While the crisis of 1998 hit Bakrie's interests hard,¹⁸ his company survived—mostly due to a very generous debt restructuring deal. Bakrie subsequently used his economic and political connections to gain access to lucrative coal mining licenses in the Outer Islands. As the price of coal increased drastically (it quintupled between 2002 and 2008),¹⁹ so did the value of Bakrie's shares. With his business flourishing, Bakrie decided to enter politics. In 2004, he unsuccessfully sought Golkar's presidential nomination, and then supported Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Kalla's bid and was rewarded with a ministerial post. During his time in government, Bakrie's businesses continued to prosper—in 2007, *Forbes* magazine ranked him as Indonesia's richest man, with a fortune of US\$5.4 billion.²⁰ Although his wealth declined drastically after 2008 as a result of collapsing coal prices, he nevertheless was able to use his political influence to protect his personal business interests. For instance, even though one of Bakrie's drilling companies caused the now infamous mud volcano of Sidoarjo in East Java to flood more than 700 hectares of densely populated land in May 2006, the government did not make Bakrie fully liable for the damage. While Yudhoyono required Bakrie to spend around US\$700 million to purchase the destroyed land, the government met all the long-term costs for land remediation and social assistance.

Having introduced paradigmatic examples of non-oligarchic and oligarchic party leaders, it is now possible to measure the degree of oligarchic intervention in Indonesian parties. One effective way of doing so is to establish the number of oligarchs who lead Indonesian parties today. Using this approach, and applying the revised definition above, we find the dominance of oligarchs is far from clear-cut: out of the ten main parties contesting the 2014 elections, five are chaired by oligarchs. The parties dominated by oligarchs are Bakrie's Golkar, Surya Paloh's Partai NasDem (Partai Nasional Demokrat, National Democrats), Hatta Radjasa's

¹⁵ Interview with Akbar Tandjung, Jakarta, February 11, 2008.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Richard Robison, *Indonesia: The Rise of Capital* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1986).

¹⁸ Richard Robison and Andrew Rosser, "Surviving the Meltdown: Liberal Reform and Political Oligarchy in Indonesia," in *Politics and Markets in the Wake of the Asian Crisis*, ed. Richard Robison, et al. (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 171–91.

¹⁹ David Strahan, "The Trouble with Coal," *New Scientist* 197,2639 (January 19, 2008): 40.

²⁰ "Bumi Row Threatens Indonesian Tycoon's Presidency Bid," *Channel NewsAsia*, 12 (November 2012), at <http://news.asiaone.com/News/AsiaOne%2BNews/Asia/Story/A1Story20121112-382895.html>

PAN (Partai Amanat Nasional, National Mandate Party), Prabowo Subianto's Gerindra (Gerakan Indonesia Raya, Great Indonesia Movement), and Wiranto's Partai Hanura (Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat, People's Conscience Party). These are cases in which the oligarchs' personal wealth has allowed them either to purchase the chairmanship of an existing organization or to establish a new party from scratch. Without these massive personal resources, it would have been impossible for them to play a significant role in politics. To begin with, Bakrie became chairman of Golkar in its 2009 congress, winning what party insiders described as a "bidding war" against his fellow tycoon and political opponent, Surya Paloh.²¹ The latter, a wealthy media entrepreneur who controls Metro TV, a leading news channel, moved on to found his own party in 2011. Hatta Radjasa, for his part, assumed the chairmanship of the National Mandate Party in 2010, replacing another oligarch, Soetrisno Bachir. While reporting a personal wealth of only 14.8 billion Rupiah (US\$1.5 million) in 2009, Hatta, an engineer by training and former president director of a drilling company, is widely believed to be involved in several oil firms that are not listed as his personal property.²² Prabowo and Wiranto, finally, founded their parties in 2008 and 2006, respectively, following controversial careers as senior military leaders under Suharto. Neither general possessed significant social capital (i.e., genuine popularity), so their wealth formed the most important resource in their bids for political power. Prior to the 2009 elections, Prabowo reported a private wealth of 1.57 trillion Rupiah (US\$157 million),²³ while Wiranto's officially reported fortune stood at 81 billion Rupiah (US\$8.1 million).²⁴

By contrast, the other five parties are led by non-oligarchic figures: Megawati Sukarnoputri's PDI-P (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan, Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle), Muhaimin Iskandar's PKB (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa, National Awakening Party), Suryadharma Ali's PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, United Development Party), Yudhoyono's PD (Partai Demokrat, Democratic Party), and Hilmi Aminuddin's PKS (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, Prosperous Justice Party). The primary political resource of these party leaders is not money, but diverse forms of social capital. For example, Megawati's primary power resource is her dynastic heritage and charisma. As the daughter of Indonesia's founding president, Sukarno, she was able to mobilize dissatisfaction with the New Order regime in the later periods of its rule. Having gained further societal support from that achievement, she went on to win the first post-authoritarian elections in 1999 and became president in 2001. Obviously, her massive popularity and electoral success attracted donations and other forms of support from oligarchs but this does not mean that she was or is an oligarch herself. Winters has described Megawati as a "hidden" oligarch,²⁵ without explaining what, exactly, that entails. Under the

²¹ Confidential interview, Jakarta, February 10, 2010.

²² Hatta led PT Arthindo Utama from 1982 to 2000, after which he formally left the oil business to become a politician.

²³ Prabowo's campaign was also supported by his businessman brother, Hashim Djojohadikusumo, who was ranked thirty-ninth on the *Forbes* list of Indonesia's forty richest persons in November 2012, with an estimated fortune of US\$750 million. See http://www.forbes.com/indonesia-billionaires/#page:4_sort:0_direction:asc_search, accessed October 18, 2013.

