

Abstract of "Indonesia's Formula for Political Development in the 1970's "

ROMAN DUBSKY

The theme of this paper is the quest for a "formula" for political development in Indonesia in the present decade. It is hypothesized that, indeed, a fairly discernible pattern is present in Indonesia's political life and we shall attempt to identify and evaluate critically such a pattern. What type of political development does contemporary reality in Indonesia reveal and what are the chances for such development in the foreseeable future?

A major part of our inquiry will be an attempt to explore the impact on political development of certain economic and administrative reforms that have been recently introduced by the regime in power. In the context of our interest in comparative institutions, clarifications on the problems and the various forces and conflicts involved in Indonesia's experience in political development should allow us to perceive certain parallels in these respects with other developing countries, particularly in the Southeast Asian context.

There are inevitably certain limitations to our argument. It can only be tentative, not authoritative, because a substantial part of the paper involves projections, not facts. Moreover, historical distance separating us from the current conditions is perhaps insufficient to afford a more detached treatment of the subject. The danger of ideological bias always loom high when we ourselves are part of a continuing historical process.

Roman Dubsky is Assistant Professor at the College of Public Administration, University of the Philippines.

The concept of political development is unfortunately a somewhat elusive concept, not enjoying the definiteness of the definition of "economic development". However, most writers in development theory appear to agree on the main ingredients of this particular concept, such as national integration, rationalization of authority, international relations, and the like. Differences among them are perhaps not really of a substantial kind; rather, they are, in Almond's expression, "primarily the consequence of the level of generalization at which they are operating and the specificity of their definitions."¹

For the purpose of this paper, political development has been defined as a capacity of a polity to cope with new goals and demands, following similar definitions by Diamant and Eisenstadt.² And, we shall focus on two indicators that are, in current development theory, widely accepted for measuring the rate of development in politics in emerging nations: national integration and political participation.

Pre-1970 tendencies and motivations

The decade of the 1970's is, of course, inevitably rooted in the preceding past, covering the whole history of the Indonesian Republic since its establishment in 1945. We shall review briefly this period and the motivations of the ruling party, as these have been documented elsewhere.³

The year 1965 is a significant landmark, for this marks the first appearance of General Suharto on Indonesia's political scene and the establishment of the "New Order," *Orda Baru*, following an abortive *coup d'état* in October of that year. Effectively, this meant destruction of the old political alliance (based on Sukarno, the military and the Communists), physical destruction of communist influences and, later, the removal of Sukarno from actual political power. Replacing the old alliance, the military rose as the premier

¹Gabriel A. Almond, *Political Development Essays in Heuristic Theory* (Boston, Little, Brown Co., 1970), pp. 287-288.

²See for instance, Alfred Diamant, "The Nature of Political Development" in Finkle and Gable, eds. *Political Development and Social Change* (1968) and S.N. Eisenstadt, "Bureaucracy and Political Development" in La Palombara, ed., *Bureaucracy and Political Development* (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1963).

³For a more general treatment of this period, see for example, Peter Polomka, *Indonesia since Sukarno* (Penguin Books, 1971) or J.M. vander Kroef, *Indonesia since Sukarno* (Singapore, Donald Moore for Asia Pacific Press, 1971); also *Trends in Indonesia* (Singapore, Institute of South-East Asian Studies, 1971).

power in the nation, supported by the technocratic elite and by the students and the intellectuals (at least in the initial stages). Support was also forthcoming from a substantial portion of political elements, represented by political parties, partly as a reaction to political, social and economic instability of the late Guided Democracy era. In the economic sphere, there was in a sense a return back to the pre-Sukarno model for national development, based on conventional ideas of economic growth in close alliance with the international economy.

