TOWARD INTEGRATION:
ETHNIC CHINESE MOVEMENTS IN POST-SUHARTO INDONESIA

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by

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to discuss a phenomenon in the reform era that historian Johanes Herlijanto called the Ethnic Chinese Social Movements in Indonesia. These movements began as independent reactions toward the May 1998 Anti-Chinese Riots and evolved into a series of social movements that call for the rights of ethnic Chinese as Indonesian citizens. The struggle indirectly reawakened a discourse regarding the position of ethnic Chinese minorities in the concept of Indonesian nationhood and nationalism, namely a discourse based on the concepts of assimilation and integration. This thesis will discuss how the Ethnic Chinese Social Movements have significant impacts in revising the understanding of Indonesian nationhood that was dominated by the New Order regime for 32 years.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Abdullah Fahrizal Siddik was born in Jakarta, Indonesia in August 15th, 1982. He came to the United States to attend a boarding school in 1998, the year Suharto's New Order government ended. He went to Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts and graduated in 2005 majoring in Asian Studies, where he wrote his thesis on the September 30th Movements and the purge of the Indonesian Communist Party from 1965 to 1966. After spending one year of internship in the Indonesian Mission to the United Nations and the Permanent Observer of the Organization of Islamic Conferences to the United Nations, he began his Master's of Arts program at the Department of Asian Studies at Cornell University in 2006. After completing his coursework he joined Cornell Institute of Public Affairs to pursue a Master of Public Administration in 2008 with concentration in International Development Studies. He is currently completing his coursework for his second graduate studies program. This thesis is to fulfill the requirement of his Master's of Arts in Asian Studies program.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Apkindo	Asosiasi Panel Kayu Indonesia (Indonesian Wood Panel Association)
Baperki	Badan Permusyawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia (Indonesian Citizenship Consultative Body)
CHH	Chung Hua Hui
DPR	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (People's Consultative Assembly)
GANDI	Gerakan Anti Diskriminasi (Anti-Discrimination Movement)
Golkar	Golongan Karya (Functional Groups)
INTI	Perhimpunan Indonesia Tionghoa (Chinese Indonesian Association)
Kalimas	Komite Aliansi Kepedulian Masyarakat Surabaya (Committee of Social Concern of Surabaya)
KKN	Korupsi, Kolusi, dan Nepotisme (Corruption, Collusion, and Nepotism)
KTP	Kartu Tanda Penduduk (Residency Identity Card)
LPKB	Lembaga Pembina Kesatuan Bangsa (Institute of Promoters of Indonesian Nationhood)
MPR	Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (The People's Consultative Assembly)
PAN	Partai Amanat Nasional (National Mandate Party)
Parpindo	Partai Pembauran Indonesia (Indonesian Assimilation Party)
Parti	Partai Reformasi Tionghoa Indonesia (Indonesian Chinese Reform Party)
PBI	Partai Bhineka Tunggal Ika Indonesia (Indonesian Unity in Diversity Party)
PDI-P	Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (Indonesian Democratic Party for Struggle

PKB	Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (National Awakening Party)
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party)
PSMTI	Paguyuban Sosial Marga Tionghoa Indonesia (Indonesian Chinese Social Association)
PTI	Partai Tionghoa Indonesia (Indonesian Chinese Party)
SARA	Suku Agama Ras Antar-golongan (Indonesian acronym for ethnic religious, race and inter-group conflicts)
SBKRI	Surat Bukti Kewarganegaraan Republik Indonesia (Letter for Proof of Citizenship of the Republic of Indonesia)
SIMPATIK	Solidaritas Pemuda Pemudi Tionghoa Untuk Keadilan (Chinese Youth Solidarity for Justice)
SNB	Solidaritas Nusa Bangsa (Homeland Solidarity)
THHK	Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan
VOC	Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (The Dutch East India Company)

INTRODUCTION

One of the most dynamic phenomena within the last ten years of post-Suharto Indonesia is what Chinese Indonesian historian Johanes Herlijanto calls "the emergence of Chinese Indonesian social movements".[1] This refers to a series of Chinese Indonesian activism to demand social, political, and cultural rights after being repressed for 32 years under President Suharto's New Order regime (1966 to 1998). These movements emerged not long after Indonesia entered a new era of democratic political reforms following President Suharto's resignation from office on May 21st, 1998.

In essence, these movements have been a collective response from the country's Chinese communities to a notion referred to as The Chinese Problem in Indonesia. Its definition is unclear, and its usage has referred to various aspects related to political, economic, social, cultural, and nationhood issues. The only clear understanding of the term is that it carries negative connotations regarding Chinese Indonesians in the eyes of the majority.

During the Suharto era, the term The Chinese Problem was used officially as a fundamental assumption for various discriminatory policies aimed at assimilating the Chinese into mainstream Indonesian society, which the government believed would solve the "problem". For the sake of assimilation, Chinese Indonesians were ordered to forego any practices associated with Chinese culture and adopted the local customs where they resided; at the same time they were not included in local and national politics, making them a politically impotent ethnic group. The New Order's anti-

[1] Johanes Herlijanto, "The May 1998 Riots and the Emergence of Chinese Indonesians: Social Movements in the Post-Soeharto Era" (Paper presented at the 18th Conference of International Association of Historians of Asia (IAHA), Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan, 6-10.12, 2004).

Chinese legislations, as these policies became to be known, legally discriminated against Chinese Indonesians in social, political, and cultural spheres.

On the other hand, Suharto's corrupt regime not only allowed the Chinese to prosper in the economic sector, which they have historically dominated, but also incorporated a select few of Chinese entrepreneurs to become financiers for key military officials loyal to the president, in exchange for government favors that allowed them to gain enormous wealth. Patron-client relationships between members of the government, military officials, and several Chinese entrepreneurs became one of the most scandalous public secrets in Suharto's Indonesia, further tarnishing the image of Chinese Indonesians as a whole in the eyes of the public. In short, within the 32 years of President Suharto's rule, the position of ethnic Chinese Indonesians in society was largely paradoxical for being an economically powerful but politically weak ethnic group, making them visible and vulnerable at the same time.

The Asian Financial Crisis that began in 1997 brought widespread social and political crises in to the nation that led to the violent end of the New Order regime in 1998. Violence broke out in major Indonesian cities about a week before Suharto resigned in May 21st, eventually spreading throughout the archipelago and continuing sporadically for the next few years to come. Some of the most remembered violent incidents in Indonesia were those occurring in Jakarta, Solo, and Medan from the 13th to the 15th of May, when mobs of indigenous Indonesians targeted the Chinese populations of the cities. Chinese houses and properties were looted or burned, while mobs targeted Chinese men to be killed and women raped. Although there were also victims of other ethnic backgrounds, this tragedy has become known today as the May 1998 Anti-Chinese Riots.

Although Chinese Indonesians certainly had been violently targeted before, the May 1998 Anti-Chinese Riots were arguably the most traumatic to the uneasy Chinese

and non-Chinese relationship in recent history. It was also a turning point for the minority group to rethink their position in society. During the Suharto era Chinese Indonesians advocated political pacifism as the strategy to ensure government protection from the hostile non-Chinese population and from government officials themselves. Chinese Indonesians also adopted, although reluctantly, the government policy of cultural assimilation to the mainstream indigenous population. Yet, after the violence in May 1998, Chinese Indonesians realized that three decades of government assimilation policy had failed them, and therefore it was time to adopt a new strategy.

The opportunity to do so came along with the coming of a new democratic era known as *Era Reformasi* or the Reform Era following the fall of Suharto in 1998. The new spirit of democracy encouraged formerly marginalized voices to reappear in public, partly as a celebration to the end of a repressive era. As a response, Chinese Indonesians once again emerged with their own social movements that promoted equal rights in social, political, and cultural spheres. Since then, equal rights for Chinese Indonesians has been a prominent issue in national discourse, gaining various responses from the government and the public, and has become one of the symbols of the new Indonesian democracy.

This thesis examines the contemporary social movements of Chinese Indonesians in order to understand the main motivation and thinking behind these movements, and particularly, the meaning of these movements to the identity of Chinese Indonesians. The central question of the thesis is the following: from the framework of nation building, toward which direction do these social movements tend to move. Do they promote Chinese rights on the basis that they are fellow Indonesian citizens that deserve equal rights as others? Or instead, do they instead promote their rights in order to strengthen their position as a distinct identity within Indonesian society, which can be described as an attempt to establish Chinese chauvinism. Based

on the author's research and analysis, the thesis argues that the general trend of these movements are dominated by forces that advocate Indonesian national identity rather than emphasizing ethnic group interests that may be associated with Chinese chauvinism. This conclusion is based on observation and analysis of the various forms of activism within the last ten years.

The generic term "social movements" may include any activity that the advocate defines as a means to promote Chinese Indonesian interests, including those conducted by a single person or those by organizations of various sizes and scales in social, political, and cultural spheres. It may also include the participation of Chinese Indonesians in all levels of domestic politics, as many refer to the action itself as symbolic in its own right. This thesis, however, primarily focuses on the newly-formed Chinese organizations, whom the author argues to be the primary agents of Chinese Indonesian activism.

The thesis argument favoring the nationalistic orientation of the movements is based on several indications found in current movements. The most important indication is the resurrection of a philosophical discourse from Chinese Indonesian movements in the past between two groups, namely the integrationists and assimilationists. This discourse emerged among Chinese Indonesian activists during the brief period of liberal democracy in the pre-New Order era in defining what it means to be an Indonesian and how ethnic Chinese could fit in that definition. Integrationists believe that ethnic Chinese should be able to maintain their distinct Chinese cultures while still being accepted as Indonesians, just like other indigenous ethnic groups in Indonesia. Assimilationists, on the other hand, believe that the Chinese are not indigenous to the geographical entity of the nation and thus must assimilate themselves to the indigenous culture and way of life. This thesis will further

explain the background of this debate and how each approach has its share of effect on the Chinese Indonesian community in modern Indonesian history.

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CHAPTER ONE

THEORETICAL APPROACH

It is important to have a clearer understanding about how the term "assimilation" is understood in the context of the ethnic Chinese Indonesian discourse. Oxford Dictionary of Sociology defines the term as "the process by which an outsider, immigrant, or subordinate group becomes indistinguishably integrated into the dominant host society" where "the subordinate group actually came to accept and internalize the values and culture of the dominant group." [2] What is not emphasized in the definition above is that in many cases the majority pressures the minority groups to undergo such process.

The majority's pressure for the minority to assimilate was apparent in American society in the early 20th century, which was a period of major immigration influx into the United States. In their book, Richard Alba and Victor Nee associate the "old formulation" of assimilation in American society with ethnocentrism as it "elevates a particular cultural model, that of middle-class Protestant whites of British ancestry, to the normative standard by which other groups are to be assessed and toward which they should aspire."[3] This type of expectations in mainstream American society at the time had "overlooked the value and sustainability of minority cultures and, in addition, masked barely hidden ethnocentric assumptions about the superiority of Anglo-American culture."[4] The American "old formulation" is an example of how defining assimilation in subjective manner risks the tendency to demean the minority's socio-cultural identity, a tendency that is also inherent in how post-independent

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[2] Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, "Assimilation," enotes.com, http://www.enotes.com/oxsoc-encyclopedia/assimilation.

[3] Richard Alba and Victor Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 4.

[4] Ibid.

Indonesian government and society defined assimilation toward the ethnic Chinese population.

However, what makes the Indonesian notion of assimilation toward the ethnic Chinese different from the American experience is not necessarily because Indonesians assume that their indigenous cultures are necessarily more superior to others. The pressure was more based on the notion that non-Indonesian, particularly Chinese, socio-cultural practices represent ambiguous ideological and political affiliations to the concept of Indonesian nationalism. In other words, the majority's pressure for the Chinese to assimilate is inherently nationalistic in character, which is in many ways the historical product of two series of events, namely colonialism and the Cold War era.

The colonial period should receive particular attention due to its major role in shaping the social settings in post-colonial nation-states. Certainly, colonial experience was not unique to Indonesia as all Southeast Asian nation-states were essentially "shaped" by the period.[5] It was also during this period when Chinese immigration occurred in large numbers and thus Chinese population began to grow throughout the region. Yet, one of the most interesting aspects about the Southeast Asian Chinese discourse is the fact that, in post-colonial period, different governments have imposed different policies regarding ethnic Chinese population in each country. The immediate question would be why this is the case. The answer lays in the different historical experience among the Overseas Chinese communities as subjects of different colonial powers in the past.

Scholars in the field of Southeast Asian Studies have categorized several types of interactions between the Chinese minority and the indigenous majority that

[5] Thongchai Wichinakul's seminal work *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-body of a Nation* a systematic explanation on the effect of colonialism to the geographical, and therefore psychological, establishment of modern Thailand and Southeast Asian nation-states in general.

occurred in different Southeast Asian countries. On the one extreme is the experience of the Chinese in Malaysia who are subjected to the government policy of accommodation. The Oxford Dictionary of Sociology defines the term "accommodation" as a process of interaction where "the subordinate group simply conformed to the expectations of the dominant group."[6] According to Vidhu Verma, Malaysia's accommodation policy is in many ways constitutional, as the constitution rejected "the model of a secular, pluralist Malaysia based on equal rights of all citizens by providing special privileges to Malays."[7] The Constitution reflects the reality of Malaysia's plural society, which is described by Verna as that in which "the public sphere is a space where ethnic and religious allegiances are dominant and remain largely unchallenged."[8] The constitutional categorization of social groups that enables the Malay-dominated government to adopt an affirmative action policy for "the economically backward" Malay majority is clearly a major legacy of the colonial period.[9]

On the other extreme is the experience of ethnic Chinese communities in Thailand, a nation that was never colonized by European power. Ann Maxwell Hill argued that the Overseas Chinese communities may have the most successful assimilation into Thai society as "with each successive generation, there are proportionately more individuals in this group who choose to identify themselves as Thai more often."[10] She continued, "this model of generational assimilation points

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[6] (Oxford Dictionary of Sociology)
[7] Ibid, 55
[8] Ibid.
[9] Vidhu Verma, *Malaysia: State and Civil Society in Transition*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.) 2002, 54
[10] Ann Maxwell Hill, "The Chinese in Northern Thailand: A Preliminary Perspective on Kinship and Ethnicity," in *The Overseas Chinese: Ethnicity in National Context*, ed. Francis L.K. Hsu and Hendrick Serrie (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1998), 47.

toward the eventual extinction of a recognizably Chinese community in Thailand."[11] Prominent scholar G. William Skinner in his definitive 1957 book describes the acceptance of the Thai majority toward the distinguishably ethnic Chinese citizens:

> "The only fourth-generation Chinese who ever identify as Chinese are likewise Chinese-educated. The implication is clear that without a Chinese education grandchildren of Chinese immigrants at the present time become Thai… It is an interesting feature of Thai psychology that no matter how strong the prejudice against "those Chinese," the Thai are never inclined to reject anyone of Chinese ancestry who speaks and behaves like a Thai."[12]

The absence of colonial power in the country's history, which allow the indigenous majority to always be the politically dominant group, may have a major role in the successful process of amalgamation between the ethnic Chinese minority and the Thai majority.

The case of the ethnic Chinese in the Philippines is more complex compare to those in Malaysia and Thailand and perhaps is more similar to those in Indonesia, since there are many sub-groups that may or may not be regarded in social terms as "Chinese." The Chinese's experience as Spanish colonial subjects was turbulent as they faced more restrictions from the Spanish colonial government compare to those living in other colonial territories.[13] However, according to George Weightman, "probably nowhere else in Southeast Asia – except in traditional Siam – was it more easy for the Chinese and their mestizo descendants to escape such restrictions and merge often as a new elite with the local society."[14] Furthermore, Weightman

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[11] Ibid.
[12] G. William Skinner, *Chinese Society in Thailand* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1957), 381.
[13] George H. Weightman, "The Chinese in the Philippines: From Aliens to Cultural Minority," in *The Overseas Chinese: Ethnicity in National Context*, ed.Francis L.K. Hsu and Hendrick Serrie (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1998), 70.
[14] Ibid.

continued, unlike the Peranakan Chinese of Indonesia, the mestizo children were considered as "Filipinos – legally, socially, and culturally."[15]

What about the ethnic Chinese living in Indonesia? As mentioned earlier, the main policy regarding ethnic Chinese was the policy of assimilation. What this study argues, however, is that the Chinese community in Indonesia have experienced a transition from the pressure to assimilate to a period that allow them to simply integrate with the society as a whole. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines integration as "incorporation as equals into society or an organization of individuals of different groups."[16] The importance of this definition is that it does not mention any specific criteria for the different group to be incorporated into the mainstream. This notion of integration began to appear in national consciousness in the dawn of the democratic reform era in May 1998, and it was this notion that becomes the central doctrine of the ethnic Chinese Indonesian social movements in promoting equal rights.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, "Integration," Merriam-Webster Online, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/integration (accessed October 2, 2009)

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CHAPTER TWO

ETHNIC TENSION: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

This chapter examines the history of the Chinese community in the colonial setting before the rise of nationalism at the dawn of the 20th century. Its primary aim is to explain the historical construction of long-lasting ethnic tensions between Chinese and the indigenous Indonesian ethnic groups known collectively as the Pribumi.

As Fryer and Jackson indicated, The Chinese Problem can be found elsewhere in Southeast Asia where it is "largely a compound of mutual lack of understanding, suspicion, and hostility."[17] What is unique about the Indonesian case, however, is that the notion has ultimately become an official term used in post-colonial government policies, some of which will be presented and analyzed in later chapters. The official definition of The Chinese Problem has never been clearly determined, but it is applicable to any negative connotation directed toward the Chinese. This reflects the intensity of ethnic tension in Indonesian society, and therefore it is important to thoroughly examine the history of this troubled relationship. By analyzing the history of the interaction (or lack of interaction thereof) between the indigenous and the Chinese community in Indonesia, one can see what the common themes associated with the Chinese Problem are, which are essential to fully understand the rhetoric behind the New Order regime's assimilation policy.

A Historical-Demographic Overview

According to Dudley Poston, Michael Mao and Mei-Yu Yu, by around 1990 there were approximately 37 million overseas Chinese in the world residing in 136

[17] Donald W. Fryer and James C. Jackson, *Indonesia* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1977), 259.

countries - 32.3 million of which, or eighty-eight percent, are located in 32 Asian countries.[18] Two thirds of the 32.3 million live in four Asian countries, in which about 7.3 million lived in Indonesia, 6 million in Thailand, 5.7 million in Hong Kong (now part of China), and 5.5 million in Malaysia.[19] Although the Chinese make only about 3 percent of Indonesia's population of more than 200 million, based on this analysis, Indonesia in the early 1990s had the largest ethnic Chinese population in the world outside China and Taiwan.

The geographic distribution of the Chinese population, however, is uneven throughout the archipelago. For instance, according to *The Encyclopedia of Chinese Overseas*, in 1998 the Chinese made less than 2 percent of the Eastern part of Indonesia's population, while being nearly one-fourth of the population of Bangka Island; in Jakarta they were estimated to consist about 10 percent of the population, in Medan about 12 percent, and Pontianak about 30 percent.[20] In terms of total numbers of Chinese population in Indonesia, the bulk of Chinese population has been on the islands of Java and Madura, even though the Chinese made only about 2 percent of the two islands' population.[21]

Who are the Chinese Indonesians as defined by Poston, Mao and Yu? Their definition is based on Wang Gungwu's studies on Chinese migration. Wang explained that the dominating type of Chinese migrants to Southeast Asian countries throughout history prior to 1850 is the *Huashang* (Chinese trader) pattern, characterized by male merchants and artisans who went abroad to set up businesses overseas.[22] The latter

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[18] Dudley L Poston, Michael Xinxiang Mao, & Mei-Yu Yu, "The Global Distribution of the Overseas Chinese Around 1990," *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (1994): 635, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2137606

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ng Shui Meng, "Indonesia," in *The Encyclopedia of Chinese Overseas*, ed. Lynn Pan (Singapore: Chinese Heritage Centre, 1998) 151.

[21] G. William Skinner, "Creolized Chinese Societies Societies in Southeast Asia," In the *Sojourners and Settlers*, ed. Anthony Reid (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), 99.

[22] (Poston, Mao and Yu 1994, 632)

types of migration include the *Huagong* (Chinese coolie) that predominated after 1850 until the early 1920s, and the *Huaqiao* (Chinese sojourner) pattern that predominated after the fall of Imperial China in 1911, which often consisted of well-educated professionals who greatly contributed to the rise of Chinese nationalism overseas.[23]

The Malay Archipelago has been a site of Chinese migration for centuries, prior to Dutch colonization of the archipelago that began in the early 17th century. As mentioned above, early Chinese settlers were mostly involved in trade, and by the time the Europeans arrived in the archipelago in the 16th century there was a significant amount of Chinese settlements around port cities, and even some rural communities surrounding the cities. The Chinese often took the role of *syahbandar*, or master of the port who collected dues and taxes for the ruler. Some became close to local rulers and became a part of the local government, converted to Islam, and intermarried with local women.[24]

Centuries of such interaction with Southeast Asian local environments gave birth to creolized Chinese societies, in which, according to G. William Skinner, "the cultural mix of Chinese and indigenous elements had stabilized into a 'tradition', including the use of indigenous-based Creole language influenced by Chinese grammar and lexicon."[25] This is certainly true to the Chinese in the archipelago particularly in Java, where the creolized Chinese communities became known as the Peranakan Chinese. This category is differentiated with the Totok Chinese community, referring to those who retain Chinese customs, traditions, languages, and affiliations with Mainland China. Totok Chinese include first-generation Chinese who migrated from the Mainland in the later period of Indonesian history or those who were born in the Dutch East Indies yet lived in an environment in which Chinese

[23] Ibid.
[24] (Meng 1998, 152)
[25] (Skinner 1996, 52)

socio-culture was maintained. Language difference was certainly one of the defining distinctions between the two groups, which directly related to the different educational orientations each group had and, in the early 20th century, their different political orientations. In general, Peranakans are the majority of today's Chinese population in Java, Bangka, West Kalimantan and West Sumatra, while Totoks dominate the rest of the Outer Islands of Java.[26]

As briefly described previously, the Chinese under pre-colonial native rule not only became a part of the multicultural society but also took a significant role in its government, indicating that ethnic tension was less of an issue at the time. Assimilation of culture and people was common not only among the Chinese but also among the Arabs, Indians, and other non-native settlers throughout the archipelago. In other words, pre-colonial Indonesian society cannot be defined as "a plural society" that characterized the later Dutch colonial period where colonial subjects were defined based on race or ethnicity. The latter would be the prevailing social system in the colonial Dutch East Indies, by which the Indonesian archipelago came to be known, until the Japanese invasion in 1942.