²⁴ "Total Kekayaan Wiranto Rp 81 Miliar," *VivaNews*, May 20, 2009.

²⁵ Jeffrey A. Winters, "Oligarchy and Democracy in Indonesia," this volume, p. 28 (Table 3).

definition offered in this chapter, however, Megawati is not an oligarchic actor in her own right. Similarly, Muhaimin Iskandar owes his standing within PKB to his lineage and personal links within Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Indonesia's largest traditionalist Muslim group. As the nephew of Abdurrahman Wahid—NU's leader in the 1980s and 1990s and Indonesia's president from 1999 to 2001—Muhaimin had significant advantages when he began his organizational career in NU in the 1990s. As chairman of PKB since 2008, he has attracted financial support from sponsors, but he cannot be classified as an oligarch. Suryadharma Ali, the chairman of PPP, is not an oligarch, either. Like Muhaimin, he worked his way up the ranks of NU-affiliated organizations before occupying a number of key positions in the hierarchy of his party. His appointment as minister in the Yudhoyono cabinet in 2004 provided him with patronage opportunities, but did not give him direct and personal possession of large amounts of capital.

Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Indonesia's president between 2004 and 2014, is also a non-oligarchic actor. Unlike Prabowo and Wiranto, Yudhoyono did not rely on massive capital resources to launch his political career. Yudhoyono's popularity grew rapidly in the early 2000s because of his well-crafted media appearances and his projection of a calm, measured style of politics that reassured an anxious Indonesian electorate. His unprecedented electoral appeal raised interest from oligarchs but Yudhoyono did not owe his rise to them. Winters describes Yudhoyono as a mixture between a full and a hidden oligarch²⁶—revealing both the difficulties inherent in his definition of oligarchy and its proper application to the Indonesian case. In the same vein, despite Hilmi Aminuddin's notorious predilection for brokering lucrative business deals, his rise in the PKS was not due to his ownership of, or access to, big bank accounts. Rather, he managed to establish himself as the undisputed religio-political authority in the party, building on his Saudi Arabian education, his founding of a Brotherhood-style movement in the 1980s, and his subsequent arrest by the New Order regime. Thus, to the younger generation in the party, he appeared as a battle-scarred leader with unquestionable religious credentials and a unique commitment to the movement. There is no doubt that Hilmi used his position to increase his personal wealth.²⁷ But as in the case of Megawati, Muhaimin, Suryadharma, and Yudhoyono, it was Hilmi's social capital that facilitated the mobilization of monetary resources. In clear-cut cases of oligarchic actors gaining political power, this relationship between social capital and money is reversed.

Nevertheless, the prominence of five massively wealthy party leaders—Bakrie, Surya Paloh, Hatta Radjasa, Prabowo, and Wiranto—highlights the fact that oligarchs have acquired half of the Indonesian party leaderships. This trend is the result of two key developments in Indonesian democracy since 2004. First, there has been a dramatic explosion of campaign and other operational costs for political parties. In the period between 1999 and 2004, Indonesia witnessed only one election for which parties had to mobilize financial resources. In the five-year electoral cycles since then, more than 550 elections have had to be paid for at both the national and local levels. In addition, the increasing professionalization of Indonesian elections introduced opinion polls, consultancy firms, and media advertisements as standard elements of electoral campaigning, replacing traditional in-house and low-cost

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ "Dari NII Jadi Godfather," *Majalah Detik*, March 3, 2013.

methods.²⁸ Second, Indonesia failed to develop new institutions and mechanisms to accommodate the costs of modern campaigns. While many advanced and new democracies offer significant state funding to parties in order to reduce the influence of oligarchs,²⁹ Indonesia all but abolished state subsidies for central party boards in 2005—ironically, at the very moment that political costs rose exponentially. Before 2005, the central boards of Indonesian parties received Rp. 1,000 (US\$0.10) per vote every year in subsidies. After 2005, that allocation shrank to a miniscule average of Rp. 108 (US\$0.01).³⁰ With costs increasing, membership fees non-existent, and donors mostly sponsoring individual politicians rather than party treasuries, parties turned to oligarchs as an easy and quick fix to their financial troubles.

It is tempting to interpret the abolition of state subsidies for parties as a conspiracy by oligarchs to expand their power. Indeed, the institutionalized financial weakness of parties is the *conditio sine qua non* for oligarchs who aspire to intervene in party politics. But the drivers behind the 2005 reduction in subsidies were not the oligarchs. Instead, the move was initiated by a peculiar coalition involving the Ministry of the Interior, the president's office, civil society, and public opinion. To begin with, the Ministry of the Interior—which manages the subsidies—had argued as early as 2002 that parties should not be funded by the state.³¹ This was despite the fact that the total allocation was a tiny fraction of state expenditure, and, by international standards, a comparatively small investment. There were also individuals in the presidential office—which holds the authority to determine the amount of money that parties receive per vote—who strongly advocated for abolishing the subsidies. Most prominent among these anti-subsidy advocates was Andi Mallarangeng, then President Yudhoyono's spokesman and highly influential domestic policy adviser. Justifying the 2005 presidential decree that cut the subventions, Andi said "parties should not be funded by the state—subsidies only attract political entrepreneurs who want to establish a party to make money."³² As a US-trained political scientist, his word carried significant weight in Yudhoyono's circles. Moreover, the majority of civil society groups opposed the subsidies as well, insisting that the money could be used more effectively for social development programs. Finally, most ordinary Indonesians also believed that the monetary flow between parties and society should be one-way only—that is, from the former to the latter.³³ Thus, the main institutional change that has benefited party oligarchs was

²⁸ Marcus Mietzner, "Political Opinion Polling in Post-authoritarian Indonesia: Catalyst or Obstacle to Democratic Consolidation?" *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 165,1 (2009): 95–126.