The reorganization of the party system—into a two-party system—advocated by radicals (students, technocrats), was rejected after some hesitations in favor of the traditional party formula, presumably because the regime was not strong enough to risk major confrontation with the established political parties. At the same time, purges of the parties went on, aiming at pro-Sukarnoist or pro-Communist elements. Steps were taken to keep political tempers in a low key—there were periodic repressions or manipulations of political activities—while party representation in the cabinet gradually declined to relative insignificance, the vast majority of cabinet posts being now in the hands of the military and the “politically neutral” techno-bureaucrats. The more radical Muslim *Masjumi* party, banned by Sukarno, was not allowed to operate, presumably out of fear of its becoming a power center for opposition against the regime in power. Instead, a new emasculated Muslim party was approved, from whose leadership, however, the old *Masjumi* leadership was excluded. In another tactical move, the formerly distrusted Nationalist party was again in relative favor, now to be used as a political lever against the rising Muslim power. Direct criticism of government activity was disallowed, although freedom of the press was not officially banned.

Thus, the early period of the New Order regime reveals tendencies to growing authoritarianism and radical increase in technocratic power, accompanied by steady erosion of political activity. It marks a process by which, in Feith's phrase, “the government has progressively rid itself of major centers of countervailing power,”⁴ thus monopolizing the political scene.

On the side of motivations, three principal reasons are usually given for the new leaders' anti-political stance. The first is their belief

⁴Herbert Feith, “The Political Economy Question Mark: Bureaucratic Power and the Slowing of Reform” (Paper presented to Monash Seminar on “The Indonesian Economy since 1966”).

or attitude about political activity which most army leaders shared. They believe that the liberal politics of the Western variety, the politics of bargaining, has socially divisive effects.

The second reason is the overwhelming concern of the new leaders for economic modernization or development. Determined to succeed, they would allow no obstruction to the new development ethos. Thus political frictions had to be prevented at all cost and political sensibilities had to be sacrificed, if need be, for the sake of economic efficiency.

A third reason is simply the personal interest of military leadership. They had managed to carve for themselves new social and economic power which now they would hardly be prepared to give up easily. This power, actually, went back to the Sukarno era, and to the so-called doctrine of Two Functions, on which the military forces were recognized not merely as the nation's "stabilizers," as agents of national security, but also as the nation's "dynamizers," as active agents in the nation's social and economic development.⁵ This effectively increased their hold on many aspects of the national economy, particularly the lucrative modern sector where they were working in close association with foreign capital investors.

The early 1970's

Political development of the early 1970's, roughly from 1970 till 1976, was in a way a continuation of the preceding period which we have described. The obsession with economic growth was still primary in the regime's strategy for national development. While, in the political sphere, manipulative, frequently repressive, methods continued. Political adventurism of the Guided Democracy variety was shunned, with preference being shown for pragmatic, sober and "rational" treatment of outstanding administrative problems.

In 1973, a considerable decrease in the momentum of growth created much dissatisfaction in Indoensia. Then from 1973-1974, turbulent student demonstrations and riots were held against the growing economic influence of Japan in Indonesia. There were also demonstrations by the Muslims protesting the proposed "secular" new marriage law.

The anti-Japanese demonstrations were the first great attempt under Suharto's regime to draw attention to the regime's excessive

⁵See Peter Britton, "The Indonesian Army: 'Stabilizer' and 'Dynamizer'" in Rex Mortimer ed., *The Illusion of Indonesia's 'Accelerated Modernization'* Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1973).

economic dependence on international economic giants. They were also an implied condemnation of massive corruption in public administration.

But, the Muslim discontent was perhaps an even more serious issue. Threatening to take a violent form and to spread widely, it compelled the government to come to compromise on the explosive issue of state-sanctioned marriage.

Then there was the humiliating experience of bankruptcy of Pertamina Company, the country's empire-like state enterprise based on oil, and its subsequent bailing out by a consortium of twenty Japanese banks.

During the early 1970's, party politics was subjected to new restrictions. Pressure was exerted upon the parties to conform to the government's overall requirements, while party representation in regional assemblies, was reduced to 50 per cent. A ban on all party activity was imposed in the rural areas after the 1971 elections.