Colonial Rule and Ethnic Chinese Economic Dominance

It is very likely that the natives' resentment against the Chinese had its roots in the Dutch colonial period. According to George Kahin, the establishment of the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC) or The Dutch East India Company's power in the archipelago, particularly in Java, expanded the scope of the Chinese role in the region's economic activity.[27] The Dutch East India Company was founded in 1602 and ruled its Indonesian colonies until its bankruptcy in 1799, when the

[26] (Fryer and Jackson 1977, 260)
[27] George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1952), 8.

administration of colonial territories was taken over by the Dutch government. The colonial territory would expand and reach its full extent in the early 20th century.

The VOC's primary objective was to maximize profit in the export-import trade.[28] In the early years, the prized commodities were spices from the Moluccas, a small archipelago known as the Spice Islands in the West. Over time, the Company exploited local resources to produce the most sought after commodities in the European and global market including coffee, pepper and nutmeg. In order to do so, it was required for the Company to intervene in local politics in order to ensure agreements with local rulers that suited with its interests and to eliminate competitors consisting of Javanese, Arab, Chinese and non-Dutch European traders.[29]

Dutch colonial rule rearranged Indonesian social structure as a means to gain political and, ultimately, economic control. In the VOC period, social reconstruction was conducted primarily in Java, where the Company created a hierarchic political system with the Dutch at the top of the hierarchy. The next most powerful positions were dominated by selected native aristocrats (known in Java as the Priyayi, referring to the native class who worked as government bureaucrats) assigned to rule VOC-controlled territories; in the later period, a few positions were granted to Chinese community leaders. But the expansion of Chinese economic power was made possible due to the Dutch's favor to incorporate them as primary agents of the colonial economic system. The Company was only interested in the wholesale trade with China, leaving domestic retail trade to the Chinese in Java. The latter became "intermediaries" between the Company and the indigenous population[30] particularly as tax collectors for the Dutch.[31] Over time, from the seventeenth to the twentieth

[28] (Fryer and Jackson 1977, 56)
[29] (Kahin 1952, 3)
[30] Ibid, 8
[31] Adam Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000), 102.

century, the Dutch eventually allowed the Chinese to occupy the roles that they themselves could not fill.[32]

The economic importance of the Chinese, particularly in the urban setting, is reflected in the story of Batavia, which served as the Company's headquarter, the center of Dutch colonial government starting from 1800 and, one and a half centuries later, became the capital of Indonesia. In 1619, Jan Pieterszoon Coen of the VOC decided to build a new harbor to rival the Sultanate of Banten and selected a native settlement named Jayakarta to the Sultanate's east. The port city was named Batavia and became a major trading port for trade with China. Batavia itself was built primarily by Chinese laborers and its economic activities began primarily with Chinese retail commerce; soon the city became the site for the largest Chinese community in Java.[33] Chinese settlers became the city's shopkeepers, merchants, and contractors of the city; some also lived as peasants outside the city's walls and produced food stocks for the inner city's population. Batavia was primarily a Chinese city as the Chinese consisted of one half of the total population.

The VOC implemented a similar model to other territories that came under their rule; the Chinese were given the permission to monopolize various sectors such as collecting road tolls and charging bazaar fees. Given almost complete control of Java's internal commerce in both urban and rural settings, the expansion of Chinese economic power practically marginalized the indigenous population. In urban areas, Chinese merchants' economic power supported by colonial policies led to the disappearance of the once-flourishing pre-colonial Javanese merchant class.[34]

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[32] G. William Skinner, "The Chinese Minority," in *Indonesia*, ed. Ruth McVey (New Haven: Southeast Asian Studies, Yale University, 1963), 98.
[33] (Meng 1998, 152)
[34] (Kahin 1952, 3)

Another colonial policy had a major effect in the rural areas where landlords had to collect taxes or tolls from local peasants to pay to the government. Landlords made their profit by charging the peasants an amount above the government quota. The Chinese soon dominated this activity after the colonial administration as well as native landlords leased them the political and economic authority over a certain area consisting of villages or districts for an agreed period of time in a system known as "revenue farming".[35]

The Chinese maintained their position when the colonies were taken over by the Dutch government. In the turn of the 19th century, a production boom of exported cash crops occurred not only in Java but also in Sumatra with the exportation of rubber, and in Celebes with the exportation of copra. Many Chinese entrepreneurs gained opportunity due to their long-term credit relationship with indebted peasants, enabling them to buy cash crops at monopolized-market price before selling them to the international market with much higher price.[36]

This social inequality illustrates the dominating economic power of the Chinese over the native population during the colonial period. What should be noted is that the Chinese, as intermediaries between the natives and the Dutch, became the most visible economic oppressors in the eyes of the native majority. Indeed, the Chinese economic domination became one of the defining themes of The Chinese Problem in modern Indonesia.

Colonial Rule and the Construction of Identity

Aside from the Chinese and the Dutch, there were two other major groups of foreigners in the archipelago - namely the Arabs and the Indians. Under either the

[35] (Meng 1998, 192)
[36] (Kahin 1952, 22)

VOC or surviving native rulers such as the Banten Sultanate and the Kingdom of Mataram, foreign population were always organized into groups led by their own headmen, who were responsible to collect taxes and manage the behavior of their community. These headmen were given the title Kapitan; thus the Arab, Indian, and Chinese communities all had their own respective Kapitan in almost every major city where they resided. What the native rulers did not do, however, was segregate the interaction between groups and categorize each of them under racial or ethnic terms, where each ethnic group had its own position under colonial law and hierarchic structure of society. This colonial policy left another major legacy to ethnic tensions in post-colonial Indonesia as the root of the construction of Pribumi versus non-Pribumi categories - a crucial dichotomy during the 20th century Indonesian New Order regime.

The fact that economic privileges were granted to the Chinese in colonial period did not mean that the relationship between the Chinese and the Dutch rulers was always harmonious. It should be noted that those economic privileges, first of all, were not granted to the agriculture sector. In fact, in 1879, the colonial government issued a regulation that prohibited the Chinese to work as peasants.[37] Furthermore, there were times when Chinese settlers were targeted for oppression and even persecuted by both the Dutch and the natives. One of the most remembered and horrifying persecutions in Java was directed toward the Chinese in the 1740 Massacre in Batavia. It was triggered by a surplus of Chinese labors due to a previous VOC policy that created incentive for Chinese workers to migrate to Java in order to work mainly at cash crop plantations around Batavia. As economic circumstances caused massive unemployment, the Company decided to reallocate these labors to Ceylon. The Chinese coolies ran amok outside the city wall causing the Company to mobilize

[37] Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Hoakkiau di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Garba Budaya, 1998), 126.

its military power in order to kill the mobs. The Dutch also massacred an estimated 10,000 Chinese residents within the city wall.[38]

After this incident, the Company decided to strengthen its control over its Chinese populations. It immediately regulated the ghettoization of Chinese neighborhoods, relocating many of them to an area that was purposefully located "within the range of the city's guns" in case the Chinese attempted to revolt again, as mentioned in the VOC edict of March 5, 1741.[39] Furthermore, in order to ensure the separation of the Chinese from the rest of society, the VOC also issued aa resolution on December 11, 1759 that forbade the Chinese's interaction with the indigenous community, particularly with the "Mohammedans."[40] This was problematic for many Peranakan Chinese who originally lived among indigenous communities, because the new law forced them to abandon their indigenous socio-cultural aspects of life and to adopt those of the Chinese as they were now considered as "full-blooded" Chinese.[41]

By the late 19th century, the colonial government had established similar policies to each group of colonial subjects. Laws such as the *passenstelsel,* or the "pass" system, regulated the movement of colonial subjects; those who attempted to travel beyond the boundaries of a certain jurisdiction had to have an authorized letter to do so.[42] In 1835, a policy similar to the Chinese ghettoization was imposed upon all colonial subjects and became known as The Quarter System, or *wijkenstelsel*, requiring each group to live in separate locations throughout the city.[43]

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[38] Ibid, 124
[39] A.R.T. Kemasang, "The 1740 Massacre of Chinese in Java: Curtain Raiser for the Dutch Plantation Economy." *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 14 (1982): 70.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] (Toer 1998, 125)
[43] Ibid.

In her book about the Hadrami Arab community in the East Indies, Natalie Mobini-Kesheh took note of Benedict Anderson's argument that colonial rulers in Southeast Asia "viewed their subjects' populations through an ethnic-racial grid" in which colonial subjects "were increasingly viewed by their rulers in racial categories rather than, say, religious ones."[44] In fact, the Dutch colonial government divided its population into three major racial groups: Europeans, natives, and non-native "Foreign Orientals", consisting of the Chinese, the Arabs, and the Indians.[45] Such categorization was constructed for practical administrative purposes without much discussion with those subjected to the labels. For instance, the term *inlander*, or "native to the islands," under one "ethnic" category must have been controversial for those bearing the label because identifying a person from, say, Minangkabau in West Sumatra with a Buginese from the island of Sulawesi under one racial category was perhaps previously unheard of among the different peoples of the archipelago. Indeed, the Indonesian translation of the Dutch term *inlander* is Pribumi. This colonial policy certainly contributed to the binding of people from all around the archipelago under one group that would later become the foundation of Indonesian nationalism.

Similar to the case with the "native" category, yet excluded from future indigenous nationalist narrative, were those labeled as "Foreign Orientals", who themselves were even more diverse in ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds; the Arabs were largely from Hadramaut in what is today Yemen[46] while the Indians in North Sumatra and urban centers of Java were largely of Tamil, Punjabi, and Sindhi background.[47] As mentioned, the Chinese communities were already divided into two

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[44] Natalie Mobini-Khesheh, *The Hadrami Awakening: Community and Identity in the Netherlands East Indies, 1900-1941* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, 1999), 31.
[45] (Fryer and Jackson 1977, 21)
[46] Ibid.
[47] The Embassy, "Outline of Indonesia," The Embassy of India in Jakarta, http://www.eoijkt.org/content.php?sid=186

major groups of the Peranakans and Totoks, yet there is still further diversity within the Totok category based on their demographic origin in Mainland China. Most Chinese immigrants in Indonesia came from the two provinces of Fujian and Guangdong, and the three major linguistic groups in Indonesian Chinese community were Hokkien, Hakka, and Cantonese, which were mutually unintelligible to each other.[48] This was even further complicated by the diversity within the Peranakan category, an umbrella term for Chinese who were assimilated to different native cultural and linguistic traditions across the archipelago.

Sumit Mandral, as cited by Mobini Kesheh, argued that the "institutionalization of racial difference by the Dutch" in the environment was conducive to the emergence of a new consciousness:

> "… following the separation of groups by pseudo-racial categories through the pass and quarter system, more self-consciously Arab and Chinese groups had begun to assert themselves within the political legal boundaries that had been set up in the preceding half century… as some have argued in the case of the Chinese, in all likelihood this group would have been assimilated into native society had it not been for the statutory separations imposed on the in the second half of the nineteenth century."[49]

The colonial East Indies' social structure was vital to the construction of post-colonial native (Pribumi) and non-native (non-Pribumi) categories. The creation of a plural society in the nineteenth and early twentieth century ended the interaction of different ethnic groups in the archipelago that had occurred for centuries. It was through colonial policy of segregation that the Pribumi and the Chinese developed separate identities, in such a way that the Chinese were the privileged group in the eyes of the colonial rulers and where Pribumi Indonesians belonged to the lowest social class - an important breeding ground for the construction of identities among

[48] (Skinner 1963, 102)
[49] (Mobini-Kesheh 1999, 32)

different groups, particularly in the dawn of nationalist ideas. In short, colonial social structure resulted in long-lasting consequences that still have a major impact to the Chinese Indonesians until the present day.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE EMERGENCE OF CHINESE INDONESIAN NATIONALIST IDENTITY

According to Wang Gungwu, the Chinese traditionally never had a concept of identity, but rather a dichotomous concept of "Chineseness" that is measured according to being Chinese or being "un-Chinese".[50] Yet, he continued, ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia "have changed and… are capable of undergoing further change."[51] This change refers to the way they have identified themselves in reaction to the introduction of new ideas, be it externally from the changing conditions in China or domestically within the regions where Overseas Chinese reside. The history of Peranakan and Totok Chinese societies in the Dutch East Indies discussed in Chapter 1 demonstrates such a phenomenon. Wang Gungwu suggested that, prior to 1950, there were at least two ways the Chinese saw their "Chineseness", which is equivalent to their sense of Chinese identity - one might be called historical identity, and the other Chinese national identity.[52] The latter is a new development of 20th century Southeast Asian social order that has shaped the position of future Chinese Indonesians in post-colonial society.

This chapter will discuss the rise of Chinese nationalist movements in the Dutch East Indies from 1900 to the early 1940s prior to the Japanese occupation. It attempts to explain how various forces - many of which were unrelated to the aspirations of the indigenous Indonesian nationalist movements yet existed side by side with native cause - dominated Chinese political activism since its inception in the early 20th century. Its purpose is to argue that the Mainland Chinese nationalist

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[50] Gungwu Wang, "The Study of Chinese Identities in Southeast Asia," in *Changing Identities of the Southeast Asian Chinese since World War II*, ed. Jennifer W. Cushman and Wang Gungwu (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1988), 1.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.

movement and the concept of identity that they represented had a tremendous effect on the Dutch East Indies Chinese's exclusion from the formation of Indonesian nationalist identity.

Benedict Anderson on Indonesian Nationalism

In his celebrated book *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson defines the "nation" as "an imagined political community – and imagined both as inherently limited and sovereign."[53] He wrote, "It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."[54] He further wrote, "In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined."[55] Anderson's definition of the "nation" is central to understanding how indigenous Indonesians and the Chinese "imagined" their own versions of nationalism and to understanding the role of colonial policy in shaping those "imaginations."

In his other book *Java in a Time of Revolution*, Benedict Anderson began with a description of the crucial role of *angkatan muda* (younger generation) in the nationalist movements in Indonesia, from its formation in the beginning of the 20th century to the outbreak of revolution in 1945. The very idea of nationalism initially revolved among the youth of the indigenous elites who received Western education in the Netherlands or on the island of Java, the political, economic, and educational center of the colonial government. The early *angkatan muda* consisted mainly of the

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[53] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 6.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.

children of Javanese aristocrats or the Priyayi class, successful entrepreneurs, or those with close relationship with colonial bureaucratic elites – a very privileged minority of the indigenous population. It was the experience of learning, according to Anderson, in institutions of higher education located in Batavia and Bandung that led these educated youths to formulate the ideology of Indonesian nationalism. He wrote that it was a result of "their experiences in schools where the raison d'etre derived directly from the centralized structure of the Netherlands Indies in the twentieth century… It was not until the Japanese period that nationalism spread deeply into small-town and rural Java; and it did so because of the new experiences encountered there, to which it gave coherent meaning."[56]

The epitome of Indonesian nationalism was then proclaimed by participants of the second Congress of Indonesian Youth from October 26 to 28, 1928, when, on the last day, they took the historic Pledge of the Youth or *Sumpah Pemuda*, committing to one nation, one people, and one language, namely that of Indonesians.[57] The three points were the essence of a cohesive Indonesian identity central to the understanding of the "us" and "them" in post-war Indonesia.

Anderson further suggests that indigenous nationalism was partly a response to the monopoly of business by non-native ethnic groups. He wrote, "Almost everywhere economic power was either monopolized by the colonialists themselves, or unevenly shared with a politically impotent class of pariah (non native) businessmen - Lebanese, Indian and Arab in colonial Africa, Chinese, Indian and Arab in colonial Asia."[58] An example of these phenomena is the development of what many considered to be Indonesia's first popular nationalist organization, Sarekat Islam (Islamic Union) in

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[56] Benedict Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944-1946* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), 18-19.
[57] Ibid, pp. 18
[58] Anderson 1991, 116

1912. Previously named Sarekat Dagang Islam (Islamic Trade Union), the organization was formed by entrepreneurs in what were traditionally considered native dominated industries, the batik industry and the *kretek*, or clove-cigarette, industry. They formed a union under one goal: to protect their industries from new competitors - namely the Chinese entrepreneurs.[59] These new competitors appeared after the Dutch decided to monopolize the opium trade, which was dominated by urban-based Chinese traders and entrepreneurs.[60] To mobilize the increasing number of urban unemployment caused by the huge loss of this lucrative business, the government gradually removed travel restrictions for the Chinese in 1904 and, later on, in 1910, allowed them to infiltrate the interior rural market where native entrepreneurs prevailed.

Chinese Nationalism: Peranakan vs. Totok

Indonesian nationalism was indigenous in character in the sense that it was proposed, formulated, and proclaimed by the young Pribumi elites in the Dutch East Indies. It is wrong, however, to assert that this particular nationalist outlook is exclusive only to the natives - although some may consider an exception, the inclusion of Indo-European journalist and politician Ernest Douwes Dekker[61] as one of Indonesia's national heroes, for instance, is symbolic to the acceptance of non-Pribumi individuals within the understanding of Indonesian national identity. Douwes Dekker's case also reflects the essence of pre-independence Indonesian nationalism as a spirit of united resistance against colonial rule, regardless of ethnicity or religion,

[59] Kahin 1952, 67

[60] Vernon Joseph Turner, "A History of Indonesian-Chinese Relations in Indonesia since Independence: the Problems of Assimilation and Integration" (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1974), 24.

[61] Ernest Douwes Dekker (1879-1950) was one of the founders of *Budi Utomo* (Pure Endeavors) in 1908. The birth of the organization, May 20th, 1908 is celebrated as The National Awakening Day. For more about Ernest Douwes Dekker see Van Der Veur, Paul. "E.F.E. Douwes Dekker: Evangelist for Indonesian Political Nationalism." *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 17, 4 (1958): 551-566.

hence embodied in the national motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, which is roughly translated as "Unity in Diversity."

However, this rhetoric was not extended to most Chinese in the East Indies at the time. From political perspective, this was mainly due to the various existing political streams among the Chinese themselves, many of which were oriented toward the nationalist cause in Mainland China. Popular mainly among Totok Chinese communities, this became known as "the Chinese movement in the Indies"[62] but is referred to more accurately as the Totok pan-Chinese movement.[63]

According to Donald Fryer and James Jackson, this movement was partly a response of the Chinese who became increasingly dissatisfied with their position under colonial rule in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, particularly to the restrictions on places of residence and movement of Chinese, unequal administration of justice, discriminatory taxes, as well as other measurements that the government took to limit Chinese domination in the economy.[64] In the political realm, the Chinese complained about their legal position in the Dutch East Indies, particularly after the colonial government granted the Japanese the same legal status as Europeans in 1899.[65] What should also be highlighted, however, is the concern about the absence of well-managed Chinese schools provided by the government,[66] a particularly important body in order to preserve Chinese traditional identity. This awareness on the importance of Chinese identity was mainly triggered by Imperial China's reclaim in 1896 that Chinese descendents all over the world were all her children.[67]

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[62] (Fryer and Jackson 1977, 262)
[63] (Skinner 1963, 109)
[64] (Fryer and Jackson 1977, 263)
[65] (Turner 1974, 23)
[66] (Fryer and Jackson 1977, 263)
[67] (Turner 1974, 23)

This agitation was then combined with the growing nationalist movement in Mainland China after the fall of Imperial China in 1911. It should be noted that, unlike the Peranakans, many Totok Chinese in the Dutch East Indies were not citizens of the colonial state, and therefore their interests in current Mainland Chinese politics were inevitable. Moreover, similar to the Indonesian nationalist movements, the role of education was important for the spread of the movement. In fact, Wang Gungwu explained that the *Huaqiao* pattern that predominated after 1911 was "strongly comprised of well educated professionals" and was "strongly tied to feelings of nationalism."[68] This was the turning point at which Wang's historical identity experienced a transition into a national identity. Additionally, Sun Yat Sen's concept of *min-tsu* (*minzu*), a translation of the Western concept of "race" or "nation", reached Overseas Chinese's social imaginings based on the idea that their 'racial' origins should lead them to identify with the nationalist cause in Mainland China.[69]

The ties between education and Chinese nationalism were embodied within the establishment of *Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan* (THHK), a pioneering Chinese organization that promoted education based on Confucian thought in Batavia in 1900. The aim of THHK was to educate Totok children as well as to resinify Peranakan Chinese.[70] The organization, quickly followed by others with similar intentions, built Chinese schools all over the archipelago. By 1911, THHK quickly became a supporter of the nationalist Kuomintang Movement that successfully overthrew the Qing Dynasty and established the Republic of China in the same year.

How did Peranakan Chinese respond to this Totok-dominated movement? The Dutch colonial government, who saw the latest nationalist trends among Totok Chinese residents as potential threat, had a major role in Peranakan's response. In

[68] (Poston, Mao, and Yu 1994, 632)
[69] (Wang 1988, 2)
[70] (Skinner 1963, 109)

1908, the colonial government abandoned the policy of cultural exclusivism and set up Peranakan schools called the *Hollandsch-Chineese Scholen* (Dutch-Chinese Schools) that offered Western curriculum.[71] Peranakan culture had also become increasingly Christianized due to the alternative of entering Catholic and Protestant schools, a phenomenon that Skinner interpreted as "a search for security and status in a rapidly changing society."[72] Skinner also mentioned, however, Peranakans who joined the Totok nationalist movement in hopes of purifying, or resinifying, Peranakan culture.[73] Nevertheless, the latter's social, cultural, and political trends, particularly among the elites and the middle class, were generally oriented toward Dutch or Western culture.[74] This development led to the formation of the *Chung Hua Hui* (CHH), an organization formed by Dutch-national Chinese in 1927 that advocated Dutch citizenship for Peranakan Chinese and specifically excluded the Totoks from its membership. They proposed to work in the interests of the Chinese community in the municipal and provincial councils and the *Volksraad*, a national advisory body of Dutch subjects in the Indies, while rejecting any dependence on the Chinese government.[75]

Another development within the Chinese political arena in the Dutch East Indies was the formation of *Partai Tionghoa Indonesia* (PTI), or the Indonesian Chinese Party, in 1932. As reflected by its name, the organization supported Indonesian independence and took an anti-Dutch stance. There are at least two interpretations of the motivation behind PTI's formation, however. As indicated by

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[71] Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 218.
[72] (Skinner 1963, 108)
[73] Ibid, 108-109
[74] (Turner 1974, 27)
[75] Donald Earl Willmott, *The National Status of Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, 1900-1958* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1961), 10.