²⁹ Jonathan Hopkin, "The Problem with Party Finance: Theoretical Perspectives on the Funding of Political Parties," *Party Politics* 10,6 (2004): 627–51.

³⁰ Marcus Mietzner, "Party Financing in Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Between State Subsidies and Political Corruption," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 29,2 (2007): 238–63. While provincial, district, and municipal governments also pay subsidies to parties, their size differs greatly from territory to territory. Thus far, it has been impossible to calculate the total amount of subsidies paid at the local level. In any case, much of this money was quickly absorbed by local party boards trying to pay for the costs of local elections, and therefore could not be used to build strong central party organizations.

³¹ "Bantuan untuk parpol ditinjau ulang," *Media Indonesia*, March 26, 2002.

³² Interview with Andi Mallarangeng, Jakarta, September 28, 2006.

³³ In 2012, President Yudhoyono was reportedly prepared to reintroduce substantial state subsidies for parties, but then decided against it because his advisers warned him of a possible public backlash. Confidential interview, November 15, 2012.

not devised by them, but by forces that would later bitterly complain about the oligarchs' political rise.

Overall, then, a detailed assessment of the role oligarchs play in Indonesian parties delivers a more nuanced picture than Winters or Hadiz and Robison suggest. First, "only" half of Indonesia's party leaderships are in the hands of oligarchs, with the other half controlled by more conventional politicians with alternative political resources. Thus, key political actors are not "almost always oligarchs."³⁴ This in itself is not only empirically, but also analytically significant. It suggests that continued contestation rather than oligarchic domination is the main feature of power relations within Indonesian parties. Second, the trend of oligarchization in some party leaderships was fueled by the failure of Indonesia's institutional designers to respond adequately to the rising cost of political operations after 2004—the year direct presidential and local elections were introduced. Instead of strengthening the existing institutional barriers against oligarchic influence and erecting new ones, Indonesia almost completely abolished the most important of these barriers: namely, public funding for the central boards of political parties. Hence, the growing power of Indonesian oligarchs after 1998 was not simply the result of their being released from the shackles Suharto had imposed on them, as Winters suggests,³⁵ but was rather the consequence of a major institutional deficiency for which oligarchs were not responsible.

OLIGARCHS AND THEIR MOTIVATIONS: ONLY WEALTH DEFENSE?

The previous section demonstrated that portrayals of Indonesian party politics as being dominated by oligarchs are rather overstated. Equally important, however, is the fact that these portrayals do not sufficiently explore the differences among the various types of Indonesian oligarchs who engage in party politics. As a result, most authors representing the oligarchization school imply that all oligarchs who engage in politics are part of the oligarchy's quest to "rule." To be sure, Winters distinguishes between indigenous Malay and ethnic Chinese oligarchs, emphasizing that the former have focused strongly on "holding top party positions, and having strategic party affiliations,"³⁶ while the latter typically do not. However, the entry of the ethnic Chinese tycoon Hari Tanoesoedibjo into party politics in the early 2010s has shown that these distinctions are no longer as relevant as they used to be.

A more useful typology of Indonesian oligarchs—and a better understanding of their political involvement—can be drawn from analyzing their motivations for engaging in politics. For Winters, the overarching goal of oligarchic operations is "wealth defense," defined as consisting of two components: "*property defense* (securing basic claims to wealth and property) and *income defense* (keeping as much of the flow of income and profits from one's wealth as possible under conditions of secure property rights)."³⁷ According to Winters, in Indonesia, the primary focus of

³⁴ Winters, *Oligarchy*, p. 181.

³⁵ Jeffrey Winters, "Who Will Tame the Oligarchs?" *Inside Indonesia* 104 (2011), at <http://www.insideindonesia.org/feature-editions/who-will-tame-the-oligarchs>

³⁶ Winters, *Oligarchy*, p. 189.

³⁷ It is important to note that in Winters's model, political engagement is only one avenue for oligarchic wealth defense. The massive wealth of oligarchs allows them to pursue a wide range of alternative pathways. At the same time, Winters clarifies that not everything that oligarchs do with their money is related to wealth defense—they can "engage their material

oligarchs is on property defense, because secure property rights are not yet established. For Hadiz and Robison, the ultimate goal of (necessarily political) oligarchs is "the concentration of wealth and authority and its collective defense."³⁸ This excessive concentration on "wealth defense" distracts analysts from acknowledging the broad range of motivations that have driven Indonesian oligarchs into party politics. The development of a motivation-based typology of Indonesian oligarchs reveals that not all oligarchs are in politics for the purpose of wealth defense. In other words, there are a significant number of oligarchs who are not in the service of the "untamed ruling oligarchy" that Winters sees in control of Indonesia.

Five subgroups of oligarchs can be identified. The first contains politically active oligarchs who seek to advance their politico-economic interests by holding public office. In essence, this is the type of oligarch described by Winters as well as by Hadiz and Robison. Bakrie is the main example of this category. The other four subgroups, however, are not theorized by Winters or by Hadiz and Robison. The second subgroup features oligarchs who enter politics primarily out of personal vanity, spending much of their fortunes to gain recognition beyond the business world. In many cases, individuals in this group of oligarchs exhaust rather than expand their power while in politics. Sutrisno Bachir is one such case. A batik entrepreneur from Central Java, he was unknown on the national stage when he was elected to chair PAN in 2005. There are no indications that he profited financially from entering politics, but he could proudly proclaim that "now the president of Indonesia sometimes gives me a massage."³⁹ Indeed, after funding the party for almost five years, he had to watch helplessly as former chairman Amien Rais, a non-oligarch, pushed him aside in 2009 to take direct control of coalition negotiations with Yudhoyono.⁴⁰ Bitter, Bachir surrendered the chairmanship and left party politics altogether. Clearly, it is vital to separate tycoons like Bachir from oligarchs such as Bakrie—while the former are prepared to lose much of their money in politics, the latter are focused on personal wealth expansion.