Two events affecting political activity were of particular significance. The first was the creation of a pro-government "non-political" party under the name *Golkar* (a typical Indonesian acronym standing for "Joint Secretariat of Functional Groups"). This was a vast multiorganization, composed of "functional groups" (labor, farmers, women, students, etc.). Its formation was really an attempt to draw electoral votes in the 1971 elections away from traditional political parties while, at the same time, broadening the base of government's popular support. Its artificiality became evident after the elections when, having obtained a majority of the national vote, the government relegated it to a state of relative hibernation.

The second was the "rationalization" of the party system in 1973, along the lines of the two-party system proposed by political radicals over half-a-decade before. Viewed from the point of view of the regime in power, party merger was another device by which political activity was to be made more tractable. The various groupings of parties would be compelled to work in harmony and so chances for social concord would be enhanced. The simplification of the party system consisted of its reorganization into two large national parties, one Muslim-based, another representing the secular, nationalist *cum* Christian elements.

Despite such manipulations of the country's political life, the basic commitment of the regime to democratic political principles remained, however, unaltered. President Suharto himself would periodically reaffirm his belief in political democracy, rejecting

explicitly the idea of a dictatorship, including a military-based dictatorship. It is evident that he regarded the repressive measures on the part of his regime as aiming to protect the delicate fabric of Indonesia's democratic system. He did not appear to see any contradiction between democratic liberalism and his regime's authoritarian attitudes in the peculiar Indonesian setting. Throughout this period, he appears to have held the belief that, as he once put it, "Monopoly of power by whatever group is obviously undemocratic; it even kills democracy, as does dictatorship."⁶

political formula

The relative consistency of certain methods and attitudes in Indonesian politics in the early 1970's, indeed even before, suggests the presence of a fairly definable pattern. It seems that once a certain basic decision had been made in the early period of Suharto's regime, reality arranged itself into a certain pattern, following the logic of the original decision. The principal features of this pattern—the regime's political formula—may be identified as follows.

First, the centrality of economic development. The idea of modernization or *Pembangunan* (development), conceived usually in economic terms, has become the new ideology underlying official thinking.

Second, this is essentially an authoritarian political formula. Authoritarianism is justified by the need for efficiency and on the ground of a well-established tradition.

Thirdly, the formula lays emphasis on a strong bureaucratic element. This is, perhaps, not surprising because traditionally, the bureaucratic elite has been recognized as the leading administrative arm of the ruling authority. Also, being a relatively "neutral" force in political life, this elite is viewed by many as having politically the least upsetting effects, serving merely as a tool of a beneficial public authority.

Fourthly, the formula appears to involve an "alliance" of certain social and political forces or interests. The core combination in the regime is essentially a triadic relationship composed of the military, the techno-bureaucrats and the organized political groups represented by the parties.

Finally, a strong element of traditionalism is present in the formula. Traditional Javanese values are given prominence in running political affairs. The "consensus politics" and such

⁶Quoted in Louis Kraar's "trends in Indonesia" in *Trends in Indonesia, op. cit.*, p. 12.

traditional principles as *musjawarah* and *mufakat* are held to be the core of Indonesia's political as much as social life.

In all, this is an essentially "conservative" formula for political development. Certain modernizing elements have been inevitably added as the regime's commitment to a certain economic modernization has required.

The formula involved commitment to a certain economic orientation as well as a certain value orientation which may not always harmonize well with the desired development ethos.

Integrative and participatory capacities

The question that may be asked next is how the mentioned political formula contributes to political development. A critical review of our period suggests impressive achievements of our formula as an instrument of national integration and stability. The presence of relatively sustained economic growth and stability and the relative absence of more violent challenges to the regime in power indicates that fair stability or unity has been attained in this vast and potentially division-ridden country.

The new capacity to command and make effective the new development goals of the nation, however limited in scope, may also be regarded as an impressive achievement. This is in view of the fact that the administrative capacity of Indonesian governments has always been quite weak. In addition, integrative gains have been made on the side of overall constitutionally and legality.