Donald Willmott, the party was purely embracing Indonesian nationalist cause by provoking the Peranakan Chinese to "invest all their hopes in Indonesia" [76] and "forget about China"[77] by working side by side with other ethnic groups for common ideals. Vernon Turner suggested a more pragmatic reason: the aim of this party "did not coincide with those of their Indonesian counterparts"[78] because the Chinese emphasized "the preservation of their race as a culturally distinct ethnic group, and the eradication of those factors which conflicted with their interests."[79] The two views may suggest polarization within the PTI itself, as its aspirations became a combination of the two.

Thus, by the final period of Dutch rule in Indonesia, there were three political outlooks within the Chinese communities across the archipelago - namely Chinese-oriented nationalism, Dutch-oriented political affiliation, and Indonesian nationalism. The PTI was the smallest of all in terms of membership and the least visible, specifically compared to the CHH and the THHK who had their own extensive network of political affiliations and newspaper publications.[80] Yet, as suggested by Vernon Turner, it is probably true that most Chinese people did not have any interest in politics and therefore did not join nor sympathize with any of the three streams.[81]

A series of Chinese political activism in the early to mid 20th century implied that at the time many Chinese viewed themselves to have a separate identity from that of the indigenous Indonesians, particularly because of their support for either the Mainland Chinese nationalist cause or for Dutch status quo over the Netherlands Indies. Nevertheless, the fact that the PTI represented some Chinese who did

[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.
[78] (Turner 1974, 32)
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid, 10
[81] Ibid, 11

sympathize and support the Indonesian nationalist cause was not recognized for a long time in the popular historical narrative of the Indonesian Revolution, at least prior to 1998. Furthermore, the fact that there is no single Indonesian national hero who was of Chinese descent truly reflects this lack of recognition.

Mary Somers Heidhues argued that, after the Constitution and the Pancasila,[82] "the Revolution has probably been the most powerful symbol of national identity, whether in the Old Order under Sukarno or in the present (Suharto) regime."[83] The Chinese was generally not considered as participants of the Revolution, leading indigenous Indonesians to question what Indonesian national identity meant to the Chinese. Over time, society has begun to consider the identity of ethnic Chinese to be outside the framework of Indonesian national identity, which has become the prevailing identity of the post-colonial era. As a product of a combination of political, economic, and cultural resentment, this perception has become the root of the troubled relationships between ethnic Chinese and the Indonesian state as well as society. This troubled and multifaceted schism is referred to as The Chinese Problem.

[82] Pancasila is the national ideology of Indonesia. Formulated by Sukarno, it stated five principles that are meant to be a common ground for the different ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds of the Indonesian people. Or more on cultural analysis on Pancasila see Dharmaputera, Eka. "Pancasila and the Search for Identity and Modernity in Indonesian Society: a Cultural Analysis" in *Boston College*. Boston: Boston College, 1982.

[83] Mary F. Somers-Heidhues, "Citizenship and Identity: Ethnic Chinese and the Indonesian Revolution," In *Changing Identities of the Southeast Asian Chinese since World War II*, ed. Jennifer Cushman and Wang Gungwu (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1988), 115.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE SUKARNO ERA: 1949 TO 1965

This chapter focuses on the dynamics of the Chinese-indigenous relationship during the Sukarno era - a period of political transition in which the politically dominant group was no longer the Dutch but the indigenous majority. There were at least three important issues in relation to the Chinese communities in this post-independent political environment. First and foremost was the issue of citizenship that immediately affected the Chinese after independence. Second was the issue of Chinese economic dominance and the government's subsequent attempts to develop indigenous economic dominance. Third was the issue of Chinese Indonesian political activism as a means of protecting their interests in the new, challenging environment. It should be noted that Chinese Indonesians refer to those who became or desired to become Indonesian citizens after independence.

The third issue, however, would be interrupted by another major political shift that linked them to the alleged communist threat in the later period of the Sukarno era. This shift led to a tragic end of the Sukarno era and the beginning of an oppressive and powerful military regime. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the early Chinese Indonesian social and political activism would leave a long-lasting legacy that would be rejuvenated again in the post-New Order era starting in 1998.

All three issues were complicated by the Indonesia's foreign policy, particularly with its bilateral relationship with China. It is impossible to discuss many Chinese Indonesian issues in this period without discussing Indonesia's relationship with China, particularly with regard to the issue of citizenship. Another troublesome bilateral issue was Indonesia's nationalistic economic policy that discriminated "foreign citizens" who were predominantly Chinese citizens who resided in Indonesia

since the colonial period. As a result, Chinese Indonesian political activism during the Sukarno era was eventually affected by the souring relationship between the two countries.

The Issue of Citizenship

The issue of citizenship was arguably the most important and complex matter for Chinese Indonesians. Within the Chinese communities, the issue instigated the Totok vs. Peranakan division to become a citizen vs. non-citizen division, in which the Peranakans tended to adopt Indonesian citizenship. Within the national context, this issue challenged the definition of Indonesian national identity and what it meant to those who acquired citizenship. But the most important aspect of this issue is that of Indonesia's foreign policy, particularly with China.

It is important, first of all, to explain the relationship between the Indonesian government and the then Kuomintang Chinese government in the mid 1940s. There was no official diplomatic relationship between the two, but the concern about Chinese citizenship arose as early as 1946 when Indonesian nationalists adopted the Citizenship Act of 1946 (*UU No. 3 Tahun 1946 tentang Penduduk dan Warga Negara*).[84] This act adopted the passive system of citizenship called *jus soli*, or "law of the soil," meaning that the Chinese who were born in Indonesia and who had resided within the country (or occupied territories) continuously for five years automatically became Indonesian citizens, unless they legally abandoned the citizenship.[85] This was problematic because the Chinese government held the principle

[84] Wahyu Effendi and Prasetyadji, *Tionghoa Dalam Cengkeraman SBKRI* (Jakarta: Visi Media, 2008), 18.
[85] Willmott 1961, 26; Somers-Heidhues 1988, 120; Effendi and Prasetyadji 2008, 18. For more on the Citizenship Act of 1946 see Willmott 1961, 26.

of *jus sanguinis* or "law of the blood," in which any person with Chinese ancestry anywhere in the world is considered to be a Chinese citizen.

The Chinese Communist Party took over the government from the Kuomintang and established the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949. On that same year Indonesia also gained its *de jure* recognition as an independent nation state at the Round Table Conference held in The Hague. Among other issues, the Indonesian and Dutch delegations discussed the matter of citizenship and its implementations. The conclusion implied that Chinese individuals, who were most likely Peranakans, were given a two-year period to reject their granted Indonesian citizenship if they wanted to be considered as Chinese citizens - thus, this was the second time Chinese Indonesians had to choose between two citizenships.[86]

However, the agreement at the Round Table Conference was between Indonesia and the Netherlands, while the issue with China remained unsolved. At first the Communist Chinese government adopted the previous Kuomintang Republican government policy on Overseas Chinese. The issue resurfaced when China established diplomatic relationship with Indonesia in 1950. By 1954, however, China became increasingly active in seeking international support, and wanted Indonesia, its largest Southeast Asian neighbor, as an important ally. The Overseas Chinese status, therefore, threatened the well-being of Sino-Indonesian relations.[87] Thus, after a series of bilateral negotiations, the two governments finalized the Dual Nationality Treaty at the Asia-Africa Conference at Bandung in 1955.[88]

The Dual Nationality Treaty stated that, starting January 20, 1960, Chinese Indonesians with dual nationality who were 18 years or older had to make a choice again between adopting either Chinese citizenship or Indonesian citizenship within the

[86] (Willmott 1961, 27)
[87] (Fryer and Jackson 1977, 266)
[88] (Effendi and Prasetyadji 2008, 14)

next two years. Those who failed to do so would default to the nationality of their parents, which was most often Chinese.[89] Nonetheless, there were several issues that complicated the implementation of these policies. One of these issues was that many local-born Chinese simply did not have certificates of permanent residency from the Dutch East Indies period. According to David Mozingo, about one-third of an estimated 2.5 million ethnic Chinese in Indonesia possessed dual nationality.[90] He wrote, "Somewhat unexpectedly, only about 32,000 (out of a potential 700,000 to 900,000 Chinese with dual nationality) have to date successfully opted for Indonesian nationality, while there is no evidence that even this many have chosen Chinese nationality."[91] This is particularly true among lower class Peranakan Chinese with little education. Thus, they officially became either Chinese citizens or, for those who were pro-Kuomintang, stateless.[92]

Economic Nationalism

Wang Gungwu argues that studies on ethnic Chinese identity in Southeast Asia in the period between 1950 and 1960 focused on three types of identity: national (local) identity, communal identity and cultural identity.[93] These three aspects of identity resonate either directly or indirectly with the three important issues related to the Chinese in Indonesia.

However, Wang does not mention the economic identity if the Chinese as one of the identities that received attention from this time period. The attention seemed to be focused more on the period of 1970s when scholars were particularly interested

[89] David Mozingo, "The Sino-Indonesian Dual Nationality Treaty," *Asian Survey* 10 (1963): 25.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.
[92] (Willmott 1961, 30)
[93] (Wang 1988, 1)

with Chinese ethnic and class identity.[94] This could be because the regime that ruled in the 1970s focused on economic development, unlike Sukarno's regime that focused more on political and nationalistic issues. It is important, however, to examine the Sukarno regime's economic policies with regard to the ethnic Chinese because they reflect one of the most important aspects of The Chinese Problem in the coming years under Suharto.

During the Sukarno era, the primary concern of the Indonesian government with regard to the Chinese was to minimize Chinese dominance in the economic sector and to empower the position of the indigenous business class. The first major attempt to empower indigenous business class was the implementation of Benteng (Fortress) Program in 1950 by the Minister of Welfare, Djuanda. The program was to secure national control on import trade by reserving import licenses of several goods for indigenous importers.[95] Sumitro, Indonesia's Minister of Finance and Industry in 1950, stated that the program was intended to counter the economic interests of the Dutch. Yet, the program was aimed to also counter the economic interests of Chinese businessmen who dominated the intermediate trade in rural areas and retail trade in urban areas.[96] In practice, however, many indigenous businessmen used this privilege to join partnership with their Chinese counterparts in a relationship that became known as "Ali Baba", in which an "Ali", a nickname for a native Muslim, would use his name to reserve import licenses while leaving all the work to the "Baba," which usually referred to Peranakan Chinese but, in this case, referred to any Chinese entrepreneur.[97] The Benteng Program was considered a failure and finally eliminated.

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[94] Ibid.
[95] Thee Kian Wie, "Indonesia's First Affirmative Policy: The "Benteng" Program in the 1950s" (paper presented at the Workshop on the Economic Side of Decolonization, Yogyakarta, August 18-19, 2004).
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.

Not long afterwards, the Chinese were again antagonized for their economic dominance. Asaat Datuk Mundo, a political figure of the Islamic party Masjumi and the chairman of the association of Pribumi Indonesian importers, delivered a speech at the Congress of the National Importers, in which he stated that there should be more preferential treatment given to indigenous Indonesians in economic affairs.[98] Asaat brought the Chinese economic issue to the national stage and started what has become known as the Asaat Movement, which called for the government to implement further affirmative action to empower Pribumi entrepreneurs and to combat ethnic Chinese domination. As Vernon Turner notes, this was one of the earliest public displays of anti-Chinese that "developed during the colonial period and were allowed to emerged as public and governmental issues following independence."[99]

In 1959 the Indonesian government launched another policy that aimed to protect indigenous economic interests. This time, the regulation was directed only toward non-citizen Chinese - particularly Chinese entrepreneurs who did not have Indonesian citizenship in rural areas. This policy was called Government Regulation Number 10 of 1959 (*Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 10 Tahun 1959*) that prohibited foreign citizens – in his case the Chinese – from being involved in retail activities within the county and bellow in areas outside of provincial capital.[100] Those who had settled in these areas had to close down their business by January 1st, 1960. At the time, the term "foreign citizen" was targeted at ethnic Chinese who did not have Indonesian citizenship, as ninety percent of 86,690 registered foreign small retailers were ethnic Chinese. Furthermore, the Indonesian military was mobilized in order to implement this regulation, which was strongly enforced in several areas in West

[98] (Turner 1974, 104)
[99] Ibid.
[100] "Peraturan yang Menggusur Tionghoa," *Tempo*, August 13-19 2007, 94-95.

Java.[101] A mass exodus of non-Indonesian Chinese from rural to urban areas followed, which eventually led the Chinese government to criticize the Indonesian government and arrange naval transportation to China for those who wanted to leave Indonesia.[102]

Baperki and Chinese Politics in Sukarno's Indonesia

Despite all the discriminative policies that the Sukarno government imposed upon Chinese Indonesians, the Sukarno years also saw a rise of political activism particularly among Peranakan Chinese Indonesians. This was made possible largely by the period of liberal democracy that allowed the nation to hold its first-ever parliamentary election in 1955. This open political atmosphere ended in 1957 when Sukarno imposed martial law declaring his Guided Democracy and proclaimed himself president for life.

From the beginning of the Sukarno period, ethnic Chinese Indonesians were under very ambiguous and uncertain positions. In response, the Chinese focused on the protection of their interests by socio-political means. As early as 1948, Peranakan Chinese formed the Persatuan Tionghoa (Chinese Union) to defend their status, position, and culture. It was transformed to a political party, Partai Demokrat Tionghoa Indonesia (Chinese Indonesian Democratic Party), in 1950. Due to its lack of support, in 1954 a group of Western-educated Peranakans formed a new political organization called Badan Permusyawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia (Indonesian Citizenship Consultative Body) or Baperki.[103] As emphasized by its leaders, Baperki did not see itself as a political party but rather as a mass organization with the purpose

[101] (Fryer and Jackson 1977, 269)
[102] "Terusir dari Kampung Sendiri," *Tempo*, August 13-19, 2007, 96-97.
[103] (Fryer & Jackson 1977, 269)

of gathering Chinese social and political interests under one umbrella organization. Its members could also join any political party in the nation.[104]

Although not a political party, Baperki became involved in national politics by participating in the 1955 and 1957 elections, where it formed an alliance with the Indonesian Communist Party or the PKI in several areas, which gained a substantial amount of support from Chinese Indonesians. Baperki won one chair in the parliament and elected its charismatic spokesman, Siauw Giok Tjhan, as its representative.[105] Siauw Giok Tjhan was also a cabinet minister in the Amir Syarifuddin Government.[106]

Although initially focused on parliamentary elections, in the late 1950s Baperki became more concerned with community service. It specially assisted Chinese communities in establishing schools with Indonesian curricula as a response to the ban of Chinese–language schools by the government in 1957.[107] More importantly, Baperki was engaged in a prominent discussion of assimilation and integration; the two proposed policy solutions to the question of how ethnic Chinese fit in to the concept of Indonesian nationhood. The integrationists saw the Chinese as simply one of the hundreds of ethnic groups of Indonesia who had the right to retain their distinct identity.[108] Baperki argued that one of the bases for this logic was related to the national motto Bhineka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity), which could easily be interpreted as allowing the Chinese to exist as a distinct ethnic group.[109] Furthermore, although the Constitution mentioned the difference between *suku bangsa Indonesia* (referring to the indigenous ethnic groups of Indonesia) and *suku bangsa asing*

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[104] Charles A. Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis*, (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1983), 43.
[105] (Turner 1974, 124)
[106] Ibid.
[107] (Fryer and Jackson 1977, 270)
[108] Adam Schwartz, *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia's Search for Stability* (Boulder: Westview Press, A Member of the Perseus Books Group, 2000), 104.; (Coppel 1983, 44)
[109] (Turner 1974, 63)

(foreign ethnic groups), it did not mention the need for assimilation to the point that these ethnic groups' characteristics are eliminated.[110]

On the other side of the debate were the assimilationists, represented by Lembaga Pembina Kesatuan Bangsa (LPKB), or the Institute of Promoters of Indonesian Nationhood. The assimilation movement appeared in 1960 as a response to the controversial Government Regulation Number 10 of 1959 and the implementation of the Dual Nationality Treaty.[111] Assimilationists believed that there was no future for the Chinese to continue demanding special consideration from the government as a distinct ethnic group, because discrimination from society and the government would always exist. Instead, according to Thung Lian Lee, who was one of the leading assimilationists, only a complete assimilation of the Chinese into the general population would lead to a harmonious society.[112] He asserted that this should be viewed as a realistic solution as oppose to the idealistic ethnocentrism of the integration approach.[113] Advocates of assimilative approach to Indonesian nationhood formed the LPKB in 1963 after a conference that condemned the establishment of Baperki's exclusively Chinese schools.

Communism and Chinese Indonesians

Aside from their ideological stance, it is important to take note of the two major Chinese organizations' political affiliation with the actors in Indonesian politics at the time. The LPKB, which was typically anti-communist in its political affiliations, was closely associated with the Indonesian army, which was one of the major groups in the national political scene. To some extent, the organization was also sponsored by

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[110] Ibid, 62-63
[111] (Coppel 1983, 45)
[112] (Coppel 1983, 45); (Schwarz, 2000, 104)
[113] (Turner 1974, 63)

the army, and its membership also included typically rightist Pribumi civilian members. Furthermore, its Jakarta headquarter was also located on army property.[114]

Baperki, on the other hand, was affiliated with the Indonesian Communist Party or the PKI – an affiliation that would be troublesome in the future. Although never claiming himself a communist, Siauw Giok Tjhan made statements indicating communist ideals and was close to prominent PKI members.[115] This was problematic for some Baperki members because they saw this affiliation as a move away from the organization's non-alignment stance with regard to political parties.[116]

It was also this affiliation that brought Baperki to its end. The PKI and the Indonesian Army were two opposing factions competing for political power, and as the party that won the largest majority, the PKI became particularly close to President Sukarno during the Guided Democracy era. This alarmed the army not only ideologically but also politically, because the PKI had very close relations with the Communist Chinese government. Donald Fryer and James Jackson wrote, "In the eyes of Peking it was not the Overseas Chinese who offered the best prospect of revolutionary success in Indonesia, but the PKI, and this was overwhelmingly Indonesian in membership."[117]

The power struggle between the army and PKI escalated in 1965 when the president's poor health raised the question of political succession in case of his death. Another alarming development for the army was Sukarno's proposal to create a Fifth Force to support Indonesia's confrontation with the neighboring country of

[114] (Coppel 1983, 45)
[115] (Turner 1974, 124)
[116] Ibid, 125
[117] (Fryer and Jackson 1977, 267)

Malaysia.[118] The Fifth Force was to consist of farmers and peasants who were given military training and arms, and to be an entirely independent entity from the Indonesian military. The implication of the Fifth Force was worrisome due to the PKI's popularity among peasants and farmers, since it could serve as the party's armed forces in order to take over the country. Finally, the army became alarmed when a pro-Sukarno air force officer, Field Marshall Omar Dhani, went to China to discuss the purchase of small arms for the Fifth Force.[119] Sukarno himself appeared to be increasingly more comfortable with the PKI as his major political ally. Tension escalated among Indonesia's political elites, as there were widespread rumors about a possible coup on October 5th, 1965 allegedly by a group of high-ranking army officers called the Council of Generals. That day, elite battalions of the Indonesian Armed Forces from across the country gathered in Jakarta to join a parade to celebrate its birthday.[120]

On the night of September 30th (or more precisely the early morning of October 1st), six top army generals and a junior officer were kidnapped and killed by a group led by Colonel Untung who called themselves The September 30th Movement" (Gerakan September Tigapuluh or Gestapu), claiming that their conduct was a counter attack against the coup attempt by the members of Councils of Generals.[121] Three days later, on October 4th, Indonesians heard a contradicting statement on national radio from a relatively unknown general named Suharto, claiming that the September 30th Movement itself was a coup attempt to overthrow the government, and that the

[118] The Fifth Force refers to the creation of a new military unit after the army, the navy, the air force, and the police. For more about Indonesia's Confrontation with Malaysia see Sutter, John O. "Two Faces of Konfrontasi: "Crush Malaysia" and the Gestapu." *Asian Survey* 6, 10 (1966): 523-546.
[119] Brian May, *The Indonesian Tragedy* (Singapore: Graham Brash (PTE) Ltd., 1978), 94.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.

mastermind behind this coup attempt was the Indonesian Communist Party.[122] It was the beginning of what the CIA called "one of the worst mass murders of the twentieth century"[123] when in the next six months Indonesians were engaged in a bloodbath that may have taken more than half a million lives. The army helped either to execute or accommodate gangs of Muslim, Christian, Hindu, and other anti-communist elements to hunt down and kill anyone suspected of affiliation with the PKI.[124] Six months later, on March 11, 1966, President Sukarno resigned after transferring his presidential power to Suharto, the man whom few Indonesians knew before the September 30th Movement.