The third category in the typology of oligarchs consists of wealthy entrepreneurs who seek to represent the interests of private capital as a whole. Representatives of business play a legitimate and important role in economic policy formulation in Indonesia, as in any other society. In fact, scholars of democratization have frequently credited entrepreneurial forces with attacking authoritarian state structures and promoting political liberalization in the name of removing hurdles to economic growth. While these theories on the link between entrepreneurship and democracy have been mostly developed in the Western European context,⁴¹ some authors have found similar patterns in East Asia.⁴² In Indonesia, a significant number

resources across a range of political issues about which they care deeply." Nevertheless, Winters's chapter on Indonesia is heavily focused on the political engagement of oligarchs as a key strategy of wealth defense. See: Winters, *Oligarchy*, pp. 6–8.

³⁸ Hadiz and Robison, "The Political Economy of Oligarchy," p. 37.

³⁹ Interview with Sutrisno Bachir, Jakarta, January 16, 2008.

⁴⁰ Bachir claims to have spent 180 billion Rupiah (US\$18 million) of his own money on the party in the first two years alone. Ibid.

⁴¹ Nigel Harris, "New Bourgeoisies?" *Journal of Development Studies* 24,2 (1988): 237–49; Barrington Moore, *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966).

⁴² Kanishka Jayasuriya, "The Political Economy of Democratization," in *Towards Illiberal Democracy in Pacific Asia*, ed. Daniel A. Bell et al. (New York, NY: Palgrave, 1995), pp. 107–33;

of business leaders have become active in party politics largely in order to voice the concerns of the business community rather than to protect their individual wealth. For instance, Golkar's Airlangga Hartarto, the chairman of AEI (Asosiasi Emiten Indonesia, Indonesian Association of Publicly Listed Companies), has been widely considered a competent representative of professional business interests in the parliament. Similarly, members of HIPMI (Himpunan Pengusaha Muda Indonesia, Indonesian Young Entrepreneurs Association) have joined political parties, and they have advanced proposals for further institutional change. Thus, while these entrepreneurs qualify as oligarchs simply because their primary political resource is capital, they differ vastly from their counterparts who use it to advance their personal interests and/or that of their companies.

The fourth group of oligarchs comprises opportunists whose primary goal is to make money from political connections. Unlike the massively wealthy tycoons of the first category who buy their way into politics, these second-rung entrepreneurs often seek political office first to gain funds as a basis for further self-enrichment. Once they have amassed sufficient monetary resources, they spin an ever-increasing web of connections that produces further wealth, eventually turning into brokers of state contracts and positioning themselves in the center of a vast patronage network. A good example of this kind of oligarch is Muhammad Nazaruddin, the former treasurer of PD and a legislator for his party from 2009 to 2011. Initially an unknown regional politician-cum-businessman, Nazaruddin offered himself to PD functionary Anas Urbaningrum as a fund-raiser in the mid-2000s. Promoted by Anas to increasingly influential party positions, Nazaruddin eventually controlled contracts worth hundreds of millions of dollars, mostly obtained through kickbacks and influence-peddling. At the time of his arrest in August 2011, the PD treasurer was under investigation for 131 cases involving five ministries and a total project value of 6 trillion Rupiah (US\$600 million).⁴³ While on the run and in detention, Nazaruddin laid out intimate details of his money-making scheme, through which he was able to enrich himself while supplying Anas with operational funds. In February 2013, Anas was indicted for corruption as well. In contrast to the second category of oligarch, the Nazaruddin-type operators are utterly indifferent towards politics as a way of gaining publicity. Indeed, taking a back seat and avoiding the public's attention is an essential key to their success.

The final but highly important category is located at the intersection between oligarchic and non-oligarchic actors. This category consists of politicians who run businesses to finance their political operations. These politicians are not oligarchs, since their command of personal funds is usually not their primary power resource and the businesses involved are too small to be described as oligarchic. However, the money generated by these enterprises is crucial in determining the politicians' standing in party politics. One example of this type of entrepreneurial politician is Maruarar Sirait, a deputy chairman of PDI-P. As the son of Sabam Sirait, one of PDI-P's most respected leaders, Maruarar always understood he would eventually pursue a career in politics. But he also knew that he would have to build up his own

Richard Robison, Garry Rodan, and Kevin Hewison, *Transplanting the Regulatory State in Southeast Asia: A Pathology of Rejection* (Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong, 2002); and Andrew Wyatt, *Party System Change in South India: Political Entrepreneurs, Patterns and Processes* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010).

⁴³ "Total Nilai Proyek 'Ditangani' Nazaruddin Rp 6.037 Trilyun," *Republika*, August 14, 2011.

businesses in order to fund his political aspirations. Pointing to his belly, Maruarar stated that "you have to take care of this before you go into politics; if you don't, you'll become corrupt—politics is expensive these days."⁴⁴ Mostly, such politicians leave their businesses in the hands of relatives or professional managers once they enter fully into party politics, drawing from the profits of their businesses to finance their political activity. "I know it's unavoidable, but I could get sick sometimes if I think about how much of my business earnings I have spent on politics," said Alvin Lie, then a member of the PAN caucus in the DPR (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, People's Representative Council, or parliament).⁴⁵ For this category of politicians with income-generating businesses, oligarchic "wealth defense" is not their primary goal—neither in terms of Winters's definition nor in the revised one offered above.