On the other side of our equation, our findings in the area of participatory politics reveal an essentially negative attitude to political activity—the prevalence of depoliticizing tendencies. However, political activity has not been repressed altogether and party leaders have been periodically consulted on such issues as future state policy guidelines.

It may even be argued that the present low profile of the parties may be to their ultimate advantage at least in the long run, after *Golkar* will have exhausted its political usefulness and the old sins of the parties, to play divisive politics, will have safely receded into historical past. Also, with the increasing reduction, it not dismantling, of military involvement in the government, there may be new hopes for revival of a more vigorous political life.

It must, also, not be forgotten that there are other possible avenues for political action, apart from the parties, such as functional groups, even *Golkar* itself, whose political potential has

not yet been properly exploited, except for negative purposes.

The formula reveals, then, considerable progress on the side of political institutionalization and relative absence of more sustained dynamism on the side of political participation. This suggests a certain reduction of dynamism in Indonesia's political development, this operating now on a lower, presumably safer, level of political life.

To complete our argument, we must assess the impact on political development of Indonesia's May 1977 national elections and of recent economic and administrative trends. More radical shifts in political mood can never be excluded in a rapidly changing development setting. Thus one may raise the question whether the "conservative" orientation in political development during the first decade of Suharto's regime is the last phase in the story of such development in contemporary Indonesia. It is conceivable that "the present situation may yet be viewed as a period of "recouping" of forces, when a period of consolidation—here identified with Suharto's achievements in overall stabilization—becomes an important stage to the next leap in an 'upward' direction, when presumably the dynamic element will again be operative.⁷ If this speculation should indeed be correct, then a new dynamism should be effected in Indonesia's political life, which should in turn vastly modify or transform the original formula.

The 1977 elections

The May 1977 general elections, the Republic's third, indicate (at this early stage of assessment) certain basic affinities with the past as well as significant differences. We shall summarize presently some of the principal features that marked this memorable event in Indonesia's recent political history, as reported by domestic and international press.

In the first place, a certain political thaw preceded the elections. The ban on the participation of civil servants in political activities was lifted, although other restrictions, such as screening prospective candidates, remained in force. Occasional detentions occurred, particularly among more outspoken "fanatical" Muslims, out of fear that this might foment strong socially-divisive feelings. Criticism of certain issues that involved more fundamental tenets of the New Order, like *Panja Sila*, was forbidden. The balloting itself appears to

⁷See S. N. Eisenstadt, *Modernization: Protest and Change* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey Prentice-Hall, 1966), pp. 131-133.

have been a relatively smooth affair, although certain "irregularities", such as ballot rigging, were reported in several parts of the country.

The old manipulative methods in politics, at the same time, were not abandoned, but they were perhaps used less bluntly than in the past. One of the more subtle devices to sway the rural people to *Golkar's* position was to use the services of popular *dalangs* (puppeteers), who enjoy great respect particularly among the villagers and are often an effective instrument for spreading "popular wisdom" or other messages to enlighten the public. In this case, they were recruited to spread the development message of *Golkar*; and as before they were deployed by the government to explain new rice-planting techniques and to sing praises to the government's family planning program.

A significant difference from the old political style was the explicit identification of the New Order regime or *Golkar* with *pembangunan*, the development ethos. This was in sharp contrast with the 1971 elections where electoral issues consisted of personalist issues *plus* threats rather than rational arguments. And where before development was hardly mentioned, now the advocates of the regime's political line came out openly, and even aggressively, in favor of development. They charged other parties with failing to present a clear program for the nation's future. In the words of Emil Salim, a leading technocrat, "Twenty out of thirty years of Indonesia's independence were wasted by political bickering," to which he added that, "only in the last decade have people joined in development programs organized for them by the New Order. Development has definitely benefited the common people."⁸

A healthy feature in these elections was the presence of open competition. Practically all government leaders went out to the "field" to meet the people to explain and justify their positions.