The New Order Regime and ethnic Chinese politics

Most victims of the communist purge were indigenous Indonesians, and the anti-communist purge could not be equated with anti-Chinese violence.[125] However, the PKI's affiliation with China brought the attention of Suharto's new regime to the ethnic Chinese. Suharto's New Order (Orde Baru) regime chose the name to

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[122] Ibid, pp. 103. For more about the accusation against PKI see (May 1974, 103-120). The exact chronology, real perpetrators, and, more importantly, the purpose behind this event remains a controversy due to contradicting evidence and information. Scholars have different opinions on the subjects. Cornell University scholars Benedict Anderson and Ruth McVey argued that it was Suharto who was behind the coup, and that the PKI, with its strategic position in the Indonesian political scene, would not have the incentive to conduct a coup to overthrow Sukarno. For more about this argument see Anderson, Benedict R. O'G and Ruth T. McVey. *A Preliminary Analysis of the October 1, 1965, Coup in Indonesia.* Ithaca: Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University, 1971. Berkeley scholar and former Canadian diplomat Peter Dale Scott emphasized the role of the CIA in the overthrow of Sukarno. For more about this argument see Dale-Scott, Peter. "The United States and the Overthrow of Sukarno, 1965-1967." *Pacific Affairs* 58, 2 (1985): 239-264. But many others, particularly Indonesian scholars, are convinced that the PKI was behind the coup, in line with the official version of the coup. For more about this view see Subroto, Hendro. *The revolutionary council of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI): report on its failure to turn Indonesia into a Communist country.* Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 2008.

[123] Peter Dale-Scott, "The United States and the Overthrow of Sukarno, 1965-1967." *Pacific Affairs* 58, 2 (1985): 240.

[124] Ibid, 243

[125] For more analysis on why the anti-communist purge did not turn into an anti-Chinese violence see (Coppel 1983, 59)

differentiate itself from Sukarno's regime, which was now referred to as the Old Order (Orde Lama). Suharto established a military authoritarian regime that was staunchly anti-communist and, therefore, anti-Communist China, which the government accused of being the financiers for the PKI.[126] The regime declared that communism was a national threat and decided to "freeze" its diplomatic relationship China. With regard to the ethnic Chinese, Suharto's regime accused them for having the potential of being a fifth column for the PRC, an allegation that indiscriminately accused all Chinese, citizens and non-citizens alike, as dangerous and disloyal.

This development clearly sealed the fate of Baperki. Its affiliation with the PKI put it in the worst possible position as an organization, and not long afterwards the government banned and dissolved the organization by closing down its schools and regional offices.[127] On the other hand, the LPKB campaigned to ban Baperki in a vigorous attempt to salvage the tarnished image of ethnic Chinese as opportunists and communist sympathizers, loyal only to China or their community. Eventually, the LPKB and its assimilationist policy were incorporated into the New Order government in attempt to solve The Chinese Problem.[128]

Thus, understanding the development of the Chinese-Pribumi relationship during the Sukarno era is crucial in analyzing the position of the Chinese in Indonesian society during the New Order regime. The Sukarno government's affirmative action policies to weaken the economic power of the Chinese reflected the strain between the Chinese minority and the non-Chinese majority. As a response, the Chinese social and political activism during this era was their own attempt to solve the strain between them and the majority. The hostility of the majority toward this ethnic minority would take a new form when the "Chinese Problem" became an official issue

[126] (Coppel 1983, 56)
[127] For more about the dissolution of Baperki see (Coppel 1983, 56-57)
[128] (Coppel 1983, 63)

of the state, in which the new regime under President Suharto produced a series of regulations designed to solve this “problem.” However, these policies deeply affected the everyday lives of ethnic Chinese in Indonesian society and eventually brought a devastating effect.

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE SUHARTO ERA: 1966 – 1998

This chapter discusses the Chinese-indigenous relationship during the Suharto era. Two main issues conditioned the lives of Chinese Indonesians under the New Order regime. First was the Indonesian government's accusation of Chinese Indonesians for being potential agents of communist China; in turn, the government forced the Chinese to abandon their cultural affiliations with China and assimilate into the majority population by adopting indigenous Indonesian culture and other attributes of identity. As will be discussed in this chapter, this policy was implemented in the form of discriminative regulations on various aspects of Chinese Indonesian life.

The second issue was related to the Indonesian society's perception toward this ethnic minority. Suharto's New Order regime incorporated entrepreneurs who were mainly ethnic Chinese to implement its economic development policy. This involvement gave the opportunity for these businessmen to gain enormous wealth through various government concessions as well as from a form of patronage relationships with top-level officials from the government and the military. This relationship was corrupt and, in turn, had a detrimental effect on the image of ethnic Chinese as an identity in Indonesian society. The popular image of Chinese Indonesians as a group became associated with economic exploitation through corrupt relationships with the regime.

These accusations heavily affected the lives of Chinese Indonesians during the New Order era, as anti-Chinese expressions of various degrees occurred in different places across the nation. The climax of such expression occurred from the 13th to the 15th of May, 1998, only days before Suharto resigned from presidency.

Suharto's Indonesia

For the New Order regime, political stability and economic development were two primary goals that went hand-in-hand. Political stability was achieved primarily through the doctrine of Dual Function (Dwifungsi), in which the role of Indonesian military members was not only to be the nation's primary defense apparatus but also to be active participants in national politics.[129] Members of the military were able to occupy powerful legislative and executive positions while serving as military officers. In accommodating the Dual Function practice, which blurred the line between military and civilian rule, one of the government's major strategies was to heavily control national parliamentary elections and to allow only three parties to run. The ruling party was Suharto's own named Functional Groups (Golongan Karya) or Golkar. It was a party dominated by the three major currents in post-Sukarno politics, namely the anti-communist civilian groups, the government bureaucrats, and the army, whose members often became the party's most senior members.[130] Over three decades Golkar managed to win the majority in virtually every election of the New Order era.

Political stability was also achieved by the centralization of power, in which all political and economic aspects, including the allocation of budget, the appointment of governor and head of regency, the structure of local government, the development plan, and even the shape of governmental buildings and offices, must be under the control of the central government in Jakarta.[131] This was realized by the creation of a gigantic bureaucratic system that connected local governments from the village level up to the provincial level with the central government in the capital. The New Order

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[129] R. William Liddle, "Indonesia: Suharto's Tightening Grip," *Journal of Democracy* 7 no. 5 (1996), http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v007/7.4liddle.html

[130] (Schwarz 2000, 31)

[131] Rizal Sukma, "Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia: Causes and the Quest for Solution," in *Ethnic Conflict in Southeast Asia*, ed. Kusuma Snitwongse and Willard Scott Thomson (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005), 10. For more about political centralization in New Order Indonesia see (Sukma 2005, 10-13).

regime also imposed strict media control of popular opinion toward the government.[132] Furthermore, its transmigration plan enabled the government to manage the nation's population to suit its political and economic interests. In short, the New Order regime created a military authoritarian state with Suharto as its chief dictator.

However, it was a dictatorship with pragmatic means, as was primarily reflected in the government's policy on economic development. "Development" became the ultimate buzzword of the Suharto era to the extent that the president promoted himself as The Father of Development (*Bapak Pembangunan*). It did make sense, however, for Suharto to have development of all sectors in the economy on as a high priority as he took the office as Indonesia's second president in 1968. When Sukarno left office in 1966, Indonesia's economy was in devastation with negative growth rate, six hundred percent inflation, virtually zero foreign reserve, and a national debt of US$ 2 billion.[133] As soon as Suharto took power, he ensured that the economy was a primary concern. His American-educated team of economists restructured the nation to be a part of the free market economic system, encouraging foreign investments and trade with Western countries.[134] The regime also welcomed financial support from donor countries as well as from international financial organizations such as the World Bank, the IMF, the IGGI, and the ADB for economic stabilization.[135] However, there was a desperate need to rejuvenate domestic economic

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[132] (Schwarz 2000, 319-320). For more about the Indonesian media during the Suharto era see Hill, David T. *The Press in New Order Indonesia*. Nedlands, Australia: University of Western Australia Press in association with Asia Research Center on Social, Political and Economic Change, 1994.

[133] Michael Vatikiotis, *Indonesian Politics under Suharto: The Rise and Fall of the New Order* (London: Routledge, 1993), 33.

[134] They are known as the Berkeley Mafia, consisting of graduates from University of Berkeley, California. For more about the Berkeley Mafia see Dick, Howard. *The Emergence of a National Economy: An Economic History of Indonesia 1800-2000.* Crow's Nest, Australia: Allen and Unwin, 2002.

[135] Ivan Wibowo, Introduction to *Rekonstruksi dan Rekontekstualisasi Masalah Cina*, edited by Ivan Wibowo (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama & Pusat Studi Cina, 1999), xxi.

activities, especially to create the much sought employment opportunities for the millions of unemployed Indonesians. To do so, the New Order government relied particularly on the Chinese business community, a group within society that held the most significant amount of capital.[136]

The bond between economic development and political stability cannot be overemphasized in securing the regime's strategic position and, in turn, Suharto's power. A stable economic development was the key for political stability, as indicated by R. William Liddle who wrote, "In the eyes of many Indonesians, economic growth also validates Suharto's vision of a strong state that successfully pursues development while remaining paternalistic and insulated."[137] In other words, the Indonesian people had their political freedom curtailed in exchange for economic security. This was an essential characteristic of Indonesian society under the New Order regime.

However, the regime's obsession to generate economic growth also spawned a massive socio-economic inequality in Indonesian society. Corruption, a practice that became universal in virtually all levels of Indonesian society, was in the heart of this inequality. Corruption on its largest scale involved the exploitation of the nation's vast natural resources such as petroleum, minerals, timbers, gas, and forests. Generally, the exploitation of these primary commodities was intended to provide the capital for development, yet government officials managed to use their political control over these mechanisms as an instrument for personal wealth and, equally important, to nurture crucial patronage relationships to maintain their power. This was done so by allocating the rights of resource exploitation to selected individuals.[138] For Suharto,

[136] (Wibowo 1999, xxi)
[137] (Liddle, 1996, 59)
[138] (Sukma 2005, 13)

such practices were done to ensure loyalty among his key allies, especially members of the military elites.[139]

This patron-client relationship became the norm of the regime's bureaucratic culture from the top echelons down to field bureaucrats, a culture that toward the end of the regime became known as the KKN, which stands for corruption (*korupsi*), collusion (*kolusi*), and nepotism (*nepotisme*).[140] Virtually anyone who must deal with government bureaucracy is familiar with certain corrupt expectations they must fulfill in order to get what they need.

The Chinese Problem

The phrase The Chinese Problem was incorporated into the New Order regime by a series of legislations. These legislations were adopted during the early years of the Suharto era when extreme anti-Chinese sentiments were prevalent within the government as well as among non-Chinese Indonesians. Indonesia's bilateral relation with China, first of all, turned sour when it suspended trade with the Communist government in September of 1966. One month later Indonesia unilaterally suspended its diplomatic relations with China indefinitely. This was clearly a turning point in Indonesia's international political and economic policies. Whereas the Sukarno era government was staunchly anti-West, Indonesia under Suharto welcomed Western support, particularly in economy and trade. In terms of trade relations, Indonesia also became closer to Taiwan as it moved away from China.

Domestic anti-Chinese sentiments were particularly frequent in this early period. Student demonstrators and Muslim youth groups, who demanded the

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[139] For more about the Indonesian military, see Jenkins, David. *Suharto and his generals: Indonesian military politics, 1975-1983*. Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesian Project, Southeast Asia Program, 1984.
[140] Rizal Sukma, "Democratic Governance and Security in Indonesia." *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 4 (2) (2004): 3.

resignation of Sukarno in 1966, had turned their attention to the Chinese - this trend was worsened by the mobs of urban poor who saw the opportunity to loot Chinese properties. In several cities in Java and Sumatra, mobs targeted Chinese stores and houses, and there were reports about Chinese community leaders and teachers having been tortured or killed.[141] The Chinese were virtually driven out of provinces such as Aceh, parts of North Sumatra, and West Kalimantan. Furthermore, student demonstrators took over Chinese-language schools that would eventually be turned into government property.[142]

It was during this tense social setting that the Suharto government released a document entitled "The Basic Policy for the Solution of the Chinese Problem" (Surat Edaran Presidium Kabinet Ampera No: SE-O6/Pres.Kab/6/1967 Tentang Masalah Cina) that regulates the term "Tionghoa" to be changed in use with the word "Cina."[143] It reads, "From the perspective of ethnological-politics and historical etymology, the terms "Tionghoa/Tiongkok" carry negative political association for the Indonesian people, while the term "Cina" only represents a name (of a place) where the Chinese race came from, and for most of us the two terms are not detached from (various) psychological and emotional aspects."[144]

This "negative political association" refers to the fact that the word "Tionghoa" during the Sukarno era was closely affiliated with the PRC, or "Republik Rakyat Tionghoa." What the document referred to as "psychological and emotional aspects" of the term in its second verse is its inherently political connotation, particularly when used in Sukarno's orations on strengthening the close relationship between the two

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[141](Turner 1974, 279)
[142] Ibid, 274
[143] S. Satya Dharma, "Menjadi Cina Berjiwa Patriot Indonesia," In *Suku Tionghoa dalam Masyarakat Majemuk Indonesia*, ed. Eddie Kusuma & S. Satya Dharma (Jakarta: Sakti & Awam, 1998), 150. Translation mine
[144] Ibid.

nations. Changing the term to a more apolitical "Cina" is, therefore, viewed as the first step to disapprove communist ties from Chinese Indonesians. But the problem with such change is that the term "Cina" itself has been inherently derogatory in Indonesian vernacular. This was the reason why the Chinese preferred the word "Tionghoa" in the first place, which is the Hokkienese pronunciation of the Mandarin word "Zhongguo," the official term to which Chinese citizens refer their nation. This shift constituted for more prejudice against the Chinese communities in the nation.

Nevertheless, the government continued to impose policies developed to assimilate Chinese Indonesians into Indonesian nationhood based on its own subjectivity. This was the responsibility of the National Intelligence Coordination Body (Badan Koordinasi Intelijen Negara) or BAKIN, the New Order's national intelligence agency, which created a separate division for this matter called Chinese Problem Coordination Body (Badan Koordinasi Masalah Cina). In 1979 this division published a three-volume handbook entitled *A Guide for the Solution of the Chinese Problem.*[145] Written only for a limited audience within the government,[146] it vividly describes the government's solution to the problem, from ideological conception to technical implementation to the plan of action, "in order to simplify the task of Officials and Operators in everyday usage."[147]

The anonymous author(s) wrote that, based on the National Constitution (Undang-Undang Dasar 1945 or UUD 1945), the Parliament (MPRS) reinforced Resolution Number III/MPRS/1966 about the Promotion of National Unity (Pembinaan Kesatuan Bangsa) "in order to solve the social conflict that arose as a

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[145] BAKIN. *Pedoman Penyelesaian Masalah Cina di Indonesia: Volume 1*. Jakarta: Badan Koordinasi Masalah Cina – Bakin, 1979. Translation mine

[146] This is written on the third page of the book on the top-right side, which reads, "Terbatas hanya untuk pejabat." (Limited only for officials).

[147] (BAKIN 1979, 12). Translation mine

consequence of Gestapu/PKI in 1965." [148] The resolution suggests three basic principles - one of them states that there should be an "acceleration of integration process through the assimilation of citizens of foreign descent."[149] This was the foundational thinking (*pikiran dasar*) for the next step of foundational policies (*kebijaksanaan dasar*). The earliest series of policy was the Presidential Instruction (*Instruksi Presidium*) No. 37/U/IN/6/1967 outlining the main policies concerning the solution to The Chinese problem,[150] particularly regarding those who were Chinese nationals, that regulate the following:

(a) Foreigners in Indonesia could stay and work in the country only with permission by the government, and the Indonesian government claimed that their investment in Indonesia was essentially a national investment. This instruction was to be converted into an act - UU No. 6 of 1968 about domestic investment - which was also intended to "prevent the transfer of those investments abroad."[151]

(b) Establishment of foreign schools was only permitted for the needs of diplomatic and consulate family members as well as other foreigners who only resided temporarily in Indonesia, referring to expatriates.

(c) Foreign nationals, either temporary or permanent residents, were allowed to establish organizations that were "local" but only served in several sectors including health, religious affairs, death, sports and recreation.

(d) Diplomatic relationship with the PRC would be regulated according to Indonesian national interest.

It is clear that these particular instructions were directed toward non-Indonesian-citizen Chinese, including those who had been residing on the archipelago

[148] Ibid, 15. Gestapu stands for Gerakan September 30, or the 30th September Movement. Translation mine
[149] Ibid, 16. Translation mine
[150] Ibid, 17. Translation mine
[151] Ibid. Translation mine

since the Dutch period. For Chinese Indonesians there was a different set of regulations through the Presidential Instruction No. 240 of 1967 that emphasized the necessity of consultation (*pembinaan*) to assimilate them into Indonesian society. It stated, "The consultation of Indonesian nationals of foreign descent (*WNI keturunan asing*) will be conducted through the process of assimilation, mainly to prevent a racially exclusive life. For this assimilation process there is an opportunity for Indonesian nationals of foreign descent to channel their ability and financial capability (*daya dan dananya*) in all fields to accelerate development and enhance prosperity and welfare of the Nation and the State." [152]

From the statements above, it is possible to conclude at least three points. First, at least from the government's perspective, The Chinese Problem was directly linked to the Communist threat. Secondly, the means to solve The Chinese Problem was through assimilation of the Chinese into Indonesian society. Lastly, the Chinese were expected to financially participate in the development program of the nation. These were the major components of the official understanding of The Chinese Problem and its solution.

Together, these components were indeed problematic for the following reasons. First, the communist threat accusation was a political threat, while assimilation as its solution could generate changes in the socio-cultural spheres. Although the latter may have an impact on one's political orientation, it should be remembered that communism has its own version of socio-cultural ideology that was implemented in opposition to traditional "Chinese" or "Russian" socio-cultural practices. In short, equaling Chinese socio-cultural practices with communist political ideology was a product of insensitivity by the Indonesian government.

[152] Ibid, 18. Translation mine

Second, the link between an assimilation process and the requirement to channel financial support, as mentioned in the Presidential Instruction No. 240 of 1967, could be interpreted as an official confirmation of the popular Indonesian perception towards the Chinese, that the economic affluence of some was inherently Chinese. And third, although the approach of assimilation was propagated by the Chinese organization LPKB, it is unclear whether these assimilative regulations were the result of a discussion with Chinese organizations like LPKB, because these organizations would have more likely rejected the discriminative characters of these coercive measures. For instance, the Parliamentary Resolution (Ketetapan MPRS) No. XXXII/1966 about the regulation of the press includes the following: "Press publication in foreign language not written in Latin alphabets (for instance Chinese) is allowed only for one publisher chosen by the state."[153] Moreover, the Cabinet Presidium Decision (*Keputusan Presidium Kabinet*) No. 127/U/Kep/12/1966 regulated the need for Indonesians of foreign descent to change their foreign names to more familiar (*lazim*) sounding Indonesian names "in order to facilitate better social communication."[154] One of the most controversial legislation, however, was the Presidential Instruction No.14/1967 that regulated Chinese religion, belief, and customs and traditions, limiting Chinese religious practices to private settings, and banning Chinese religious and traditional celebrations in public.[155]

Another major problem arose in April 1969, when Indonesia unilaterally declared that the Dual Nationality Treaty was invalid. This ended the right of minors to hold two nationalities until they reached 18 years of age, making children of Chinese descent immediately hold the citizenship of their parents. Naturalization was not impossible, but, as reported by Munthe-Kaas, "The Indonesian authorities have so

[153] Ibid, 19. Translation mine
[154] Ibid. Translation mine
[155] Ibid. Translation mine

far shown no urge to speed up or facilitate the process of naturalization for either Chinese nationals or the stateless Chinese in spite of their professed commitment to this goal."[156]

As reflected by the legislations above, assimilation became the basis of many coercive government policies. There were various reactions among the Chinese communities toward these new regulatory policies. Although many decided to flee from Indonesia, many who either chose to stay or had no other choice began to adopt the assimilation program (*program pembauran*), or at least appear to move toward assimilation, in order to adjust to the new situation. Yet, at heart many saw "no reason why they should have to jettison their culture to prove that they are worthy and loyal Indonesian citizens."[157]

But perhaps the government's most troubling policy was the obligation for citizens to prove their status of citizenship by introducing a new legal document entitled the Letter for Proof of Citizenship of the Republic of Indonesia (Surat Bukti Kewarganegaraan Republik Indonesia) or SBKRI which was a certificate of evidence regarding Indonesian citizenship. Article 1 of the Minister of Justice Decree No. JB 3/4/12 of 1978 regarding SBKRI stated, "each citizen of Indonesia must prove his citizenship by applying for a copy of SBKRI to the Ministry of Justice."[158] Technically, every citizen had to have this document in order to apply for the Residency Identity Card or KTP, an obligatory identity card for those who have reached the age of seventeen.

In practice, however, this document was compulsory only for Chinese Indonesians, as they were required to present it when applying marriage certificate,

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[156] (Fryer and Jackson 1977, 272)
[157] (Fryer and Jackson 1977, 275)
[158] Frans H. Winarta, "Racial Discrimination in the Indonesian Legal System," in *Ethnic Relations and Nation Building in Southeast Asia: the case of Ethnic Chinese*, ed. Leo Suryadinata (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2004), 70.

birth certificate, and other documents issued by the government. Not surprisingly, this process created an incentive for corruption among field-level bureaucrats. For instance, although Article 2 sub-paragraph 2 of the Joint Decree stated that there was no administration fee to issue SBKRI, one of Indonesia's biggest newspapers reported that the fee to issue this certificate reportedly ranged from 1 million to 7 million rupiah (around $100 to $700) and took around two to three weeks to produce.[159]

The introduction of SBKRI is a major example of the structural vulnerability for ethnic Chinese legal rights in Indonesian society. With such a weak legal basis there was no firm guarantee by the state to provide protection for them. Protection became, as Jemma Purdey put it, "a day-to-day concern."[160]

The Economy and the Chinese

In his book about Chinese business in Indonesia, Christian Chua noted that popular perception of ethnic Chinese Indonesians during the New Order era was problematic because it was based on a number of Chinese business tycoons associated with the corrupt government. He wrote, "The powerful position of the Chinese billionaires is without question: what is problematic was that the remaining 6 million Sino-Indonesians were considered to be as powerful, wealthy, and exploitative."[161] Indeed, as the Chinese business community became crucially involved in the nation's economic development, resentment against their economic domination became even stronger among indigenous Indonesians. With the political impotence of the Chinese, there was no source for the majority to learn about the diversity within the ethnic Chinese communities. In turn, many non-Chinese Indonesians had the tendency to

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[159] Ibid, 71

[160] Jemma Purdey, *Anti-Chinese Violence in Indonesia, 1996-1999* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2006), 21.