But even for those oligarchs whose most important goal is wealth defense, political interventions do not always deliver the expected results. Bakrie, for instance, saw his net worth shrinking from US\$5.4 billion in 2007 to below US\$1 billion in 2012.⁴⁶ Remarkably, this decline occurred during a period in which he became chair of Golkar, controlled several cabinet positions, and enjoyed a famously good relationship with Yudhoyono. Bakrie's case points to the circumstance that, at a time during which most Indonesian tycoons have their companies publicly listed in domestic and international stock exchanges, political power is no longer sufficient to protect them. Fluctuations in the world economy, changes in the price of key commodities, and bad business decisions can affect a tycoon's economic fate more decisively than the extent of his or her political access. In October 2008, for example, when the share prices of Bakrie's flagship company Bumi Resources plunged dramatically, Bakrie could initially use his political power to achieve a suspension of its share trade at the Jakarta Stock Exchange. But Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati immediately overturned the decision, causing Bumi's shares to fall further.⁴⁷ While Bakrie subsequently led a campaign against Sri Mulyani that contributed to her resignation from the cabinet, this did not protect Bakrie from similar declines in Bumi Resources's share values in October 2011 and throughout 2012. In neither of these cases did Bakrie get help from the state; instead, he had to enter into humiliating bailout deals with offshore and domestic investors. Of course, the inability of some oligarchs to defend their wealth through political engagement does not contradict the oligarchic model developed by Winters and Hadiz and Robison, but it is notable that discussions of such failures are almost completely absent from their writings.

In sum, not only do Winters and Hadiz and Robison overemphasize the influence that oligarchs have on Indonesian politics and the parties that shape it, they have also paid scant attention to the important differences *between* politically active oligarchs. Winters's description of the Indonesian case identifies wealth defense as the main motivation of oligarchs to engage in party politics,⁴⁸ while Hadiz and Robison's systemic view of oligarchy and their intense focus on the state assumes

⁴⁴ Interview with Maruarar Sirait, during a trip to his legislative constituency in Subang, October 22, 2006.

⁴⁵ Interview with Alvin Lie, Jakarta, December 8, 2006.

⁴⁶ "Bakrie out of Rich Men's Club," *Jakarta Post*, November 10, 2012.

⁴⁷ "Mulyani, SBY at Odds over Bumi Trading," *Jakarta Post*, November 7, 2008.

⁴⁸ Winters, *Oligarchy*, p. 189.

that political oligarchs are inherently involved in wealth defense.⁴⁹ The above analysis, however, has pointed to fundamental differences among the oligarchs who engage in politics. Indeed, it has shown that only two subgroups of oligarchs are in politics to pursue an exclusive agenda of personal wealth protection and expansion: tycoons such as Bakrie, who have a clear track record of intervening in the political process to gain financial benefit; and the political brokers like Nazaruddin, who develop patronage networks with the single goal of increasing their wealth. The other categories are more diverse, including tycoons who spend much of their fortunes to purchase a place in the limelight, entrepreneurs interested in good economic policy, and "traditional" politicians who set up companies to fund their political careers. While the first section has shown that the process of oligarchization has affected some, but not all parties, the discussion here has questioned the notion of oligarchs as a coherent political entity with the common goal of wealth defense.⁵⁰ In the following final section, the discussion turns to the counter-oligarchic forces in Indonesian politics that have challenged the increasing influence of money and tycoons over the political process.

COUNTER-OLIGARCHIC FORCES IN INDONESIAN PARTIES

Given their focus on the overwhelming oligarchic dominance over Indonesia's state and society, it is understandable that Winters and Hadiz and Robison downplay the significance of opposition to that dominance. To be sure, both Winters and Hadiz and Robison acknowledge the existence of oppositional politics that challenges the oligarchs—they just do not believe that this opposition is important. For Winters, "Indonesia has decisively moved in the direction of a ruling oligarchy as *pribumi* oligarchs have increasingly captured and dominated the open democratic process."⁵¹ Hadiz and Robison note the "widespread rise of reformist movements" but question "the larger transformative significance of these forms of oppositional politics."⁵² Ultimately, they contend, "incremental demands for reform by individuals or groups can only be piecemeal."⁵³ What is needed, by contrast, is nothing less than "the disintegration of the old order and its social underpinnings and the forging of a new social order with its political forces."⁵⁴

Consequently, Winters and Hadiz and Robison choose not to address the counter-oligarchic response by many civil society activists who have joined political parties since the mid-2000s. However, the influx of activists into parties is significant because it signals a strategic watershed in the relations between civil society and formal political institutions. Immediately after Suharto's fall in 1998, many reformist

⁴⁹ Hadiz and Robison, "The Political Economy of Oligarchy," pp. 36ff.

⁵⁰ While Winters recognizes conceptually that oligarchs can have diverse political interests and agendas, his work on Indonesia hardly engages with such intra-oligarchic differences. In *Oligarchy*, he introduced the *pribumi*-Chinese dichotomy as the only typological difference between oligarchs. As demonstrated above, there are many more fundamental differences among individual actors within the oligarchic category.

⁵¹ Winters, *Oligarchy*, p. 192.