Another significant feature of these elections was that, unlike in 1971, *Golkar* was no longer an artificial body organizationally speaking, a mere *ad hoc* creation to suit the convenience of the regime in power under pressures of immediate electoral needs. By now it had become a well-organized body with a reported membership of 1.6 million and more than 40,000 well-trained cadres, being also a highly disciplined body that seems to have a great deal of money to spend.⁹

⁸Quoted in David Jenkins, "Challenge to Golkar as poll nears," *Far Eastern Economic Review* (April 15, 1977), p. 14.

⁹Quoted in David Jenkins, "The Golkar road to victory," *Far Eastern Review* (May 6, 1977).

A few other points here appear of significance to the assesment of Indonesia's current political stNDING: One relates to the rather successful electoral tactics of the Muslim opposition. yhis effectively derailed the regime's strategy, concentrated on development, to another, namely, religious issue. Thus the regime's appeals to development were increasingly being weakened or undermined by "religious" appeals of the combined Muslim parties. This was not expected and put national leaders on the defensive. At the same time, this revealed the relative insecurity of the regime's ideology of development.

The outcome of the elections was somewhat disappointing to the government party which had been expecting to reap 65-70% of the total national vote. Instead, it received about 62% — slightly less than in 1971—while the representation of the Muslim United Party went up to about 30%. The Democratic Party managed to obtain about 9%. A blow to *Golkar's* pride was the losss of the metropolis Jakarta to the Muslims. STill, many observers saw this as a blessing in disguise, more likely to keep *Golkar* on its toes in the face of relatively strong opposition parties.

Viewed as a whole, the elections reveal perhaps more change in style than in substance. In the first place, this was essentially a legitimizing, not a democratizing affair. It may be viewed as a valuable means to provide a figleaf of legitimacy to the regime in power and to be a fitting curtain-raiser for the presidential election coming up shortly, which virtually eliminates opposition to Suharto, the current incumbent, and ensures perpetuation in power to top national leadership.

There are also other good reasons to think that the elections were not meant to involve, or are unlikely to involve, any more radical measures in the near future to alter the prevailing political conditions. One such reason is simply that national leaders, as they themselves frequently make clear, will not allow any serious tampering with the on-going development process. They would not be a willing party to the dismantling of the prevailing economic system, partly because they appear to be sincerely convinced that this is the best way to Indonesia's prosperity, partly because of their own peculiar, more personal interest in keeping such system going.

Another reason is that their suspicion of the motives and actions of political parties is unlikely to be abated quickly. Such suspicion, moreover, might have been vindicated by certain pre-election tactics of the parties. Once again, the Muslims have come out in favor of

their own *particular* interest, demonstrating considerable capacity for political mischief, leading to divisive politics. Such a danger could be conceivably amplified, particularly under a revived practice of political bargaining.

Conceivably, an alliance of discontent Muslims with, for instance, socially radical leftist elements, however unlikely at present, might well be forged, which could shake the relative stability of Suharto's establishment, if not destroying the New Order altogether.

Another important factor can perhaps be mentioned in favor of the *status quo* situation. This is the relative success of the existing political arrangements from the point of view of national leaders. From their particular view, the current style of politics based on "accommodation" must have worked rather well, preventing major de-stabilization in the nation. With appropriate modifications, therefore, the same style can serve also as the basis and the model for future political arrangements.

In sum, we have noted certain dynamic elements presented in Indonesia's politics during the recent electoral period. Can such elements, however, be sustained and further amplified? Political reality in Indonesia today does not appear to vindicate optimistic beliefs in an early major increase in development momentum.

New Directions

A Major challenge in Indonesia to development thinking in politics may come from other than directly political sources. It may come as a consequence of economic growth, of economic and administrative reforms or forces. Our findings indicate the presence of "new directions" in the nation's economy, having affinity with development in other Southeast Asian countries like the Philippines. The impact of such new economic forces on Indonesia's long-range political arrangements cannot be disregarded.