[161] Chua, Christian. *Chinese Big Business in Indonesia: The State of Capital* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 4.

associate any Chinese, wealthy and poor alike, citizens and non-citizen alike, Peranakan and Totok alike, and entrepreneur and non-entrepreneur alike, with economic exploitation, corrupt relationship with the bureaucratic system, and, most importantly, wealthy.

From 1966 to the early 1990s, Indonesia had an average growth rate of between five to ten percent each year, which indicated an economic expansion by almost five hundred percent within those decades.[162] The oil boom in the early 1970s led to spectacular growth particularly in petroleum exports, as well as in manufacturing, mining sectors, and other natural resources.[163] By the late 1980s Indonesia was hailed as one of Asia's success stories on the way to becoming a newly industrialized economic entity. The percentage of people living under the poverty line declined from well over half of the population to around 20 percent.[164] The New Order government achieved international recognition for its successful food production as the country became self sufficient in the production of rice, and its successful family planning programs made Indonesia a model country for its implementation.[165]

As mentioned previously, however, widespread socio-economic inequality was clearly visible throughout the nation. Population living standards remained very low, while wealth was and remains highly concentrated in a few urban areas, particularly in Jakarta. Suharto's family and his close friends were among those who particularly gained spectacular wealth. The President and his wife were involved in private business activities, and their children were infamously involved in their own business interests in telecommunications, shipbuilding, agribusiness, and the nation's basic infrastructures, among many others. The wealth of the presidential family became one

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[162] (Purdey 2006, 18)
[163] Ibid.
[164] (Vatikiotis 1993, 108)
[165] Hal Hill, *Indonesia's New Order*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), 54-55.

of the most prominent issues particularly among Indonesian urban populations within the last decade of the New Order era, when the President's children began to enter the country's business realm.[166]

Public sentiments on economic inequalities were also focused on the Chinese big business tycoons who also managed to gather enormous wealth. Some of these entrepreneurs were among Suharto's closest cronies who occupied a central position in maintaining the interrelationship between economic development and political stability. Suharto needed the Chinese entrepreneurs in general for two interrelated goals. First of all, as indicated by Wibowo, the government needed to create employment during the period of economic devastation in the late 1960s, and the Chinese entrepreneurs were the ones who had the means and capabilities to do so.[167] The government's role, therefore, was to provide incentives through means such as concessions for the Chinese-dominated private sector to grow healthily. The other goal, however, was more deeply political - in order to secure his strategic position, Suharto had to maintain the support of the Indonesian army, the largest and most powerful of all branches of the Indonesian military. To do so, Suharto relied on the Chinese business community to fund this relationship.[168] Thus the partnership between the military and ethnic Chinese businessmen developed, in which the military provided them with facilities for the entrepreneurs to continue their business.[169] More importantly, this partnership with the military provided the ultimate guarantee of

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[166] (Purdey 2006, 18). For more about Suharto's family business see (Schwarz 2000, 133-161)

[167] (Wibowo 1999, xxi)

[168] (Turner 1974, 400)

[169] N. Nuranto, "Kebijakan Terhadap Bisnis Etnis Cina Di Masa Orde Baru," In *Retrospeksi dan Rekontekstualisasi Masalah Cina*, ed. Ivan Wibowo Hal. (Jakarta: Gramedia,1999), 59. Nuranto suspected that there was an establishment of forums such as the "Indonesian Business Center" (IBC) and the "National Development Corporation" (NDC) in 1968, which were intended to conduct fund-raising for the military. Among those in the board were military leaders, and the ownership were dominated by the military and several well—known *cukongs* such as Sudono Salim (Liem Soe Liong), Jusuf Wanandi (Liem Bian Kie), and Suwandi Hamid (Ong Ah Lok).

security, which was something that Chinese Indonesians in general did not have due to their political insignificance. This mechanism gave birth to what became known as the *cukong* system, where military personnel had such a relationship with a *cukong*, a pejorative term for an ethnic Chinese businessman who, as Jemma Purdey wrote it, would exchange money for security.[170] The *cukong* system is one of the defining aspects of Indonesia's crony capitalism under Suharto.

It should be noted that most ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs come from the Totok community. First of all, it is helpful to provide a general idea of the difference between Totok and Peranakan Chinese communities in socio-economic spheres during this time period: the Totok Chinese were more likely to be associated with entrepreneurial activities while the Peranakans showed a larger diversification of occupations, mostly being associated with paid employment and white-collar jobs as well as certain professions such as medicine, law, and engineering.[171] As a reflection of these occupational differences, the two groups were more likely to reside in different urban areas. While the Totoks tended to remain in the urban areas' historic Chinese quarters, the Peranakan Chinese were more widely spread out and lived in greater variety of houses, from small huts to suburban villas.

This differentiation was important in relation to the collective image of "Chineseness", as Wang Gungwu called it, in the eyes of the indigenous majority. The stereotypical foreign characteristics of the Chinese mostly referred to the Totoks, whose cultural, linguistic, and even physical appearances tended to be more closely associated with mainland China, unlike the Peranakans were more similar to those of the Pribumi. It was the predominantly Totok Chinese business tycoons who not only became the most powerful entrepreneurs in the nation but also received extensive

[170] (Purdey 2006, 21)
[171] (Fryer and Jackson 1977, 265)

national media attention due to their role in the economy. This publicity factor, combined with the lack of representation of Chinese communities' diversity to the Indonesian public, was also a detrimental factor that shaped the negative association of "Chineseness" with economic exploitation and corruption.

Cukong-ism: The Case of Liem Soe Liong

The essence of Indonesia's crony capitalist system is the following: the closer someone to the center of power, the wealthier that person would be. This was precisely the case of those who were close to Suharto, Chinese or non-Chinese alike. Aside from Suharto's family, however, the wealthiest Indonesians during this era were ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs who practiced the *cukong* system with none other than President Suharto himself. The extent of opportunities would be determined by one's degree of relationship with the president, which would eventually determine his favor to certain individuals.

To have a further understanding on this high-level *cukong* system phenomenon, it is necessary to examine the relationship between Indonesia's most prominent *cukong* in the New Order era, and the nation's ultimate ruler. Liem Soe Liong or Sudono Salim was the founder of the largest Indonesian conglomerate, the Salim Group, the country's wealthiest person for decades, and the *cukong* of no other than President Soeharto himself. A first generation Chinese Indonesian from Fujian Province who migrated to central Java, he managed to conduct spectacular business expansions during the New Order era. By the early 1980s the Salim Group became the largest Indonesian business group, and by the early 1990s its total income were about US$ 9.9 billion with at least 427 affiliated companies and a total of 135,000 employees, making it the largest conglomerate not only in the country but also in southeast Asia. According to Yuri Sato, there are at least two reasons for this massive

success, namely, "the high degree of business diversification and the monopolistic and oligopolistic positions in hold in so many businesses."[172]

The relationship between Liem and Suharto began not long after the republic gained its independence. During the period of Indonesian revolution in the 1940s, Liem helped the Indonesian army with basic logistic supplies. By the early 1950s he became a trusted army supplier, and had a chance to meet Lieutenant-Colonel Soeharto, who was then an officer assigned to the Diponegoro Territorial Army Division in Central Java. From then on Liem became Soeharto's main supplier. Liem's business expansion began in 1967, along with Soeharto's rise to power. At the time Liem was in the export-import business, in which he accumulated enough capital foundation for his future business group by the early 1970s.

Connection to Soeharto was indeed critical; for instance, his earliest success was in the export-import business of primary products with PT Waringin (Waringin Corporations). The corporation was granted license to "five times more coffee than the formal quota that the government allotted to coffee exporters."[173] Another company of his, PT Mega, was granted five percent commission by the government in the import of cloves. Again, both companies clearly received such concessions solely because of Liem's relationship with the president.

When the New Order government promoted import-substitution industries in the late 1960s,[174] the Salim Group's entrance to manufacturing received massive government aid in financing and markets. The Salim Group began with PT Tarumatex in 1968, an integrated cotton spinning-weaving company, and then with PT Boga Sari in 1968, a flour milling company. Again, PT Boga Sari received direct loan from the

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[172] Yuri Sato, "The Salim Group of Indonesia: The Development and Behavior of the Largest Conglomerate in Southeast Asia." *The Developing Economies* XXXI (4) (1993), 408.
[173] Ibid, 411
[174] It is where "the government began promoting the localization of final processing of consumer-goods and basic material production" (Sato 1993, 412)

Central Bank, a rare practice to non-state-owned corporations.[175] PT Tarumatex was no different; to compete with a large number of new textile companies in the early 1970s, the corporation received an order for uniforms from the Indonesian army worth US$ 1.7 million.[176] Government facilities were also enormous for his cement factory.

In her conclusion on a research about the Salim Group, Yuri Sato stated:

> "The 'pursuit of market domination' seen consistently throughout the development of the Salim Group can be understood as the manifestation of the group's own power: 'politically affiliated power' and 'conglomerate power.' These two hallmarks of Salim Group have been possible because of Soeharto's rise to power and because of the "full-set" industrialization strategy that has been promoted by the Soeharto's government. In this sense the Salim Group is a *symbolic economic actor* of Indonesian during the Soeharto era."[177]

Forest Czars: Bob Hasan and Prajogo Pangestu

Another distinctively prominent ethnic Chinese conglomerate owner was Bob Hasan, an Indonesian tycoon in the timber industry and a former Minister of Trade and Industry. Born in Semarang from a family of tobacco trader, The Kian Seng is a Peranakan Chinese who would later change his name to Mohamad Hasan when he embraced Islam.[178] The fact that he was a Muslim and of Peranakan descent may have set him apart from the typically Totok business tycoons, which was perhaps his ticket to occupy the ministry-level position in the cabinet. His long-time relationship with Suharto, like Liem, was again the key to economic and political power. Similar to Liem Soe Liong, Hasan met Suharto in the early period of the republic, when Suharto was commanding the army's Diponegoro Division in Central Java.

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[175] Ibid, 215
[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid, 441
[178] Christopher Barr, "Bob Hasan, the Rise of Apkindo, and the Shifting Dynamics of Control in Indonesia's Timber Sector." *Indonesia* 65 (1998). http://cip.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/dienst_redirect.pl?url=/UI/1.0/Summarize/seap.indo/1106953918

Hasan's main interest was in the forestry sector, in which he controlled about two million hectares of forestry concessions, mostly located in Kalimantan.[179] This pursuit of domination began in the 1980s when Indonesian businessmen turned against the export of raw logs to Japan's plywood industry. As Indonesia's dominating buyer, Japan at the time had the power to determine wholesale price. As a response, Indonesia banned the exports of raw logs and created its own plywood industry by forming Indonesian Wood Panel Association or Apkindo (*Asosiasi Panel Kayu Indonesia*), a national marketing body that controlled plywood exports.[180] Under his leadership, Apkindo successfully decreased Japanese companies' monopsony in national plywood industry. This position eventually brought him to the position of Minister of Trade and Finance in 1998, right before Suharto fell from power. He reportedly explained his business nationalism in his first conference as a minister by saying, "Monopolies are okay. As long as the monopoly serves in the interest of many people, it's okay."[181] Not long after, Apkindo became a symbol of the New Order regime's corruption, and Bob Hasan was brought to a widely publicized trial for corruption in 2000.[182]

Another top crony of Suharto who dominated the forest-related industry was Prajogo Pangestu. Born Phang Djun Phen in West Kalimantan, Prajogo was a Totok businessman who became successful before building a relationship with Suharto. He began to approach the president through Suharto's children who shared Pangestu's interest in the timber industry, especially to liberate themselves from Bob Hasan's

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[179] (Schwarz 2000, 140)

[180] Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 16. For more about Apkindo and the timber commodity industry in Kalimantan during the New Order regime see Gellert, Paul K. "Renegotiating Timber Commodity Chain: Lessons from Indonesia on the Political Construction of Global Commodity Chains." *Sociological Forum* 18(1) (March, 2003): 53-84.

[181] (Barr 1998, 1)

[182] "Suharto crony brought to trial." *BBC World News*, September 20, 2000, retrieved November 20, 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/933722.stm.

domination. As noted by Adam Schwarz, "In Indonesia, the only way to combat a crony is to become one."[183] This was the path Pangestu took, and Suharto's eldest daughter Siti Hadrianti Rukmana and his middle son Bambang Trihatmodjo joined him in doing so.

Pangestu's connection with Suharto's children became an entry point to approach the president. He partly financed the president's autobiography and several projects that pleased Mrs. Tien Suharto; more importantly, he contributed US$ 220 million to bail out Suharto's Bank Duta in late 1990.[184] This effort certainly tightened the bond with the president and by 1991 he accumulated about 505 million hectares of forest concession areas, a size slightly larger than Denmark.[185] In 1993, one of the companies controlled by Pangestu, PT Barito Pacific Timber, was the largest company on the Jakarta Stock Exchange.[186] Even in 2007 Prajogo Pangestu still held the 13th richest Indonesian according to Forbes Magazine.[187]

It should be noted that not all ethnic Chinese tycoons in the Suharto era were part of the *cukong* system. However, it is fair to say that the vast majority of Indonesia's top ten business groups were founded by those who maintained close relationship with either government or military officials, if not directly with the president himself. Along with Liem Soe Liong, Bob Hasan, and Prajogo Pangestu, names such as Eka Tjipta Widjaja (Oey Ek Tjhong), William Soeryadjaya (Tjia Kian Liong), Mochtar Riady (Lee Mo Tie), Suhargo Gondokusumo, (Go Ka Him), and The

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[183] (Schwarz 2000, 141)
[184] Ibid.
[185] Ibid, 140
[186] Michael Richardson, "A Giant Joins Jakarta Exchange," *International Herald Tribune*, January 10, 1993, retrieved November 20, 2008 from http://www.iht.com/articles/1993/10/01/jak.php
[187] Justin Doebele, "Indonesia's 40 Richest," *Forbes.com*, December 13, 2007, retrieved November 20, 2008 from http://www.forbes.com/lists/2007/80/07indonesia_Prajogo-Pangestu_D0B8.html.

Ning King were on the top ten list of Indonesia's wealthiest business leaders in 1992;[188] all were involved in the practice of crony capitalism.

Anti-Chinese Violence

By the early 1970s, many elements within society began to notice the negative effect of a combination between the *cukong* system and a liberal economic system that loosely controlled the influx of foreign investment. University students, who supported the overthrowing of Sukarno's corrupt regime in the mid 1960s, realized that eradication of corruption was not the government's main priority.[189] The cosmopolitan Pribumi business community was also concerned with the *cukong* system, particularly in relation to the flood of foreign investment inflow that often benefited ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs due to their connections with the power. In the historically heated competition between indigenous and Chinese conglomerates, this trend infuriated the indigenous entrepreneurs who, besides the few who enjoyed close relationships with Suharto and his family,[190] were left behind in having business opportunities.[191] For instance, in the mid 1990s, an estimated seventy-five percent of the foreign investors who set up joint ventures in Indonesia chose an ethnic Chinese-owned firm as their local partner.[192] Moreover, the heavy foreign investment led to serious loss in labor-intensive factories run by Pribumi entrepreneurs to the capital-intensive plants set up by foreign investors and their ethnic Chinese partners.[193]

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[188] See Table I: Indonesia's Ten Largest Business Groups, 1992 in (Sato 1993, 409)
[189] (Schwarz 2000, 33)
[190] Ibid, 142. The largest indigenous business groups were, in fact, owned by Suharto's children. According to Adam Schwarz, the Bimantara Group, owned by Suharto's eldest son Bambang, was the largest indigenous-owned business group in the 1990s, only a decade after he entered the business world. For more about Suharto's family business see (Schwarz 2000, 133-161)
[191] (Vatikiotis 1993, 108)
[192] (Schwarz 2000, 313)
[193] Ibid, 34

This phenomenon certainly strengthened the economic position of ethnic Chinese in key industries, which aggravated the resentment felt by many non-Chinese. This agitation was also shared by several senior army officers who favored a higher degree of economic nationalism in policymaking, reminiscent to the Sukarno period's PP 10 of 1959 implementation.[194] The government eventually responded by establishing state-owned enterprises (Badan Usaha Milik Negara) in several key industries in the early 1980s, although it did not decrease the economic power of the ethnic Chinese tycoons.

Anti-Chinese sentiments had occurred since the beginning of the New Order period. Several documented acts of anti-Chinese involved different segments of society including military paratroopers, such as in Jakarta's Glodok Chinatown area in 1968, student-demonstrators that vandalized Chinese properties in Surabaya in the same year, and Muslim groups in the city of Manado in 1970.[195] A more significant incident involving mobs of urban poor occurred in Bandung in 1973 that killed one person and damaged about 1500 Chinese houses and shops.[196]

However, none of these anti-Chinese sentiments shared the frustration of university students and Pribumi business circles, which was the case in what to be known as the Malari Incident. In January 1974 Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka visited Indonesia. Japan was the nation's largest investor at the time, and therefore the Prime Minister was a particularly important guest for the government. During negotiations between Suharto and the Prime Minister at the National Palace, thousands of students demonstrated on the streets of Jakarta, calling for reduction of prices, the end of corruption, and the disband of Suharto's private assistants (*staf*

[194] Ibid, 108
[195] (Turner 1974, 384-388)
[196] Ibid, 389-390. (Schwarz 2000, 34)

pribadi) who many accused for being instrumental in accommodating corrupt practices in the government.[197]

The demonstrations turned violent when mobs stopped motor vehicles, particularly those made by Japanese companies, and ordered the passengers to get out before vehicles would be burned. The mobs also targeted the showrooms of Toyota, whose local partner was William Soerjadjaja's Astra Group.[198] Then they turned their attention to Chinese shops, particularly the Chinese-dominated commercial area of Pasar Senen, whose four-story building was burned.[199]

The Malari Incident became a turning point for Suharto to tighten his grip of power, particularly in the political realm. Suharto dismissed the military personnel who supported economic nationalism, who were mostly from the old 1945 generation, and replaced them with new graduates from the Magelang Military Academy.[200] Suharto also took measures to gradually depoliticize Indonesian society by giving more power to the state apparatus. Some of the measures taken by the government included the arrest of many student leaders and prominent independent public figures and the coercion of strict regulation by the Minister of Education and Culture on student-led demonstrations outside and within university campuses. It also imposed a newly formulated Pancasila indoctrination document called the Guidelines for Instilling and Implementing Pancasila (Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila) or the P4 to create ideological conformity on the state philosophy.[201]

The demands of nationalist and interventionist ideas in economic policy-making resulted in several changes. Foreign investment regulations were once again

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[197] (Schwarz 2000, 34)
[198] (Turner 1974, 393)
[199] Ibid.
[200] (Hill 1994, 16)
[201] Ibid, 15

tightened where investors were obligated to form joint ventures with local partners, and trade and industry policy was redirected towards import substituting industrialization led by the state.[202] This led to the rise of state-owned enterprises such as Krakatau Steel and the state-owned oil company Pertamina.[203]

However, this change in favor of the indigenous business class did not have any effect on ending the targeting of Chinese properties and individuals by other elements of society during times of dissent, such as Islamic youth groups and the urban poor. When the New Order government relaxed some restrictions against collective expressions of political and social aspirations in the early 1990s, sporadic acts of anti-Chinese violence increasingly occurred in various parts of the nation, particularly toward the last three years of the New Order regime.[204]

The urban poor made a large part of Indonesia's workforce who moved into the urban manufacturing sector. Along with this migration, the frequency of labor unrest intensified, particularly in the mid 1990s. In 1994, for example, about 150,000 workers went on strike, compared with just 1,000 in 1989.[205] The main cause of this was the problem of underemployment. Although the official employment level was low, a World Bank report in 1996 estimated that more than a third of Indonesia's 90 million-strong labor force was working less than 35 hours per week.[206] Moreover, the unemployment trend showed that in the mid 1990s young Indonesians between the ages of 15 and 24 accounted only for twenty percent of the workforce, but seventy percent of the unemployed.[207] In 1996, Juwono Sudarsono, the then deputy governor of the National Defense Institute, noted, "It's the urban poor who are the most

[202] Ibid, 37
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid, 24
[205] Ibid.
[206] (Schwarz 2000, 312)
[207] Ibid.

deprived and therefore the most volatile, and it's not difficult to incite them to violence. It happened in 1974, it happened in 1996 and you may not have to wait another twenty years for it to happen again."[208] Only two years after, the urban poor participated in the May 1998 Riots, which included the raping and killings of ethnic Chinese Indonesians.

By the 1990s the issue of socio-economic inequity became entangled with the issue of ethnicity, with the dichotomy becoming that of the Chinese rich and the Pribumi poor.[209] This resentment increased toward the end of the 1990s when increased racial tensions occurred; according to Michael Vatikiotis, the Chinese were said "to behave too exclusively, and were lending a bad image to the majority of Indonesian Chinese – not all of whom were rich and well-connected."[210] The Chinese as a collective identity became associated with enormous wealth and the corrupt regime. The existing *cukong* system combined with the day-to-day bribery in which Chinese Indonesians had to involve became prevalent in all levels of society, from conglomerates seeking protection to military members or government bureaucrats to small shopkeepers paying local military officials.[211]

Vernon Turner wrote, "The fact that it was possible to arouse anti-Chinese sentiments so easily was a barometer of the explosive nature of Indonesian-Chinese relations."[212] Despite the fact that President Suharto's market-generated economic growth in the 1980s and 1990s increased the per capita income of the Pribumi majority, there was a pervasive belief that Suharto's market liberalization favored the

[208] (Schwarz 2000, 312)
[209] (Vatikiotis 1993, 170)
[210] Ibid, 178
[211] (Purdey 2006, 21)
[212] (Turner 1974, 395)

"already rich" Sino-Indonesians at the expense of indigenous Indonesians.[213] The word "Chinese", according an interviewee to Schwarz in 1989, became synonymous with the word "corruption".[214]

The position of ethnic Chinese Indonesians during the New Order era, therefore, is difficult to discuss due to their ambiguous position within society. On one hand, they were oppressed by the government through its discriminative assimilation policy. On the other hand, the non-Chinese Indonesians saw the Chinese as benefactors of a corrupt regime at the expense of the majority. This ambiguity was a reflection of the nature of Suharto's New Order regime, whose approach to political, social, and economic issues was based on the pragmatic goal of staying in power. Needless to say, the Suharto regime intensified the historical schisms between Chinese Indonesians and indigenous Indonesians throughout its 32 years of rule.