⁵² Hadiz and Robison, "The Political Economy of Oligarchy," p. 54.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

civil society activists were reluctant to join parties.⁵⁵ Some activists insisted that it was the task of civil society to monitor the conduct of political institutions, not to become part of them. Others argued that the pro-democracy segments of civil society should found their own issue-oriented parties. But by the mid-2000s, both camps had to rethink their positions. The initial supporters of party absenteeism realized that their unwillingness to engage had surrendered the political arena to established elites, including oligarchic forces. At the same time, the camp that had favored the establishment of issue-oriented parties had to admit the failure of such parties at the ballot box—in the 1999 and 2004 elections, the combined vote share of those parties had been minuscule. As a result, both groups came to agree that joining existing mainstream parties was not only an acceptable option, but a necessary one. Veteran journalist and activist Daniel Dhakidae eloquently summarized the rationale for this move, telling a younger NGO leader in 2010 that “we can’t leave Indonesian democracy only to the hellhounds [*anjing neraka*], that is, the rich and powerful; if we want democracy to work, we must participate in its institutions.”⁵⁶

Of course, many Indonesian politicians claim a civil society background, and not all of them are interested in advancing a counter-oligarchic agenda. Thus, the pro-democracy activists discussed here are only those who have a strong track record in advancing a socio-political reform agenda that collides with the interests of established, affluent elites. By this definition, there were 37 pro-democracy, counter-oligarchic activists among the 560 national legislators in 2009—or 7 percent of the total DPR membership. Their number in key political party positions is more difficult to establish, but the influence of such reformers has been particularly visible in three areas: women’s affairs, labor issues, and human rights.

To begin with, some activists became concerned in the early 2000s that democratization could damage rather than promote women’s rights. For example, the proportion of women elected to the first post-Suharto parliament in 1999 declined to 8.8 percent, from 10.8 percent in the last New Order legislature of 1997.⁵⁷ According to women’s rights activists, one of the reasons for this decline was that low-profile female candidates were losing out to well-funded male candidates. As a consequence, prominent feminists decided to seek seats in parliament themselves. One of them was Nursyahbani Katjasungkana, the former secretary-general of the Coalition of Indonesian Women (Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia), who became a PKB legislator in 2004, and was later appointed deputy chair of the party. Once in parliament, Nursyahbani demanded more credible quotas for women in parties and on electoral lists.⁵⁸ Mobilizing women’s rights activists in and outside of parliament, Nursyahbani played a key role in the passing of regulations to that effect in 2008. The

⁵⁵ Mikaela Nyman, *Democratising Indonesia: The Challenges of Civil Society in the Era of Reformasi* (Copenhagen: Nias Press, 2006); A. E. Priyono, Willy Purna Samadhi, and Olle Toernquist et al., *Making Indonesian Democracy Meaningful: Problems and Options in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Demos—Lembaga Kajian Demokrasi dan Hak Asasi, 2007).

⁵⁶ Interview with Usman Hamid, Jakarta, November 30, 2010.

⁵⁷ Sharon Bessell, “Increasing the Proportion of Women in the National Parliament: Opportunities, Barriers, and Challenges,” ed. Edward Aspinall and Marcus Mietzner, *Problems of Democratisation in Indonesia: Elections, Institutions, and Society* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2010), p. 219.

⁵⁸ Interview with Nursyahbani Katjasungkana, Jakarta, November 25, 2010.

percentage of women in the 2009 legislature subsequently rose to an unprecedented 18 percent.⁵⁹

The continued pressure from women's rights activists in political parties led in 2013 to the exclusion of several smaller parties from the 2014 elections. For the first time since Suharto's fall, the KPU (Komisi Pemilihan Umum, General Election Commission) treated the stipulation that each party's national and regional boards must have 30 percent women as a binding threshold. Hence, when it announced the participants of the 2014 elections in early 2013, only parties that met the threshold were included. "We know that this is a legal breakthrough, but we decided in the KPU that this needs to be done to ensure better participation of women in parties, elections, and parliaments," said Hadar Gumay, a KPU Commissioner.⁶⁰ Besides being crucial in overcoming religious prejudices and antiquated social perceptions, the goal of increasing the level of female participation in politics also had a distinctively counter-oligarchic impetus. Women candidates have always found it difficult to compete with their financially stronger male counterparts. The provision of guaranteed positions on electoral lists meant that women could avoid paying large fees for their nominations—instead, parties actively sought female candidates. Some parties tried to circumvent the new regulations by including the wives, daughters, nieces, aunts, and other female relatives of male party bosses on their candidate lists. But despite this phenomenon, there remains sufficient room for reformist women's rights activists as well.

Women's rights activists were not the only counter-oligarchic forces to enter Indonesian party politics. Labor leaders also began to populate mainstream parties. While the former had been driven into party politics by the disappointing gender composition of the 1999 parliament, the latter changed their strategy largely because of the electoral collapse of the leftist splinter parties they had supported in 1999 and 2004. Thus, when parties such as Golkar, PKS, PKB, and PDI-P started to approach labor activists to represent them as legislative nominees in the 2009 elections, many of them were open to the idea. In her study on the engagement of trade unions in the local legislative elections in Batam in 2009, Michele Ford has described the remarkable extent to which labor union officials stood as candidates in the polls. In fact, their involvement was so extensive that the pro-labor vote was split among the many candidates, and eventually none of them was elected.⁶¹ However, some of their national colleagues did better. In 2009, for example, Budiman Sudjatmiko, a former leader of the pro-labor PRD (Partai Rakyat Demokratik, People's Democratic Party) and political prisoner under Suharto, was elected as a legislator for PDI-P. Other labor activists aligned themselves directly with senior party executives, particularly those holding high public office. Among them has been Dita Indah Sari, a labor leader also imprisoned under Suharto.⁶² Having run for parliament in 2009 for the Reformasi Star Party (Partai Bintang Reformasi, PBR), in 2010 Dita accepted the

⁵⁹ *Kompas, Wajah DPR dan DPD, 2009–2014: Latar Belakang Pendidikan dan Karier* (Jakarta: Kompas Penerbit Buku, 2010).