There has been, first, a considerable and sustained growth in the nation's economic product.¹⁰ The average annual rate of growth in GNP has been estimated to be between 7-8% or slightly over for 1968-1975. The growth in gross capital formation for the same period

¹⁰The source of the following data and argument has been mainly Muh. Arswad Anwar, *et al.*, *Performance and Perspectives of the Indonesian Economy* (Tokyo, Institute of Developing Economics, March 1976); particularly articles by Muh. Arswad Anwar, "Social Economic Development and Problems in Indonesia" and Marsudi Djojodipuro, "Industrialization in Indonesia, Its Problems and Its Future." An interim report published by the Kiel Institute of World.

was between 19-24%, which suggests considerable dynamism in the nation's economic growth, The GNP reached about US\$18.76 billion in 1975 as compared with about US\$7.45 billion in 1965, recording an annual growth rate of 7%. During the same period, per capita income is estimated to have risen from US\$89 to \$143 per annum.

There have been dramatic increases in budget expenditures (i.e.), from US\$8,454.1 million to US\$410,144.93 million for FY 1977-78. Inflationary pressures with price index (based on 62 commodities in Jakarta) soared up as high as 47% during FY 1973-74, but reduced to 13% during the first three quarters of 1975.

Arguably, such substantial changes in Indonesia's social and, ultimately, political life should affect the composition of the classes or lead to considerable shifts in class membership, apart from affecting the people's general outlook or values, perhaps away from strictly traditional attitudes to more "development-oriented" attitudes. There should be corresponding changes in the area of political values, it not of political practice.

Of more immediate interest to our argument are certain shifts that are taking place in the orientation of the economy. We shall briefly mention three such shifts in economic strategy that have made themselves increasingly left over approximately the last three years. One is the tendency to a more "nationalist" economic posture. The regime has increasingly explored the idea of economic "self-sufficiency," not only in rice production, but more widely. The new strategy has marked a shift from former emphasis on import-substitution to export-oriented activity, partly to increase the country's foreign currency capacity and so reduce the country's dependence on other countries.

The second major innovation has been the encouragement of dispersal in development, frequently referred to as "regionalization." Government budgets indicate dramatic increase in allocation for "local" development projects.¹¹ Even more, this strategy has been institutionalized by the establishment of a network of development agencies throughout the country.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the new strategy for political development in the 1970's, is the new thrust favoring small-

¹¹ For the period 1974-75, for example, total development budget outlays for direct support of regional and local development were to be increased by 344.6%, of which about one half was to be allotted for district development. During Repelita I (First National Development Plan), in the preceding period, about 17% of all development expenditures was allotted for regional and local development.

scale industrial development. Here, a considerable institutionalization has taken place and an impressive amount of credit has been distributed among what is frequently referred to as "economically-weak" enterprises. The government has also encouraged small rural enterprises through projects aiming at modernization of small holder's plantations.

The consequences of the strategies just mentioned, particularly in small-scale industrial activity, may have far-reaching impact on Indonesia's future social and political orientation. Indeed, the growth of a vigorous small industrial sector may herald the advent of a stronger middle-class element or small-ownership interest. But so far, it seems, the potentiality of this strategy for more basic social transformation has not been grasped. Once more conservative in his outlook, Suharto appears to think of the new economic measures as essentially rescue operations, to alleviate poverty or increase "social justice", rather than as a possible building bloc or a restructured society.

Economic "new directions" are paralleled with certain reforming administrative trends. The new reformist spirit in public administration is, however, not necessarily related to the substantial increase in 1976 in the number of public bureaucratic agencies or to recent attempts to boost the flagging morale of the bureaucracy (or perhaps to lessen the attraction of time-honored corruption practice) by substantial salary increases.¹² Rather, it is related to the regime's overall attempts at bureaucratic rationalization.

What is perhaps important at this stage is not so much the continued presence of such bureaucratic evils as "red tape" or corruption, but the awareness on the part of top bureaucrats themselves that these evils, and other evils, exist, such as a personalist style of conducting official business, a faulty communication system, excessive centralization, lack of coordination and the like.