[213] Amy Chua, *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 43.
[214] (Purdey 2006, 22)

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CHAPTER SIX

CHINESE INDONESIAN MOVEMENTS IN THE REFORM ERA: 1998 - 2008

This chapter will analyze what was known as the Chinese Indonesian Movements during the post-Suharto era. These movements refer to the emergence of social and political activisms by various ethnic Chinese organizations during the past one decade from 1998 to 2008.

The word “movement” may suggest that there was a collective activism by various groups of people in promoting a common cause. Chinese Indonesian activism, however, was a phenomenon in which independent groups promoted different aspects of Chinese Indonesian interests. Many were less concerned to create one large ethnic Chinese organization that promoted the interests of all Chinese Indonesians. Thus, they will intentionally be referred to as “movements” because there is no single, collective movement representing this phenomenon.

Furthermore, not all activisms involving the ethnic Chinese desire to be seen as a part of these “Chinese” movements. Many groups, for instance, argue that they simply promote equal rights for all ethnic minorities. The membership policy of many organizations is also not limited to ethnic Chinese and even encourages non-Chinese Indonesians to join their cause. Others, on the other hand, are solely focused on promoting the Chinese community’s interests and have an exclusively Chinese membership policy.

The chapter is primarily focused on finding a common theme among these movements. It examines the main goal, objective, and philosophical justification of different activisms in the context of Indonesian nationhood. What is the primary message of these movements? What is the nature of their goals - is it simply to put

forward the interests of this minority group? Or does it have a larger implication within the framework of national identity?

This is an important question for at least one reason: throughout history there has been much paranoia about the movements of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. From the national revolution era in the 1940s to the era of the New Order Regime, there was a tendency among Pribumi Indonesians to think of Chinese activisms as being too attached with the mainland. In other words, Chinese social and political activisms were often viewed as a reflection of Chinese chauvinism, which in turn emphasized the notion that the Chinese were aliens to Indonesians. Thus, it is interesting to study the main objectives of these contemporary Chinese movements, particularly from the perspective of the Chinese themselves, as an attempt to counter this perception among many Indonesians.

What has been found in this study, however, is not only that these various movements share a common goal, but they also redefine the mainstream understanding of Indonesian identity. The main objective of these movements is to eradicate the notion of The Chinese Problem that had been promoted by the previous regime, and to change the negative perception of the Chinese that has been prevalent in Indonesian society. Essentially, these movements attempt to argue that the Chinese indeed share a sense of Indonesian nationhood, and have the unquestionable right to be treated as equal Indonesian citizens.

Fall of the New Order Regime

As mentioned in the previous chapter, anti-Chinese violence occurred throughout the New Order regime. Resentment against this minority group reached its climax toward the end of the regime rule in May 1998, when a popular uprising led to the downfall of Suharto from presidency.

The trigger for this political crisis was an economic one, namely the Asian Financial Crisis that began in 1997. [215] After about six months of economic crisis, various elements of society began to blame the Suharto government for the increasingly chronic price inflation of basic goods, food shortage, and mass unemployment in early 1998.[216] This economic crisis turned into a political crisis particularly when Suharto was re-elected on March 11th, 1998, with his new cabinet consisting of family members and cronies.[217] Demonstrations began to take place on campuses and in the streets of major Indonesian cities with students, workers, and intellectuals on the forefront of the movement, demanding Suharto's resignation and a cabinet reshuffle.

The demand for Suharto's resignation became even more widespread after four student demonstrators from Jakarta's Trisakti University were shot dead in their campus by mysterious snipers on May 12th.[218] Within the next three days Jakarta became a site of mass student demonstrations and heavy military presence throughout the city, with more than 15,000 troops backed by tanks and armored vehicles deployed at vital locations.[219] However, despite the presence of military troops, by May 18th tens of thousands of students occupied the grounds and buildings of Indonesia's Parliament, the People's Consultative Assembly (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat) or the

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[215] Stephan Haggard, "Crisis, Political Change, and Economic Reform," in *The Political Economy of the Asian Financial Crisis* by Stephan Haggard, Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 2000, 116.

[216] Ressy Canonica-Walangitang, *The End of Suharto's New Order Indonesia* (Frankfurt, Peter Lang GmbH, 2003):241. Also see Zon, Fadli. *Politik Huru-Hara Mei 1998*. Jakarta: Institute for Policy Studies, 2004.

[217] Ibid, 234. The new Vice President was Suharto's close associate B.J. Habibie, and the "Seventh Develoment Cabinet" included the President's daughter, Tutut, as minister of social affairs, and Bob Hasan as minister of industry and trade. Suharto's son-in-law Prabowo Subianto was appointed as the head of the key elite force "Army Strategic Reserve Command".

[218] For more about the Trisakti shooting incident see Hadikoemoro, Soekisno. *The Trisakti Tragedy, 12 May 1998*. Jakarta: Trisakti University Press, 2000.

[219] (Canonica-Walangitang 2003, 237)

DPR. Suharto announced his resignation on May 21st, 1998, marking an end of the New Order era and the beginning of Indonesia's period of democratic reform.

However, May 1998 is also remembered for another darker incident – namely, the riots that occurred in several major cities including Jakarta, Solo, Surabaya, Lampung, and Palembang. The violence, particularly in Jakarta, reached its peak from the 12th to the 15th of May, when mobs consisting primarily of the urban poor damaged and burned residential and commercial areas including shopping centers, office buildings, and car showrooms. These series of events took more than 1100 lives,[220] with more than one thousand people trapped in shopping malls and killed by the fire in Jakarta and Solo.[221] What the May 1998 Riots are most remembered for, however, is the targeting of Chinese Indonesian individuals and their properties by the non-Chinese mobs. The type of damage included material damage, death and injuries, kidnapping victims, and most controversially, sexual harassment and rape.

The targeting of Chinese Indonesians was confirmed by the report of Habibie government's on the subject, which was better known as the TGPF Report.[222] It indicated that gang rape was the dominating form of sexual violence, and most victims, although not all, were women of ethnic Chinese descent with various socio-economic backgrounds.[223] Chinese Indonesian victims were also reported to suffer the most material damage.[224] The report also indicates that the violence was partly

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[220] Providing an estimated number of victims is a controversial issue between the government and various Non-Governmental Organizations. According to *Republika* (June 5, 1998), the Social Institute of Jakarta counted over 1000 and the National Commission of Human Rights counted 1188 victims. *Suara Karya* (June 10, 1998) reported 1217. To have a better understanding on the controversy of numbering the victims, including the most controversial rape cases, see Purdey, Jemma. "Problematizing the Place of Victims in Reformasi Indonesia: A Contested Truth about the May 1998 Violence." *Asian Survey* 42, 4 (2002): 609-611

[221] (Purdey 2006, 108)

[222] For more about the controversial investigation and writing of the TGPF Report see (Purdey 2002, 609)

[223] Laporan TGPF, "Chapter 4: Findings," Copyright © Semanggi Peduli, http://semanggipeduli.com/tgpf/bab4.html

[224] (Purdey 2006, 108)

triggered by certain elements that could be categorized under the provocateur group (*kelompok provokator*), namely individuals who were highly trained in weapons, demonstrated high mobility with transportation, and used electronic communication systems such as cell phones and handy talkies.[225] These groups provoked hundreds of people in the area who in turn became aggressive and began looting and burning shops and residents "in an organized way."[226]

By this statement the TGPF Report suggests the widespread allegation that the May 1998 Riots were instigated by certain elements in the military. The alleged military involvement was related to an elite power struggle between two opposing factions within the army on the issue of presidential succession.[227] The leaders of the two factions were Lieutenant General Prabowo Subianto, then the Commander of Kostrad (Army Strategic Reserve) who was also then the son-in-law of Suharto, and General Wiranto, at the time the Minister of Defense and a close associate to the president.[228] Analysts speculated that Prabowo instigated violence with the help of his close ally Major General Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin, the Operations Commander for Greater Jakarta (Pangkoops Raya), whose position granted him considerable control over military operations in the capital.[229] The violence was suspected to have two aims: to terrorize the opponents of the government and, perhaps more importantly, to demonstrate the incompetence of Wiranto as a commander in controlling disorder.[230]

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[225] (Laporan TGPF)
[226] (Laporan TGPF)
[227] See (Purdey 2002, 609)

[228] (Purdey 2006, 106)
[229] (Purdey 2006, 107). Also see Laporan TGPF. "Chapter 5: Analysis." Copyright © Semanggi Peduli 2001-2003, http://semanggipeduli.com/tgpf/bab4.html. This government report indicates that Prabowo was responsible in the case of kidnapping activists. This argument is disputed by Fadli Zon who, based on his first-hand observation, argued that Prabowo was being set up as a scapegoat by post-Suharto political figures. See (Zon 2004, 127-128).
[230] (Purdey 2006, 107)

Yet, when resigning on May 21st, 1998, Suharto chose to take the constitutional path by transferring his power to Vice President B.J. Habibie, bypassing the two opposing military figures.

Whoever the real perpetrators were, the violence shocked the majority of Indonesians, particularly the Chinese population. According to Leo Suryadinata, there were three major impacts of the violence toward the Chinese communities in the affected urban areas. The first impact was an exodus of ethnic Chinese out of Jakarta to other towns or out of the country. From May 14th to the 21st, about 152,000 people fled out of the country, an estimated 70,800 were Indonesian citizens; most were likely to be ethnic Chinese.[231] Second, the violence generated capital flight along with the ethnic Chinese exodus. The Chinese, who were mostly upper-middle class, took with them an estimated US$ 30 to 60 billion, while an Indonesian source claimed that the number was closer to US$ 110 billion.[232] This phenomenon would soon haunt the new Indonesian government in their struggle to improve the nation's economic condition, which has always desperately needed the capital owned by ethnic Chinese Indonesians.

The third, according to Suryadinata, is what will be the focus of the rest of this chapter – namely, an increasing political and social consciousness among Chinese Indonesians that led to what historian Johanes Herlijanto called the Social Movements of Chinese Indonesians.

The early period of Reform Era

Indonesians quickly called the post-Suharto period The Reform Era (*Era Reformasi).* The first year of the Reform Era was a euphoric time in Indonesian

[231] Leo Suryadinata, "Chinese Politics in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Beyond the Ethnic Approach?" *Asian Survey* 41, 3 (2001): 508.
[232] Ibid, 509

politics. After 32 years under dictator rule, the symbolic act of the students toppling the regime brought a widespread optimism that political power had finally come back to the hands of the people. Furthermore, the experience under authoritarian rule had enlightened the public to be actively involved in politics. The main significance of the reform movement, according to Jemma Purdey, was that it was "the greatest shift in Indonesian politics in over 30 years."[233]

In many ways, this call for democracy was made possible by the successive government under the leadership of President Burhannudin Jusuf Habibie, who was an engineer with little experience in politics. He served in a series of Suharto's Cabinet as the Minister of Technology and Research for 20 years before being promoted to Vice Presidency only months before Suharto stepped down. His inexperience in politics was further complicated by the fact that he was a civilian, which means that he lacked the military support that Suharto had, nor was he an eloquent speaker as Sukarno was.[234] Perhaps as he realized his relatively weak political position, Habibie decided to cater to the contemporary popular spirit of democratic reform in order to gather public support. Not long after he took presidency, Habibie took steps to liberalize public life by giving Indonesia's civil society two of its basic rights - the freedom of association and free expression.[235]

The consequence was enormous as fear, anger, and hatred that had been repressed for so long were suddenly allowed to be expressed. This new openness led to a mosaic of interests projected in various forms and degrees of intensity, from mere verbal frustrations on the media and internet to the fight for control of jobs, resources, and territories, and for the overthrow of opposing parties from power in the municipal

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[233] (Purdey 2006, 106)
[234] Norman G. Owen, ed., *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia* (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press: 2005), 440.
[235] (Chua 2008, 78)

and provincial-level political scenes. Communal violence broke out in the islands of Sulawesi, Ambon, Halmahera, and Kalimantan, causing more loss of human lives and the exodus of hundreds of thousands of Indonesians across the archipelago.[236] A few years later, separatist attempts in Aceh and Papua gained widespread public attention, bringing to the public debate the discourse about Indonesian unity.[237] Aside from regionalism and communal interests, political Islam also re-emerged as it quickly gained support from all levels of society; new groups offered their own interpretation of Islam and the different degrees of incorporation of violence.[238]

At the same time, however, this new openness led to the re-emergence of civil rights movements in the country. As the government was to hold a national parliamentary election on June 7th, 1999, new parties blossomed almost overnight with various reform agendas, including the demand to revise the constitution, the reduction of Golkar's political power, and an end to Habibie's presidency due to his connection with Suharto. Other popular issues among political parties and non-governmental organizations alike included the advocacy to assist the poor, to demand reform in the legal system, to prosecute Suharto, and to separate police and military powers.[239] Demonstrations against human rights violations, for equality, transparency, and other concerns became annual events in the capital and other major cities.[240] New media publications reflecting alternative views on social and political issues appeared ubiquitously, and new faces of public figures with different intellectual qualifications took their chances to express their views in this new era of openness.

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[236] (Ed. Owen 2005, 440)
[237] Ibid, 442
[238] Ibid, 440
[239] Ibid.
[240] See (Chua 2008, 78-79) for more about activism against corporate-government corrupt coalition.

The Habibie Goernment and the May 1998 Violence

This spirit of celebrating freedom of expression opened an opportunity for Chinese Indonesians to voice their concerns and interests, in which they quickly participated. The first and foremost concern of the minority group was the new government's response to the horrific violence that ethnic Chinese suffered during the May 1998 Riots. Chinese Indonesians demanded for a thorough investigation and to bring the perpetrators to trial.

Aside from having the advantage of the new openness, the Chinese Indonesians' demand for justice was also supported by national and international human rights groups who viewed the May 1998 violence as a crime against humanity.[241] The incident put Indonesia under the spotlight in the international arena, receiving condemnations particularly from ethnic Chinese communities around the world.[242] China, Taiwan, and the government of the United States on behalf of the Chinese communities demanded the Habibie government conduct a thorough investigation of the violence. Aside from being a matter of diplomatic importance, the Chinese issue also became a test for the government's moral accountability in front of its own citizens as many non-Chinese Indonesians also took sympathy in the ethnic Chinese cause.

In response, the Habibie government formed a forensic and fact-finding group called Joint Fact-Finding Team (Tim Gabungan Pencari Fakta) or the (TGPF) in July, to investigate the May 1998 violence, particularly relating to the possibility that such

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[241] Ilham Khoiri, "I Wibowo Tentang Liberalisasi Masyarakat Tionghoa," *Kompas*, February 10, 2008. More about the reaction of Chinese nationals about the May 1998 Violence see Hughes, Christopher R. *Chinese Nationalism in the Global Era*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

[242] Many expressed their anger in the cyber world. One Chinese correspondent wrote: "My mother country, do you hear them crying? Your children abroad are crying out… my compatriots are being barbarously slaughtered, they need help, and not just moral expressions of understanding and concern. My motherland, they are your children. The blood that flows from their bodies is the blood of the Han race…" (Christopher Hughes, *Chinese Nationalism in the Global Era* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 82.)

attacks were systematically planned and organized by certain factions of the government.[243] In addition, Habibie also issued a Presidential Instruction to reinforce a poorly socialized Presidential Decree number 55 of 1996 that abolished the function of the notoriously discriminative document SBKRI.[244]

The status of the Joint Fact-Finding Team report as the government's official version on the topic, however, is often viewed with scrutiny in terms of the data accountability and factual basis of its analyses.[245] Those who seek a more complete picture often rely on alternative sources resulting from investigations independent from government involvement. Among the most comprehensive investigations was the one conducted by a non-governmental organization Solidaritas Nusa Bangsa or SNB (Homeland Solidarity), whose legal analyses were supported with meticulous facts showing how the riots could be viewed as an organized crime against humanity.[246]

Formed on June 5, 1998, this organization was initially a spontaneous reaction to help the victims of the riots.[247] Under the leadership of Esther Jusuf, a young ethnic Chinese lawyer who became one of the most prominent experts on the topic of the May 1998 Riots, SNB dedicates itself to promoting the eradication of discriminative policies based on ethnicity toward Indonesian citizens. The SNB itself does not claim

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[243] (Suryadinata 2001, 507)

[244] Keputusan Presiden nomor 55 Tahun 1996 tentang Bukti Kewarganegaraan Republik Indonesia in (Suryadinata 2001, 507). The abolishment of SBKRI is stated in Line 4 verse 2, "For the citizens of the Republic of Indonesia who have had a National Identity Card (KTP), or Family Certification Card (KK) or Birth Certificate, the completion for the need to fulfill the requirements for certain issues can be fulfilled with the KTP, or KK, or Birth Certificate." This was followed by Line 5 that stated, "Along with the activation of Presidential Decree, all the former legislative rulings for certain issues that require SBKRI is no longer legitimate."

[245] For a thorough analysis on the method of investigation for the TGPF report read Purdey, Jemma. "Problematizing the Place of Victims in Reformasi Indonesia: A Contested Truth about the May 1998 Violence." *Asian Survey* 42, 4 (2002): 605-622.

[246] This analysis and report is compiled into a book. See Jusuf, Esther Indahyani, *Kerusuhan Mei 1998: fakta, data, dan analisa: mengungkap kerusuhan Mei 1998 sebagai kejahatan terhadap kemanusiaan*. Jakarta: Solidaritas Nusa Bangsa (SNB) dan Asosiasi Penasehat Hukum dan Hak Asasi Manusia Indonesia, 2007.

[247] Solidaritas Nusa Bangsa, "Apakah Solidaritas Nusa Bangsa Itu?" Solidaritas Nusa Bangsa, http://www.snb.or.id/?lan=&page=profil

to be an ethnic-based organization, and emphasizes its mission to fight against all kinds of racism in Indonesia. However, partly due to the history of its formation and the leadership of Esther Yusuf as a prominent Chinese Indonesian activist, the SNB has often been attached to a series of movements that historian Johanes Herlijanto calls the "ethnic Chinese Social Movements in Indonesia".[248]

The Emergence of Ethnic Chinese Social Movements

Almost immediately after the fall of Suharto, Chinese Indonesians began to take an active role in socio-political activism. Some decided to form new sociopolitical organizations that specifically promoted or let their agenda be dominated by ethnic Chinese interests. Leo Suryadinata categorizes these movements into three types of organizational forms: political party, social organization, and youth organizations and associations.[249]

One of the earliest ethnic Chinese parties was the Indonesian Chinese Reform Party, or PARTI (Partai Reformasi Tionghoa Indonesia) that was established in Jakarta on June 5, 1998.[250] Formed by a group of young Chinese Indonesians under the leadership of 39-year-old Lieus Sungkharisma (Li Xuexiong), the party stated its goal as being to promote racial harmony and protect the interests of Chinese Indonesians.[251] The formation of PARTI was followed by the Indonesian Assimilation Party, or PARPINDO (Partai Pembauran Indonesia), established by an ethnic Chinese convert Jusuf Hamka (A Bun). The party gained the support of Junus Jahja, a prominent Chinese Muslim who was active in the LPKB, the proponents of assimilative approach as a solution to The Chinese Problem. As indicated by the name,

[248] (Herlijanto 2004)
[249] (Suryadinata 2001, 514)
[250] Ibid, 509
[251] Ibid, 510

the party aimed to promote the assimilation of ethnic Chinese Indonesians into the Pribumi Indonesian culture. PARPINDO's assimilation approach, however, was unpopular among ethnic Chinese communities since it is associated with Suharto's assimilation project. Soon after, the political party transformed itself into a social organization.

Another political party formed by ethnic Chinese was the Indonesian Unity in Diversity Party, or PBI (Partai Bhineka Tunggal Ika Indonesia), that was formed on July 1st, 1998. Led by Nurdin Purnomo (Wu Nengbin), a 50-year-old of Hakka descent, the party's first and foremost immediate goal has been to push the government to conduct total reform in the regulatory field by canceling and erasing all the presidential decrees, instructions, or other forms of regulations that consist ethnic, religious, and racial discrimination.[252] The party stated, "The racial riots that occurred on May 13th – 15th, 1998 also become an inspiration for a group of people, particularly those of ethnic Chinese minority, to establish a forum that can absorb their aspirations and rights so that such ethnic violence will not be repeated again. It has been quite a long time when Indonesian Citizens of ethnic Chinese descent have always been the scapegoats for the political games of the authority."[253]

These parties emerged along with hundreds of other new parties across the nation to participate in the parliamentary election that was to be held in June 1999. Some ethnic Chinese, however, decided to participate in politics by joining non-Chinese political parties and eventually they became successful in their political career. A notable example is Kwik Kian Gie, a prominent ethnic Chinese economist who chose to stay in Megawati's Indonesian Democratic Party for Struggle (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan) or PDI-P. Kwik was eventually appointed President

[252] "Partai Bhinneka Tunggal Ika Indonesia," *Media Sinergi Bangsa* Edisi perdana, November 1998, 40.
[253] Ibid, 39

Abdurrahman Wahid cabinet's coordinating Minister of Finance and Industry in 1999, the highest cabinet position that an ethnic Chinese has ever obtained in Indonesia's history. Kwik was re-elected for the same position and became the Head of the National Planning Body under Wahid's successor Megawati in 2001. Several prominent ethnic Chinese political figures followed Kwik's path in entering politics by joining mainstream political parties. Among them were pro-assimilation leaders K. Sindhunata and former Parpindo leader Junus Jahja, who joined the National Mandate Party (Partai Amanat Nasional) or PAN.[254] Another ethnic Chinese politician was Alvin Lie, a member of the People's Representatives from PAN.