⁶⁰ Interview with Hadar Gumay, Jakarta, December 10, 2012.

⁶¹ Michele Ford, "Learning by Doing: Trade Unions and Electoral Politics in Batam, 2004–2009," *South-East Asia Research* (in press).

⁶² Max Lane, *Unfinished Nation: Indonesia Before and After Suharto* (London and New York, NY: Verso, 2008), p. 149.

invitation of PKB chairman and Minister of Manpower and Transmigration Muhaimin Iskandar to become his close aide and spokesperson.

Since the late 2000s, the increased presence of labor activists in party politics—and the generally improved organization of the workers' movement—has been reflected in better conditions for labor.⁶³ Most importantly, there has been a dramatic increase in the minimum wage in 2011 and 2012, with many governors and district chiefs giving in to the pressure of labor advisors in their political and electoral assistance teams.⁶⁴ In Jakarta, for instance, a 15 percent increase in the minimum wage in 2011 was followed by a whopping 44 percent rise in 2012.⁶⁵ Minister Muhaimin supported the shift, hoping to mobilize political support for his party. Indonesia's business elite, however, were furious. Sofyan Wanandi, the billionaire chairman of Apindo (Asosiasi Pengusaha Indonesia, Indonesian Employers' Association), launched a passionate campaign against the wage hikes. "The government forgets that by taking a populist decision, employers will suffer losses," Wanandi said, adding that "as a consequence, employers will have to lay off workers."⁶⁶ Wanandi was also highly critical of the increasing frequency of workers' strikes, which, according to Wanandi, cost Indonesian employers US\$100 million on a single day. But the labor advocates—some now deeply entrenched in parties and the bureaucracy, as well as in traditional grassroots movements—did not back down. In addition to the minimum wage increases, labor activists achieved key changes to the outsourcing regime in 2012. Importantly, they also managed once again to prevent an initiative to revise the country's 2003 labor law, which is widely viewed as one of the most worker-friendly pieces of legislation in the developing world.

Human rights activists have also increasingly joined political parties. Rachland Nashidik, for example, who led the human rights NGO Imparsial in the late 2000s, became a member of Yudhoyono's PD in 2010 and was immediately appointed the secretary of the human rights department. When making the decision to enter party politics, Rachland was fully aware that he would face an uphill battle against the country's oligarchic and conservative forces. "I had no illusions," Rachland said, "I knew that the political system is corrupt; but that's no reason to stay outside and watch [...] I wanted to push for small but meaningful reforms in human rights."⁶⁷ Based on Rachland's accounts, he appears to have been at least partially successful. As an NGO figure, he explained, "I would often call up a senior police or military officer to complain about this or that case, and if I was lucky, he picked up the phone; but he couldn't care less about what I said." Now, by contrast, "these officers have changed their attitude—they believe that there is a possibility, however small, that Yudhoyono could have instructed me to call them."⁶⁸ Obviously, Rachland has had to put up with a large number of oligarchic and anti-reformist figures in his own

⁶³ For a discussion of labor's involvement in the social security movement of 2010–11, see Edward Aspinall, "Popular Agency and Interests in Indonesia's Democratic Transition and Consolidation," *Indonesia* (October 96): 101–21.

⁶⁴ For an extended analysis of this link, see Teri L. Caraway and Michele Ford, "Labor and Politics under Oligarchy," this volume, pp. 139–55.

⁶⁵ "Massive Layoffs Inevitable: Businesspeople," *Jakarta Post*, February 22, 2013.

⁶⁶ "Apindo Says a 44% Wage Increase in Jakarta Means Lay-offs," *Jakarta Globe*, November 16, 2012.

⁶⁷ Interview with Rachland Nashidik, Jakarta, December 8, 2010.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

party—many of its members are affluent retired military officers opposed to any scrutiny of the past or present human rights record of the security forces. But the contest between reformers such as Rachland and the conservatives mirrors more general patterns in Indonesian party politics: rather than exhibiting features of domination by oligarchs, the political arena is contested by a variety of forces.

It is important to neither romanticize nor understate the role of counter-oligarchic forces in Indonesian parties. It would be inaccurate to suggest that the influx of reformist and counter-oligarchic elements into party politics since the mid-2000s has neutralized the power of oligarchic actors. Indeed, as long as Indonesia's party and campaign financing system remains unchanged, this is unlikely to happen. In a system in which the state does not provide substantial subsidies to political parties (and in an era in which party membership fees are small and declining around the world), parties are almost certain to turn to wealthy patrons for financial support. Thus, oligarchic influence on parties and policy-making is set to remain an inherent phenomenon of the post-Suharto polity. But it would be equally wrong to ignore the impact that counter-oligarchic forces have had on the dynamics of Indonesian politics. As the examples of women's rights, labor, and human rights activists have shown, counter-oligarchic forces have left a noticeable imprint on the post-authoritarian polity. Women's rights activists initiated measures that have reduced the economic and political marginalization of women, directly challenging the dominance of rich and well-connected patriarchs; union leaders have pushed through wage increases and worker-friendly policies, infuriating large-scale entrepreneurs; and human rights advocates have—for the first time—made their influence felt from within the system, increasing the scrutiny placed upon security forces and their individual officers. To ignore these successes would mean to overlook a significant segment of the political mosaic that is post-Suharto Indonesia.

CONCLUSION: OLIGARCHY OR PLURALIST CONTESTATION?