On the other hand, the new bureaucratic trends may have certain reinforcing effects, making the bureaucrats disregard the political alternative. Paradoxically, the success in administrative reforms may have counter-productive effects on political development. Whatever these effects are it is clear the current trends in public administration

¹²The civil service population was increased from 1.5 million in 1975 by 300,000 in 1976. Recent salary increases ranged from 1,200% to 3,000% with the basic lowest salary about US\$29 and the highest US\$290.

are bound to affect the future of Indonesia's political development not to an inconsiderable degree.

Weaknesses

We are now in a position to appreciate the overall thrust of Indonesia's formula for political development in the 1970's. In summary, the formula is designed to accommodate the different social and political elements as the center of its political interest. The motivation behind the formula is a desire to bring about a lasting harmony of interests in Indonesian society.

Concretely, the New Order regime appears haunted by the specter of major divisions or conflicts in the nation, particularly along *aliran* lines, between the *santri* (orthodox Muslims) and the *abangan* (traditional Javanese) interests. More broadly, social and political conflicts might take other forms as well, such as a struggle based on new consciousness of social or class interests, which might well overstep traditional boundaries of a strictly *aliran* outlook. Thus the formula may be generalized: it is intended to keep the diverse social and political forces within the limits of political manageability to prevent major threats to the basic security and well-being of the state. This, incidentally, explains the use of such devices as merger, manipulation and cooption of party organizations, as a necessary instrument for the superior purpose of ultimate national unity.

From a critical perspective, the mentioned formula seems to reveal several major defects.^f The first is its relatively negative and static view of political life. This reflects partly the leader's traditional anti-party bias, partly it is the product of the new development ethos with its emphasis on efficiency and its tendency to bureaucratization in public affairs. Here, the "incompetence" or "irresponsibility" of politicians is frequently contrasted with the clear-headed professionalism of the technocratic elite. Although much criticism of Indonesia's party system is really to the point, particularly for its relative lack of positive response to the issue of development, it may be contended, that, on its own part, the regime is doing little to encourage a more constructive role for the country's party system. In fact, it may even be unwittingly reinforcing certain undesirable tendencies in party politics.

One instance of a negative political orientation is the tendency to manipulate political events to as to reduce popular demands (e.g., by prohibiting political activity in the rural areas) rather than to mobilize the human resources for social and political development.

The second major weakness of the formula is the authoritarian-paternalistic type of leadership which it involves. There can perhaps be many good points to such authoritarian arrangements in the Indonesian situation, but in the longrun this may have counter-productive effects if democracy is what is wanted, as it is claimed. With the military and their technocratic associates acting like self-appointed tutors of the nation, the likelihood of a more accelerated rate of growth in the direction of general political maturity or responsibility appears rather remote. Moreover, with the military so firmly in the saddle, the question arises about their willingness to go back to the barracks in the future, at the risk of losing some of their social and economic privileges.

There appears also a considerable lack of sensitiveness on issues of social equity or "social justice." This being an essentially economic formula, it tends to focus on such pet economic subjects as efficiency or productivity and to leave the ordinary people more or less out of the picture.¹³ Yet there has been considerable discontent with increasing poverty in the midst of relative prosperity, a growing concern with the gap between the rich and poorer classes. There have been, we have noted earlier, violent demonstrations against Japanese business in Indonesia, in favor of a less dominant role of foreign capital in Indonesia's economy and of greater "social justice" for the indigenous people. It is significant that these serious manifestations of social discontent have been frequently written off as provocations by irresponsible trouble-makers; and periodically the bogey of communist involvement has been invoked in support of the familiar subversion thesis. This is perhaps too easy an explanation of the real situation; at any rate, this makes the regime vulnerable in the long run, should social inequalities worsen. Here, by blaming the communists too much, the regime, when it fails to deal adequately with the social problems at issue, may weaken its own credibility or standing in the eyes of a critical public and may thus some day unwittingly enhance the chances and power base of this radical opposition, "by laying so many grievances at its door" today.¹⁴

¹³This has been a criticism which perhaps applied to most Southeast Asian regimes based on technocrats. As Richard Hooley has expressed this widely-held sentiment, "from the standpoint of social goals, the technocrats have made no more impressive record than their colonial predecessors." ("The Contribution of Technocrats to Development in Southeast Asia" in *Asian Survey*, December 1976).