Many other Chinese Indonesians, however, chose to stay away from politics by forming non-political organizations. One of the pioneers was Brigadier General Tedy Jusuf, one of the very few ethnic Chinese Indonesians who joined the Indonesian Police Force under the Suharto regime. The retired general established the Indonesia Chinese Social Association (Paguyuban Sosial Marga Tionghoa Indonesia) or PSMTI on September 29, 1998. PSMTI's missions have been to promote awareness of ethnic Chinese rights among Indonesians, to promote the elimination of discriminatory policies toward the minority group, and to encourage ethnic Chinese Indonesians interact with mainstream society.[255] Instead of conducting political activism, PSMTI has chosen social work as their primary means of achieving their goals. PSMTI also provides aid or accommodation for victims of natural disasters, communities who are facing lawsuit problems, those who need medical aid (who are referred to hospitals

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[254] PAN was a newly formed political party under the leadership of Amien Rais, a prominent Muslim intellectual from the second largest Islamic mass organization Muhammadiyah. His organization promotes the traditional, non-indigenized practices of Islam. Its main rival is Nadhlatul Ulama, the largest Islamic mass organization under the leadership of Abdurrahman Wahid, a prominent Muslim cleric and Indonesia's fourth president. Wahid's political vehicle was the National Awakening Party or PKB.

[255] Paguyuban Sosial Marga Tionghoa Indonesia, "Paguyuban Sosial Marga Tionghoa Indonesia", Paguyuban Sosial Marga Tionghoa Indonesia, http://www.psmti.org/staticcontent/informasistatis/tentangpsmti.php#aboutus

affiliated with the organization), and those communities whose children cannot continue their formal education.[256]

Not long after PSMTI was founded, however, an internal disagreement led a number of members to leave the organization. On April 10, 1999 these former members established the Chinese Indonesian Association or Perhimpunan INTI (*Perhimpunan Indonesia Tionghoa*). Under the leadership of Eddie Lembong (Wan Youshan), a pharmacist who was active in the new Chinese movements, this organization today has the largest membership of all ethnic Chinese organizations. Similar to PSMTI, INTI aims to promote solidarity between ethnic Chinese and indigenous Indonesians and contribute to the country's development.[257] Also similarly to PSMTI, INTI focuses with social work, from providing health care service to offering educational opportunities, while emphasizing its non-affiliation with any political party. They state on their official website that the organization "is not affiliated with any existing political parties and neither does it commit itself to them."[258] Furthermore, the web site states that INTI "is open to all Indonesian citizens"[259] and seeks "to mobilize the potentials of Chinese Indonesian for the sake of the joint understanding to rebuild the Indonesian nation."[260]

The third category is the youth organizations and associations that often function as non-governmental organizations. These major organizations include the Chinese Youth Solidarity for Justice or SIMPATIK (*Solidaritas Pemuda Pemudi Tionghoa Untuk Keadilan*), the Anti-Discrimination Movement or GANDI (Gerakan

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[256] Ibid.
[257] "Perhimpunan Indonesia Tionghoa Perjuangkan Asimilasi Total," *Suara Pembaruan*, April 12, 1999.
[258] Perhimpunan Indonesia Tionghoa, "Profile: Tentang INTI," Perhimpunan Indonesia Tionghoa, http://www.inti.or.id/index.php?dir=about&file=main&menu=17
[259] Ibid.
[260] Ibid.

Anti Diskriminasi), and the Committee of Social Concern of Surabaya or Kalimas (*Komite Aliansi Kepedulian Masyarakat Surabaya*). The most well-established of all arguably Esther Jusuf's Solidaritas Nusa Bangsa and the Indonesian Commission on Violence Against Women (*Komisi Nasional Anti-Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan*) under the supervision of University of Indonesia professor Saparinah Sadli. Their activities vary from political activism to social work. Many of them are formed and led by Chinese Indonesians, but often do not aim to be associated exclusively with only promoting Chinese interests. Thus, these particular type of organizations will not be discussed in length in this study.

According to Benny G. Setiono, one of the founders and leaders of INTI, contemporary Chinese organizations in Indonesia can be divided into two main groups that follow the traditional dichotomy of ethnic Chinese communities in Indonesia-namely Totok organizations and Peranakan organizations.[261] He suggested that Chinese organizations that were formed earlier in the post-Suharto era, which include all the previous political parties, organizations, and associations mentioned above, were dominated by Peranakan Chinese. Some organizations, such as SNB, PSMTI, and INTI, are still active and developing until today, while others are less active or fading away.

The trend was followed by Totok Chinese to form their separate organizations. The types of Totok organizations can be categorized by the following: 1) place of origin associations, such as those from Fujian and Yongchung, 2) surname associations, such as Rin and Yu, 3) organizations of religious affiliation, such as Confucianism or Buddhism, 4) alumni associations of Chinese language schools pre-

[261] Benny G. Setiono, "Beberapa Catatan Mengenai Perkembangan Organisasi-Organisasi Tionghoa di Indonesia," *Sinergi Indonesia*, August 6, 2008, 53.

1967, when they were closed by the New Order regime, and 5) social organizations.[262] In mild criticism, Benny Setiono mentioned, "If the organizations among the Peranakans were clear in terms of their vision and mission of struggle, these Totok organizations' "vision and mission" are unclear, most of them are only for the purpose of socializing, reunion for school alumni, dinner, nostalgic activities or karaoke with its members."[263]

Setiono's assertion has some truth in it; many of the Totok organizations are not established with a specific social or political agenda to promote. However, it is worthy to put this phenomenon in perspective by acknowledging that now Chinese Indonesians can associate themselves under an organization that publicly celebrate their ancestral heritage. In addition, during my personal interview with Benny Setiono, he was pleased by the fact that many Totok community leaders support INTI's role to be the leading organization that represents ethnic Chinese interests as a whole. He added, "It is true that they may not have the vision (on how to integrate ethnic Chinese into Indonesian society), but they continue to support through financial means, and trust the activities to the Peranakans who know how to do it."[264]

Successive Governments and the Ethnic Chinese: 2001-2008

Despite Habibie's accommodative gestures to the Chinese communities and the Indonesian people as a whole, he lost his presidential seat after the Golkar Party suffered tremendous loss during the June 1999 parliamentary elections. Habibie's successor was a prominent Muslim cleric Abdurrahman Wahid, the senior leader of Indonesia's largest Islamic mass organization Nahdlatul Ulama, and the chairman of

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[262] Yumi Kitamura, "Museum as Representation of Ethnicity: the Construction of Chinese Indonesian Ethnic Identity in Post-Suharto Indonesia." *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia*, Issue 8 (2007), http://kyotoreviewsea.org/Issue_8-9/Kitamuraeng.html.

[263] (Setiono 2008, 53)

[264] Personal Interview with Benny Setiono at the INTI Headquarter in Jakarta, January 9, 2008.

the newly formed National Awakening Party (PKB). Although receiving much criticism toward his style of leadership and lack of experience in parliamentary politics, Wahid is most remembered by the Chinese Indonesian communities for his moderate stance on humanitarian issues and his dedication in accommodating the aspirations of minority groups. During his leadership Wahid issued Presidential Decree No. 6/2000 that revoked the humiliating Presidential Instruction No. 14/1967 that regulated Chinese religion, beliefs, and traditions, effectively banning any Chinese literature or the practice of Chinese culture in Indonesia, including the use of Chinese characters.[265] The evocation of this regulation re-allowed the celebration of Chinese traditions, such as the Chinese New Year and performances such as dragon dances and lion dances, to be celebrated in public. Wahid even claimed that among his ancestors were of Chinese descent.

The next two presidents, Megawati Sukarnoputri and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, continued these gestures of accommodation toward the Chinese Indonesian minorities. Megawati, who served as president from 2001 to 2004, issued a decree that made Chinese New Year celebration (*Tahun Baru Imlek*) a national holiday.[266] Under the leadership of Megawati's successor Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who began serving in 2004, Confucianism was once more officially recognized as a religion and not merely a belief system, implying a much weaker legal position under Indonesian law. He also amended the sixth verse of the National Constitution or UUD 1945 that required the presidential seat to be reserved only for indigenous Indonesians.[267] This certainly strengthened the position of not only ethnic

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[265] A. Dahana, "Pri and Non-Pri Relations in the Reform Era: A Pribumi Perspective," in *Ethnic Relation and Nation Building in Southeast Asia: The Case of the Ethnic Chinese*, ed. Leo Suryadinata (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2004), 46-47.
[266] Ibid, 46
[267] MH. Djasmin, "Konsep "Bangsa Indonesia Asli" Ditinjau dari sisi konstitusional dan Undang-Undang Kewarganegaraan Republik Indonesia Bagian IV B," *Sinergi Indonesia*, January 5, 2008, 53.

Chinese but also other racial minorities in the national political scene. Other regulative changes include the replacement of the Sukarno-era Dual Citizenship Agreement with China (*UU Kewarganegaraan No. 2/1958*) with a new regulation (*Undang-Undang Kewarganegaraan Republik Indonesia No. 12/2006*), another highlight for the status of ethnic Chinese Indonesians.[268] Under the old law, the status of Indonesian citizens was sub-categorized as a Citizen (*Warga Negara*) and a Citizen of Foreign Descent (*Warga Negara Keturunan*). Such extended categorization was then indicated on one's national identity card through specific codes. Thus, Citizens of Foreign Descent, which almost exclusively referred to ethnic Chinese, would be required to present the infamous SBKRI document. By stating that "there's only Indonesian citizens (*Warga Negara Indonesia*) and non-Indonesian citizens (*Warga Negara Asing*)," [269] the new law abolished the sub-categorization and therefore it was a major legal triumph for ethnic Chinese Indonesians.

The re-examination of some of the most symbolically discriminative policies received great response from national and international audience alike. International Herald Tribune in December 2006 wrote:

> "After centuries of segregation, periodic violence and tension over their higher levels of wealth, Indonesia's Chinese community, which makes up to 1 or 2 percent of the population of 245 million, is now enjoying what many are calling a golden era… The country has redefined what it means to be a "native."[270]

Another important aspect is what the article claimed as a changing Indonesian mentality toward the Chinese, moving further from the notion that all Indonesian Chinese are rapaciously rich. The article ended by citing the comment by Susanto, an

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[268] Ibid, 52
[269] Ibid, 53
[270] Thomas Fuller, "A golden age for Indonesian Chinese," *International Herald Tribune*, Wednesday, December 13, 2006, Asia Pacific section.

ethnic Chinese whole-sale dealer, who claimed that "day to day there is no discrimination… I think we have a good future here."[271] Whether or not this claim is true, there is a clear sense of optimism among Chinese Indonesians that things have changed for the better for them in Indonesia.

Challenges in the Social Movements: Ten Years of Assessment

Not all ethnic Chinese agree with such optimism, however. Political scientist Christine Sussana Tjhin of CSIS, for instance, criticized the much-hyped February 2006 celebration of Chinese New Year. While many referred to this celebration as a "victory" to Chinese Indonesians for "gaining recognition" and that it signifies the "resinification" of Chinese Indonesians as their legal rights, she wrote in Kompas newspaper that "(i)t serves as a symbolic purpose only visible on the surface."[272] She argued that aside from the much-hyped government reform, issues such as trial of May 1998 perpetrators, discrimination in Chinese Indonesians' participation in politics, and even the old problems with government officials in issuing legal documents still remain unsolved.

Tjhin is not alone in this sentiment; two years later, for instance, the respected Pribumi-owned daily Suara Pembaruan wrote that many Chinese Indonesians still need to provide SBKRI to issue legal documents.[273] The head of the National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) Ifdal Kasim (whose interview was featured in the article) blamed poor government response regarding this matter.[274] Another article in the daily newspaper blamed the government's poor socialization to field officers, which it concluded as a reflection on how low the government's commitment is to

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[271] Ibid.
[272] Christine Susanna Tjhin, "Seeing Red: 'Imlek' and the Politics of Recognition," ed. Ivan Wibowo *Pemikiran Tionghoa Muda: Cokin, So What Gitu Loh!* (Depok: Komunitas Bambu, 2008), 360.
[273] "Etnis Tionghoa Masih Didiskriminasi," *Suara Pembaruan*, February 4, 2008.
[274] Ibid.

erase discrimination to minorities.[275] In a seminar by INTI, lawyer and activist Franz Hendra Winarta stated, "On legal basis, ethnic Chinese are no longer being (discriminated). But in practice, until today, ethnic Chinese are still being discriminated, such as in receiving bureaucratic service (by state apparatus), including their attempt to join the bureaucracy (as a public servant)."[276]

As of December 2008, the problem with SBKRI has not seemed to improve much. A survey conducted by the Indonesian Foundation for Legal Studies or YPHI (*Yayasan Pengkajian Hukum Indonesia*) stated that 107 out of 114 ethnic Chinese Indonesians in four major cities claimed that they still have to present the document whenever applying for identity cards, passports, and other official documents.[277]

Furthermore, according to the study, in addition to the SBKRI Chinese Indonesians are often required to pay an extra amount of 1 million rupiah when applying for an official document. For ethnic Chinese Indonesians, this survey suggests a questionable commitment of the government in eradicating the long-lasting major problems regarding ethnic Chinese, including their status of citizenship.

National or Ethnic Orientation?

On the other hand, Pribumi Indonesians have also questioned the re-emergence of ethnic Chinese Indonesian social and political consciousness, particularly on the orientation of new Chinese organizations and parties. Despite claims over their mainstream nationalist orientation, the problematic aspect of forming an ethnic based organization is that it opens the possibility to project communal identity such as

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[275] "Rendah, Komitmen Hapus Diskriminasi," *Suara Pembaruan*, February 5, 2008.

[276] Perhimpunan Indonesia Tionghoa, "Beri kesempatan Etnis Tionghoa Masuk Birokrasi," Id.inti.or.id. August 27, 2007 http://id.inti.or.id/news/24/tahun/2007/bulan/08/tanggal/27/id/329/.

[277] Simamora, Adianto P. "Ethnic Chinese still face hurdles to get ID cards: survey." *The Jakarta Post*, Monday, December 12, 2008, &:02 AM/Headlines. http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2008/12/15/ethnic-chinese-still-face-hurdles-get-id-cards-survey.html

ethnicity above the more conventional Indonesian national identity. As a consequence, the emergence of ethnic Chinese social movements in the form of political parties did receive criticism from prominent Indonesian politicians when it began in 1998. This included the comments by future president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, then the head of the Armed Forces Political Affairs section, who stated, "There is no problem with the establishment of new parties. But one has to think very carefully, whether or not it is right to form parties which are based on most sensitive points: ethnicity, religion, and race."[278]

This controversy about their involvement in politics also emerged among ethnic Chinese themselves. When answering an interview question on how necessary it is for Chinese Indonesians to have a formal organization, Brigadier General Tedy Jusuf emphasized:

> "… the primary mission is to promote our basic civil rights, not to struggle for political power, which is the mission of most … political parties … The Baperki tragedy cannot be repeated, (and) to anticipate it requires a strong adherence to the principle that ethnic organizations should not promote political aspirations, including practical politics, and only being involved in the social-related activities and promoting civil rights."[279]

Referring to the fate of the major ethnic Chinese organization in the Sukarno era, Jusuf suggested that participation in politics would risk another persecution toward the Chinese by the Pribumi majority, and thus the Chinese should find other ways to promote their interests.

Similarly, Kwik Kian Gie argued that the formation ethnic Chinese political parties was a setback for Indonesian nation-building. This was so because reviving the idea of an ethnic-based party would have a negative impact to nation building, as

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[278] Leo Suryadinata, "Chinese Politics in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Beyond the Ethnic Approach?" *Asian Survey* 41, 3 (2001): 511

[279] *Media Sinergi Bangsa*, No. 8/1999, July 9, 1999. Translation mine.

Kwik argued that the majority of Indonesia's ethnic Chinese were already integrated into mainstream society.[280] A debate erupted between Kwik and Sofjan Wanandi, an ethnic Chinese tycoon who was appointed chairman of the National Economic Committee. When Wanandi urged the Chinese communities to support Kwik in order for him to represent their interest, Kwik countered that he represented the Indonesian people and not only the Chinese community, especially the interests of the Chinese business circle, which was closely associated with Wanandi.[281] Comparing Kwik to those Chinese Indonesians such as Lieus Sungkharisma and Sofjan Wanandi, Leo Suryadinata wrote, "It is ironic to note that… Kwik Kian Gie, who retains his Chinese name, is in the vanguard of Indonesian nationalism."[282]

Historian Johanes Herlijanto, on the other hand, argued that the non-Chinese majority must tolerate this orientation toward promoting ethnic Chinese interests particularly due to the fact that the ethnic Chinese communities in Indonesia have long suffered from the violence, discrimination, and other injustices due to their lack of political freedom. During the New Order regime, ethnic Chinese must relied on the government for protection from the hostile majority; nevertheless, this did not protect them from one of the worst violent incidents against Chinese Indonesians in its modern history. He stated, "The crisis of trust among some Chinese Indonesians on the state (is based on) their reactions against the incapability of the state and military to protect them during the riots. Though the reactions were varied, all have at least two important themes: (1) the state's failure to guarantee their safety, and (2) the need for Chinese Indonesians to take some actions in order to prevent the same tragedy to

[280] (Suryadinata 2001, 512)
[281] Ibid, 521
[282] Ibid, 512

happen again in the future."[283] Similar to Herlijanto's argument, Lieus Sungkarisma, the leader of The Indonesian Chinese Reform Party or PARTI, supported the participation in politics, hoping that "perhaps non-Chinese will see that Chinese Indonesians also care about the fate of this nation."[284] To him, there should be nothing wrong with the Chinese to display their "Chineseness", since the most important thing was one's commitment to the Indonesian state and nation.[285]

As seen above, there are different perspectives on what is the true meaning of the Chinese socio-political movements in post-Suharto Indonesia even among the Chinese Indonesians themselves. The issue of Chinese movements has been controversial in Indonesian history, and therefore there are many agitations from both non-Chinese and Chinese in interpreting the movement. How should the movements be viewed in the context of Indonesian nationalism? Are these phenomena truly the aspirations by Chinese Indonesians for equal rights as well as to participate in nation building, or are they merely means to achieve political power for chauvinistic purposes, such as demanding special rights as victims of the New Order regime & the 1998 Riots? By asking this question, this study is not trying to justify the prejudice of many Pribumi Indonesians. It is merely interested with the possible consequences for a type of movement that has been historically controversial in the country.

To understand the main purpose of these social movements, or more accurately socio-political movements, it is necessary to analyze the logical assumption behind the Chinese organizations' claim to what they understand as Indonesian nationalism. In his essay, Johanes Herlijanto stated that the two main objectives of the Chinese movements were namely to get recognition of their ethnic identity and to put an end to

[283] (Herlijanto 2004, 70)
[284] "Ini kan Jebakan Politik!" *Sinergi Indonesia*, July 15 – August 15, 1999, 20. Translation mine
[285] Ibid.

discriminative policies against them.[286] In short, changing the negative perceptions toward the Chinese is at the center of these movements. This change of perception is a means to achieve a higher degree of tolerance toward them in the state level and societal level. In societal level, this tolerance would eventually lead the majority of Indonesians to recognize the Chinese's unique ethnic identity without inherent prejudice against them. In the state level, tolerance would lead the government to abolish any discriminative policies. In other words, an improved degree of tolerance would be reflected in the policies and behavior that respect ethnic Chinese rights as Indonesian citizens. This is the new paradigm for tackling the Chinese Problem through active participation of the Chinese Indonesians themselves.

In order to do so, it is necessary for Chinese Indonesians to assess the popular understanding of Indonesian nationalism among Pribumi Indonesians, particularly after 32 years of New Order rule, in which the regime had the sole power to interpret the meaning of nationalism. In the context of Suharto's nationalism, The Chinese Problem is what makes the Chinese anything but being nationalistic. Communism, Chinese capitalism, Chinese religion and culture, have been seen as diverting from what defines Indonesian nationalism. As clearly explained in the previous chapters, Pribumi Indonesians generally view the history of Chinese movements as counter to Indonesian nationalism. The vast majority of non-Chinese and even Chinese Indonesians were unaware that the Chinese were involved in these struggles at all. For those who do know about the history, they may have viewed the involvement of the Chinese in the National Revolution as being overshadowed by the much-larger Chinese organizations with other orientations such as Tiong Hoa Hwe Koan and Sin Po group (Mainland oriented) or Chung Hwa Hui (Dutch oriented). Of course, the fact that the last major Chinese organization, Baperki, was involved with communism

[286] (Herlijanto 2004, 64)

further stigmatized the idea of ethnic Chinese movements in the eyes of Pribumi Indonesians.

Again, as indicated in earlier chapters, these negative perceptions have been largely influenced by the role of the Indonesian military regime for being the sole authority to define and interpret the understanding of Indonesian nationalism in its official version of the nation's history. This is particularly true in the era of military regime under Suharto. In the context of the national motto *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* or Unity in Diversity, the regime's understanding of Indonesian nationalism emphasized the unitary element of nationalism (*tunggal*) and underplayed the pluralistic features (*bhineka*) of the Indonesian people in order to preserve the notion of unity.

The obsession towards unity was most likely due to the regime's pragmatic means to establish its status quo by legitimizing themselves as the sole legitimate guardian of the Indonesian state. Suharto's military regime became the only interpreter of the state ideology of Pancasila while other interpretations were banned for public discourse. The assimilation of Chinese Indonesians was a part of the homogenization of national identity in order to strengthen the unitarian character of the nation. In this context, the Chinese were expected to belittle or abandon their distinct "cultural" identity to adopt a "national" one.

This is one of the reasons why the notion of integration is so appealing as an alternative to assimilation: it does not require someone to alter her ethnic, religious, or cultural identity as long as she performs a commitment to the nation itself. It celebrated pluralism where many different groups of people shared one national identity without underplaying their other identities, including those based on belief, ethnicity, or culture. To the Chinese, this was a framework that embraced them in the idea of an Indonesian nation where national identity does not conflict with their cultural, religious, as well as ethnic identities.