This chapter has tested the claim by oligarchy theorists that the post-Suharto polity is dominated by oligarchs (Winters) or an oligarchic system of power relations (Hadiz and Robison). Focusing on the role of oligarchs in political parties as a case study, the chapter has demonstrated that while oligarchic forces are strong in Indonesian parties, their influence is far from monopolistic. Using a more specific definition of oligarchs than the broad classification proposed by Winters and the systemic definition advanced by Hadiz and Robison, the discussion has shown that the current power constellation in Indonesian party politics is characterized by high levels of fragmentation, involving both oligarchic and non-oligarchic elements. Moreover, it has pointed to the diversity of interests pursued by oligarchs who engage in party politics. While wealth defense is the primary goal of some plutocrats, others not only refrain from using parties as an instrument of wealth advancement, but, in fact, spend much of their fortunes in order to satisfy their personal vanity or drive for publicity. Thus, the number and influence of oligarchs in Indonesian parties is not as overwhelming as suggested, nor are those who do engage in party politics necessarily part of a "ruling oligarchy" (Winters) or a "system of power relations of wealth and authority and its collective defence" (Hadiz and Robison). In other words, Indonesian parties witness both contestation between oligarchic and non-oligarchic forces as well as divergent agendas *within* the very heterogeneous class of politically active oligarchs.

Most importantly, the chapter has shed light on the operations of counter-oligarchic groups in Indonesian parties and legislatures. Women's rights, labor, and human rights activists have all left a noticeable imprint in the architecture of post-authoritarian party politics. Observers may rightfully disagree about the exact extent of their influence, but it would be empirically and analytically problematic to ignore or belittle them.⁶⁹ In addition to facing resistance from these reformist activists, oligarchs often have to compete with conventional politicians, branch leaders, religious figures, small-town entrepreneurs, student groups, and other elements for hegemony over party positions. Accordingly, an approach focused on just one kind of actor—even one as powerful as the oligarchs—fails to grasp the pluralism of players in post-authoritarian politics. In an attempt to redress this imbalance, this chapter has advanced an alternative understanding of politics after Suharto's fall: a paradigm that highlights the ongoing struggles among a wide variety of forces, with the outcome far from certain. The equilibrium between oligarchic and non-oligarchic forces in party leaderships is a reflection of the current balance of power in parties and in Indonesian political affairs more generally. Arguably, it is this equilibrium that has caused the current stagnation in Indonesia's democratic consolidation. On the one hand, oligarchic and conservative forces have not been strong enough to cause a democratic reversal (i.e., a roll-back of reforms that, in their view, have excessively empowered individual voters over elites); on the other hand, non-oligarchic elements have failed to advance further democratic reforms—their success in preventing a full-blown reversal of Indonesian democracy notwithstanding.⁷⁰

Besides adopting a pluralist interpretation of post-Suharto party politics, this chapter has also taken a distinctively institutionalist approach. In contrast to Hadiz and Robison, who downplay the importance of institutions, it has identified Indonesia's dysfunctional party system as the main source of the partial oligarchization of party politics. Winters appears to agree with this conclusion, stating that "except for countries where public funds are a major source of finance for political campaigns, finding the money needed to be a political contender is always a challenge."⁷¹ As Winters rightly notes, in Indonesia "no public funds are available and [...] small-donor funding is almost non-existent."⁷² In the vast majority of cases, parties that fail to provide significant state subsidies for central party boards tend to create conditions in which conventional politicians can't mobilize the funds necessary to compete for public office and thus have to surrender the political arena to oligarchs. It seems only logical, then, that the introduction of substantial state subsidies for parties could help in mitigating the oligarchic problem. Arguably, increasing the proportion of state subsidies *vis-à-vis* party expenditure from currently less than 1 percent to around 30 percent (as in other new democracies) would go a long way towards reducing the influence of oligarchs.⁷³ Therefore, the political taming of the oligarchs may not require the complete overthrow of Indonesia's social

⁶⁹ Edward Aspinall, "The Triumph of Capital? Class Politics and Indonesian Democratization," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 43,2 (2013): 226–42.

⁷⁰ Marcus Mietzner, "Indonesia's Democratic Stagnation: Anti-reformist Elites and Resilient Civil Society," *Democratization* 19,2 (2012): 209–29.

⁷¹ Winters, *Oligarchy*, p. 189.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Marcus Mietzner, *Money, Power, and Ideology: Political Parties in Post-authoritarian Indonesia* (Singapore: NUS Press/KITLV/Hawaii University Press, 2013).

order—as Hadiz and Robison propose—but it certainly necessitates a number of fundamental reforms to the way post-Suharto politics is financed.

For theorists of oligarchy, the findings generated by the Indonesian case suggest that any analysis of the power of oligarchs must focus on oligarchic *and* non-oligarchic forces in equal measure. Winters, Robison, and Hadiz deserve credit for highlighting an important feature of Indonesian politics—and political affairs in post-authoritarian states more generally. Indeed, oligarchic actors and networks are crucial elements of the story of Indonesia's post-Suharto transition and consolidation. But because Winters, Robison, and Hadiz focus so intensely on oligarchs and their support infrastructure, they lose sight of non-oligarchic segments of society. As a result, they are unable to measure the extent of oligarchic power against the influence of non-oligarchic or counter-oligarchic actors and groups. Theories of oligarchy can only grasp the social and political realities of a particular society if they refrain from exaggerating the power of oligarchs for the sole purpose of sharpening or strengthening a theoretical argument. In order to assess the degree to which oligarchs have penetrated a state's socio-economic and political structures, the resistance posed by rival groups needs to be explored in-depth—and not ignored or declared insignificant without proper investigation. With such an approach (one that balances the focus on oligarchy with an equally strong emphasis on non-oligarchic politics), the power of oligarchs—and the damaging effects it can have on democratic societies—can be theorized in a more compelling and empirically satisfying manner.