¹⁴See Donald K. Emmerson, *Indonesia's Elite: Political Culture & Cultural Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), p. 250.

Another point of criticism is the weakness of the formula on the economic side. It involves largely a conventional model of development which has come increasingly under attack as perpetuating dependence of Indonesia on such economic giants as Japan or Western capitalist nations. We have noted, however, that present trends suggest a more nationalist economic stance, more emphasis on a balanced or evenly dispersed economic growth and new interest in small and middle-size local entrepreneurship.

Our last criticism is the weakness of the formula on the ideological side. The elevation of economic modernization to a position of an official ideology is unlikely to be a complete success in the presence of strong traditional beliefs and attitudes found among most Indonesians. At the same time, *Panja Sila* still remains the state philosophy, but appeals to it appears to be more a matter of lip-service than a solid spiritual commitment. This leaves a certain spiritual vacuum in a country where traditional culture manifests potent spiritual and symbolic dimensions and makes the success of the system almost wholly dependent on its economic performance.

Political involution

The findings of this paper suggest considerable constraints on the possibility of more sustained dynamism in political development in contemporary Indonesia. The relative lack of dynamism has been traced to several factors, such as we mentioned above. Of relevance here would be the somewhat limited presence of a solid middle-class element and, perhaps the slow penetration of modernizing attitudes that would have more meaningful content to the dominant ideology of development, encouraging more rational, less personalistic attitudes. Not insignificant is relative poverty of ideas on how to restructure the society, with the regime in effect only rehashing the old ideas. Indonesia's political development may thus be viewed as mere refinements of a time-honored political style and not involving a fresh and original political note.

This reveals great limitations of this formula of development. In a modernizing society, it is insufficient merely to keep reshuffling the actors or the institutions, while retaining the existing social and political structures basically intact. The old system may not get us very far if we aim at increasing its efficacy and responsiveness. It can develop only so much, after which point it may well become an obstruction to pressures for further growth which reflect modernizing tendencies.

This also weakens the usefulness of this formula for future applications. It may be that with growing prosperity and education, a new sophisticated generation will increase its demands on the polity, including political demands, which the formula will be ill-prepared to meet. Thus the problem of "modernizing" political reality in Indonesia remains really unsolved and is likely to last in the foreseeable future to haunt the regime in power as an ever-present issue, indeed escalating in proportion to the growing political maturity of Indonesians.

It is, then, evident that in a development setting, where rapid social changes may be desired an essentially conservative regime may not always be best to effect such changes. It may, even, become a dead weight in future attempts to bring about more fundamental transformations, if the dynamism of change present in national economy and in people's attitudes is not adequately matched by new political dynamism.

There are, of course, certain open options that could conceivably inject fresh momentum into a relatively stagnant situation. There is for instance, a place for a more positive or constructive attitude to political activity, which can involve experimenting with new forms of political representation, a place for more responsiveness to issues of social justice and equality, for a more dynamic pursuit of the new strategies of small-scale industrialization and regionalization, for more meaningful ideological commitment, to mention only some such options. Even the experience of other developing countries may well be explored, particularly in the Southeast Asian context, for possible comparisons with the view of improvement. In sum, what appears to be at stake in Indonesia in the 1970's, *if* a more dynamic and more modernizing approach to politics is wanted, is to advance from the traditional, essentially "involutional" model of political thinking to a new model, based on a more expansive view of human potentiality for political development and on more positive appreciation of political experience.