Benny Setiono emphasized over and over again the importance of being able to practice Chinese culture and traditions as an expression of cultural identity. This is indeed the core of INTI's mission, which is:

> "… to gather as many Chinese Indonesians to be integrated into the Indonesian nation in a holistic manner without abandoning our identity as Chinese. Together with other (ethnic groups) to build this nation, contribute in all fields without being shy of being Chinese. It is us who must position ourselves as an integral part of the nation."[287]

Thus, the post-Suharto Chinese movements should be considered as a part of a nationalist movement that is not chauvinistic in character. More importantly, however, is that they advocate a re-definition on the popular understanding of nationalism among the non-Chinese majority. It is a definition that stresses on pluralism embodied in the integration approach, which was the prevailing view among the Peranakan Chinese organizations during the liberal democracy era from 1950 to 1957. Integration serves as a philosophical common ground for different Chinese organizations in the post-Suharto era. This advocacy of integration based on pluralism opens an avenue to re-interpret the understanding of Pancasila as the national ideology, which contextual interpretation was dominated by the New Order government for 32 years.

Re-imagining Chinese Indonesians

The Chinese movements revived the spirit of integration as the solution to the Chinese Problem. Integration provides a space for distinct Chinese cultural and religious identities within the framework of Indonesian national identity. This nationalist commitment is most clearly stated in the Preamble of INTI's constitution:

> "History has recorded that the Chinese have been in Nusantara (the Indonesian Archipelago) for centuries and have participated in enriching the

[287] Personal interview with Benny Setiono, January 9th, 2008

> life of the Motherland in various aspects of life, including the fields of religion, socio-culture, politics, economics, and commerce… The birth of the Indonesian Republic is a result of the struggle of all Indonesian people including the Chinese, and therefore the Chinese is an integral part of the Indonesian nation."[288]

The statement above emphasizes historical experience while undermining geographical origin as the common ground of an Indonesian identity. This interpretation of Indonesian nationalism is constructive for the Chinese cause for at least two reasons. First of all, few Indonesians would disprove the importance of a shared experience during the struggle for independence as a key factor for the conception of Indonesian national identity. Second, the involvement of the Chinese in the Indonesian national revolution, despite the fact that pro-Indonesian independence was the smallest faction in Chinese politics at the time, is still a historical fact that no Indonesians can deny. Thus, historical revisionism became a crucial part to improve Chinese-non-Chinese relationship in the country.

The bottom-line message is the following: what separated the Chinese from Indonesian nationhood today is the legacy of the colonial social system, a policy that was re-adopted by the Suharto regime. This notion is a direct attempt to counter the argument that the Chinese had historically benefited from the Dutch colonial system due to their Foreign Oriental status. To change such paradigm, the Chinese did at least two things: first was an attempt to explain that they have been a part of Indonesian society even before colonialism took hold; second, they emphasized their predecessors' involvement in the national struggle for Indonesian independence. In other words, socializing historical revisions was a major part of these organizations' agenda.

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[288] Perhimpunan Indonesia Tionghoa, "Mukadimah INTI", INTI http://id.inti.or.id/profile/. Translation mine

References to the Chinese role in Indonesian history is widely present in ethnic Chinese publications such as *Sinergi Indonesia* magazine and INTI's official monthly magazine *Suara Baru*. One example is a column in each edition of *Suara Baru* entitled "Do You Know?" ("Tahukah Anda?") that informs less known historical facts about the Chinese in Indonesia.[289] One of the more popular new claims about the Chinese among Pribumi Indonesians is the argument that eight out of the historical nine Muslim saints, known as the Wali Songo, were of ethnic Chinese descent.[290] This is a big and potentially controversial claim due to the fact that the 15th century saints were viewed as responsible in spreading Islam to be the dominant religion in Java. Another symbolic historical finding is that about Admiral Cheng Ho, the 15th century Ming Dynasty fleet admiral and explorer who was believed to had visited Sumatra and particularly Java, where some of his sailors remained and spread the religion of Islam in predominantly Hindu/Buddhist areas.[291]

Perhaps one might not notice immediately the relationship between these historical references with the attempt to integrate the Chinese into Indonesian nationhood, especially if one accepts the concept of a nation as a modern, post-colonial entity and phenomenon. This would lead one to view that the pre-colonial society had little or no direct correlation with the creation of the modern Indonesian national identity. If one observes a bit further, however, these historical references do have profound relationship with the general understanding of Indonesian nationhood. It is hard to deny, first of all, that the symbolic aspect of these historical references do affect the predominantly Pribumi Muslim Indonesian psyche, as these references challenge the stereotypical images that the Chinese have nothing to do with Islam and

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[289] The quotation on the word "facts" is intentional because the column does not provide any reference of the resources for the information it provides.
[290] "Tahukah Anda?" *Suara Baru*, January 2007, 15. A more extensive discussion about the topic is included in Adam, Asvi Warman Adam. "Babad Tionghoa Muslim." *Sinergi Indonesia* April 2005.
[291] Asvi Warman Adam, "Babad Tionghoa Muslim," *Sinergi Indonesia*, April 2005, 9.

Muslims throughout Indonesian history. More importantly, however, modern Indonesian nationalism was partly built based on the idea that the Indonesian nation is a continuation of pre-colonial political entities, particularly the great empires of Srivijaya and Majapahit.[292] The period of colonialism is seen as an interruption of Pribumi rules over the archipelago; thus Indonesian nationalism is often depicted as the return to the nation's glorious past. For the Chinese to be a part of the pre-colonial past, therefore, suggests a more intimate historical association with Pribumi Indonesians, and thus a part of the Indonesian nation.

The notion that the Chinese have been a part of the pre-colonial Indonesian society is indeed highlighted in the contemporary socialization of Chinese Indonesian history. During the interview with Benny Setiono, he began our conversation with a brief history of the Chinese in Indonesia, in which he pointed the fact that the Chinese have been in the Indonesian archipelago perhaps one thousand years before the Europeans arrived, and that they had no problem being a part of the multi-cultural societies.[293] He also emphasized that it was the Dutch who are to blame for the position of the Chinese in Indonesian society today, and that Suharto was advocating the old colonial policy for the benefit of his regime.

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[292] Benedict Anderson argues that the genealogy of the conception of official nationalism in post-colonial states such as Indonesia can be traced back to "the imaginings of the colonial state" on their colonial subjects' past. He refers to three institutions of power, the census, the map, and the museum that "profoundly shaped the way in which the colonial state imagined its dominion – the nature of the human beings it ruled, the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its ancestry." (Anderson 1991, 163) Indonesian nationalists learned about Srivijaya and Majapahit Kingdoms from the Dutch, who defined them as regional powers with political and economic might. In turn, Indonesians envision Srivijaya and Majapahit as the prototypes of the Indonesian nation. Perhaps the most notable reference to Srivijaya and Majapahit was that by Sukarno in his speeches, such as his second "The Birth of Pancasila" speech, which was delivered on June 1st, 1945. See the full text in the website of the Republic of Indonesia National Archive at Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia. "Pidato Pertama Tentang Pancasila oleh Ir. Soekarno, 1 Juni 1945 Episode 2." ANRI. http://www.anri.go.id/web/index.php?m=bulan_dalam_arsip&bulan=6&tahun=2008

[293] Personal interview with Benny Setiono, January 5, 2008.

Lieus Sungkarisma also shared the view that the Chinese Problem is a colonial legacy in an interview with *Sinergi Indonesia*. Responding to the question why Chinese Indonesians are seen as exclusive, he blamed 32 years of Suharto rule for "historical distortion" (*penyimpangan sejarah*) by not giving ethnic Chinese the credit for their participation in Indonesian nation building. He said:

> "Since 1928 the Chinese have been involved (in national independence movement), there were four (Chinese) people involved in the Youth Pledge and yet not many people know (about it). There were four people who were a part of the BPUPKI (a committee founded in April 1945 formed by the Japanese to grant independence to Indonesia) and there are very few Indonesians know about these facts… Society view the Chinese as un-nationalistic because historical facts are (hidden), while the ones being exposed are (negative images such as the case of) Eddi Tanzil (a former Suharto crony who becomes the main suspect for a corruption scandal)… but no one sees who were behind Eddi Tanzil's success stealing Bapindo (the targeted bank)'s money."[294]

Aside from history, the two Chinese Indonesian magazines also served as vehicles to change the stereotypical images of Chinese Indonesians in everyday lives. For example, *Sinergi Indonesia* often contains a section of picture articles about poor Chinese communities around the archipelago, entitled, "Not all Chinese are Rich". It displays images of Chinese communities in poverty stricken areas such as in the town of Singkawang, West Kalimantan[295] or Tanggerang, Banten Province.[296] It is a bold attempt that targets directly to the stereotypical Chinese-rich and Pribumi-poor image.

Perhaps the most symbolic of all attempts to socialize alternative understanding of Indonesian nationhood is most embodied in a project by PSMTI. In 2002, Teddy Jusuf on behalf of his organization submitted a proposal to build a Chinese Indonesian Cultural Park (*Taman Budaya Tionghoa Indonesia*) that is to be

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[294] (*Sinergi Indonesia* 1999, 20)
[295] "Tidak Semua Orang Tionghoa Kaya." *Media Sinergi Bangsa*, June 9-July 9, 1999, 32-33.
[296] "Tidak Semua Orang Tionghoa Kaya." *Media Sinergi Bangsa*, August 15-September 15, 1999, 32-33.

located at Taman Mini or the "Miniature Garden", the Indonesian version of a cultural park that displays cultural representations from each province in Indonesia. Taman Mini was the brainchild of Madame Tien Suharto, the late Indonesian First Lady. As it was inaugurated in 1975, the cultural park dedicates a pavilion for each of Indonesia's then 26 provinces, where that province's traditional clothing, dances and traditions are depicted and displayed inside a cultural house built in traditional architecture. As of 2008, the Chinese Indonesian Cultural Park project was still under construction, having finished only the Chinese gate as the entrance of the park. This is largely due to the lack of funds, but the idea of the park itself was what sparked controversy over what it means to be Indonesian.

James T. Siegel wrote, "We do not have a word to characterize Taman Mini. It is a "theme park" a la Walt Disney. But it is more than that because it is also a museum, claiming to hold "authentic" features of the Indonesian past."[297] The mission of this institution, as stated by the park's General Manager, was "to be a vehicle for the presentation and development of Indonesian culture and as a means to strengthen the unity and integrity of the people of Indonesia."[298] Indeed, as noticed by Kyoto University's Yuki Kitamura, Taman Mini is the visual presentation of the official nationalism as defined by Suharto's New Order regime by "packaging ethnicity with wedding clothes, dances, and the authority of Taman Mini."[299] In the vision of Taman Mini, cultures are presented in a certain way that each province has a fixed, unique, homogenous culture within itself and distinct from other provinces. Each has its unique traditional house or *rumah adat*, dances, clothing, and so on. The claim to authenticity is largely indebted to the fact that Taman Mini was built by the state, or at

[297] Siegel, James T. *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution.* Princeton, Princeton University Press: 1997 (4)
[298] Taman Mini Indonesia Indah Official Site, "Message from the General Manager of Taman Mini." Taman Mini Indonesia Indah, http://www.tamanmini.com/index.php?modul=profil
[299] (Kitamura 2002)

least was recognized by the state, which was the sole interpreter of the definition of nationalism.

More importantly, however, Taman Mini excludes the Arab, Indian, Caucasian, and Chinese Indonesians in its representation of Indonesian cultures. This, one might argue, is due to the fact that the ancestral geographical origin of these minority groups are not a part of the Indonesian "geo-body," to use Thai historian Tongchai Winichakul's term.[300] The geo-body itself is clearly represented in Taman Mini - right in the center of the park is an eight-hectare pond filled with islands that are shaped like the map of the Indonesian archipelago. Above and across the pond is a cable train that would give visitors a "proper perspective" from above.[301] As all the provinces of Indonesia are a part of that particular map, so are the customs, traditions, and cultures of those provinces. Thus, the pond in the middle of the park is a statement that to be a part of this nation, one's ancestral home must be within the geographical border of modern Indonesia. Therefore, if other ethnic groups "can go home"[302] to the traditional houses displayed in Taman Mini, the minority groups mentioned above cannot do the same because their ancestral origin is not geographically within the Indonesian map.

Therefore, the idea to add a Chinese section in the park itself is indeed revolutionary because it completely disregards the concept of official nationalism that Taman Mini stood for. This project also opened a public discourse about Indonesian nationalism once more. The Jakarta Post opened its article about the Chinese Indonesian Cultural Park with the following questions:

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[300] Thongchai's seminal work *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* is oriented on the term, which explains how territorial borders as defined by one's sense of nationhood is imagined. See Winichakul, Thongchai. *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994, x.

[301] (Siegel 1997, 3)

[302] Ibid, 4

> "What does it mean to be a "Chinese Indonesian"? Who are they? What journey did they take to become part of the nation? What contributions have they made to this country? These are some of the questions awaiting answers as the Chinese-Indonesian Cultural Park is being constructed at Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII) in East Jakarta."[303]

Furthermore the article stated that PSMTI's "selection as the venue for the Chinese Indonesian Cultural Park was meant to enhance the recognition of Chinese Indonesian ethnicity by the state and its acceptance by the Indonesian people… PSMTI believes that creating a museum within Taman Mini ensures a place for Chinese Indonesian ethnicity in the Indonesian nation."[304]

Interestingly, Kitamura views the Chinese Indonesian's attempt to include their cultural heritage into Taman Mini as an attempt to assimilate, not integrate, themselves into Indonesian society. She noted, "The Chinese Indonesian Cultural Park can thus be seen as a belated assimilation into the Suharto regime's ethnicity policy."[305] This statement may contradict the thesis of this study that the contemporary Chinese Indonesian movements are based on the notion of integration, and not assimilation attempt.

Yet, I would argue that this symbolic representation could be viewed as a means to achieve integration as the final goal. There are no other more effective ways for PSMTI to enter the public imagination about nationalism than through Taman Mini. This is mainly because most Indonesians are not aware on the politicization of Taman Mini itself; they see the garden as a genuinely educational tool to introduce the cultures of Indonesia, and thus they take the representation of the Indonesian nation for granted. Taman Mini is a tool of imagining a political community par-excellence,

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[303] Agnes Winarti, "Gateway to RI's Chinese history opens debate," *The Jakarta Post*, May 26, 2008.
[304] (Kitamura 2002)
[305] (Kitamura 2002)

as even many of the most politically conscious Indonesians may not be aware of its politicization. The Suharto regime is indeed successful in controlling popular imagination of the nation-state through its official nationalism.

After successfully penetrating popular imagination, then PSMTI began with its integration project. The integration aspect was depicted in the architectural and visual representation of the park buildings itself - PSMTI chose to hire a team of Chinese architecture consultants who are employed by the municipality of Xiamen in Fujian province, China.[306] This decision has sparked a debate "over whether the park will be able to supply a complete picture of the diverse Chinese-Indonesian culture."[307] University of Indonesia architecture professor Gunawan Tjahjono told The Jakarta Post that local architects who understand the history of Peranakan Chinese should be engaged instead. He labeled the decision to hire Chinese consultants as "ignorant" because they disregard many local historians who "understand better what has really happened in the lives of Chinese Indonesians."[308]

PSMTI defended their decision by explaining that it is their attempt to exhibit within those Chinese buildings various documents, artifacts, and general descriptions on where they originally migrated from, how they lived, and their interaction with surroundings, including the Chinese's involvement in the independence war. The main message is that the content of these authentic Chinese buildings is after all about Chinese Indonesians. Tedy Jusuf added, "We have to be extreme in portraying it (Chinese architecture) because the whole idea of TMII is to preserve the original culture of the ethnic groups in Indonesia."[309] Jusuf's reasoning resonates with the comment of 17 year-old Cynthia who, as quoted by The Jakarta Post article, expressed

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[306] (Winarti 2008)
[307] Ibid.
[308] Ibid.
[309] Ibid.

her interest to visit the park so "those who cannot go to the country of origin, China, can get an idea of it."[310] Indeed, Chinese Indonesians can "go home" to their own section of cultural park in Taman Mini, just like most other Indonesians.

Self-Evaluation

Surely, this new understanding of Indonesian identity as promoted by the Chinese movements is potentially controversial. The controversy over the Chinese Indonesian Cultural Park, for instance, indicates that PSMTI is exploring a vague territory where non-Chinese may perceive their actions as a reflection of growing Chinese chauvinism. This is certainly a valid assumption because of the fact that resentment against the Chinese has taken such a deep root in Indonesian society, so it is most wise to assume that such resentment still exists even in the post-Suharto era. Perhaps anti-Chinese sentiments were silenced because of the spirit of Reformasi and due to the public sympathy toward the Chinese victims in May 1998 Riots. Thus, the confidence in celebrating political, social, or cultural practices within the Chinese movements may trigger such resentment to gain audience again.

Therefore, it is important for Chinese Indonesian activists to continuously reflect on their own movements in order to do avoid anti-Chinese sentiments to rise again. An example of such self-reflection is a speech delivered by Benny Setiono in a discussion forum entitled the "Ethnic Chinese Forum into the Mainstream Population" (*Forum Etnis Tionghoa Masuk ke Dalam Mainstream Bangsa*) at the City University of Hong Kong.

In his speech Setiono criticized several aspects of the Chinese Indonesian movements. One of them regarded the relatively low interest in the Chinese movements itself among the Chinese communities:

[310] Ibid.

> "Most Peranakans do not feel the need or importance to form or join Chinese dominated organizations. They prefer to join organizations which are national in scope such as Lions Club, Rotary Club, or other professional as well as political organizations. They are also generally more interested with religious organizations such as Christian, Catholic, Buddhist, Confucian, and even Islamic (organizations)."[311]

Another problem he mentioned was the "excessive freedom" of Chinese organizations, including by the leaders of INTI, referring to the lavish activities such as parties and gatherings "without considering the economic situation where millions of Indonesian people are still suffering from poverty and the gap between the rich and the poor are widening."[312]

Interestingly, his criticism also put a spotlight on another sensitive subject within the Chinese Indonesian movement namely, the relationship between ethnic Chinese Indonesians and Mainland China. Setiono mentioned that, in every event, an official from the Chinese Embassy is always invited to give an opening speech in Mandarin, while officials from the Indonesian government are rarely invited. Setiono asserted:

> "The problem is that the pictures of their events will appear in Chinese daily newspapers especially the international Daily News. Meanwhile the government intelligence always monitors the activities of Chinese Indonesians through these daily publications."[313]

Lastly, regarding to several Totok organizations, Setiono stated:

> "… these organizations are used as vehicles by their leaders for their own interest to become celebrities and to be included on the list of Chinese "figures" ("tokoh" Tionghoa) in the eyes of the Totok community, the (PRC) Embassy and the Chinese government."[314]

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311 (Setiono 2008, 54) Translation mine
312 Ibid, 55 Translation mine
313 Ibid. Translation mine
314 Ibid, 54 Translation mine

Such publicity, he added, may grant them awards from Chinese officials and concession or priorities and, more importantly, certain accommodations for business opportunities in China.

While there may be further explanations that justify the close relationships between these organizations with the Chinese government, Setiono's criticism should be valued for its ability to contemplate on actions that may be considered as sensitive for the Indonesian non-Chinese majority. Every Chinese Indonesian involved in these organizations should be well aware about how revolutionary and potentially controversial their movements are from historical perspective, not least because of the movements' past experience such as that with Baperki. Furthermore, Setiono's attack on business opportunists who use the movements for their own interests is critically important, since one of the strongest stigma against ethnic Chinese in Indonesia is that they are the so-called "economic animals." Such behavior mentioned above does not only provoke such stigma to gain momentum again, but can also shatter the very objective of the movement.

Another important aspect, however, is the fact that such criticisms are openly available in public as they have been published by *Sinergi Indonesia* magazine. As one of the most recognizable individuals within the Chinese communities in Indonesia, Setiono's criticism toward the successful Peranakan entrepreneurs' apathy and Totok entrepreneurs' greediness is in itself revolutionary as it indicates that, in a post-Suharto era, Chinese Indonesians have the opportunity to conduct checks and balances toward their own communities. This was not possible under the New Order regime due to their political impotence, and thus it should be celebrated a positive development within Chinese Indonesian politics.

Above all, Setiono's criticism is a reminder for the need to maintain a delicate balance between the "diversity" and the "unity" of the Indonesian nation. What Setiono evaluates is a tendency to exploit the notion of pluralism that grows among Chinese Indonesians in the past few years. This tendency can be viewed as a reversed form of Suharto's strategy that exploited the notion of 'unity' at the expense of 'diversity' in order to achieve stability and status quo. The balance between unity and diversity is the essence of Indonesian national identity, and therefore lies in the center of the Chinese Indonesian movements. Such self-criticism should be a part of the Chinese Indonesian activism in order to maintain the main objective of the movements. This is a key aspect for the Chinese Indonesian movements to continue in the future.

What can be concluded from these contemporary movements is what Dr. I Wibowo Wibisono, chairman of the University of Indonesia's Centre for Chinese studies, called a trend for liberalization.[315] They can be understood as an attempt to redefine their "Chinese-ness" in the eyes of the majority in order to gain recognition as true members of an Indonesian national identity. It is a dynamic process where the community, which consists of highly diverse sub-communities, must redefine their own understanding about themselves.

This process began as a reaction toward the violence against ethnic Chinese Indonesians in May 1998, but then gradually evolved into a series of movements that attempt to solve the Chinese Problem in a holistic manner. Along with it occurs the evolution of the movements' objectives from focusing on immediate goals, such as helping the victims of May 1998 violence and demanding justice, to struggling to revisit the definition of Indonesian national identity in order to change the majority's view toward them. In short, their movements have contributed to a much larger scope

[315] Ilham Khoiri, "I Wibowo Tentang Liberalisasi Masyarakat Tionghoa," *Kompas*, February 10, 2008.

of discourse about how to define an Indonesian national identity, a discourse that has been forgotten during the Suharto era.

Through these movements the notion of integration toward national identity is reborn. The majority of Chinese organizations embrace integration as the main doctrine of their movement, and the later part of this chapter has demonstrated how different organizations attempt to implement integrative approach into Indonesian society. The ultimate end of all these activities, from the demand for equal rights to the philosophical discourse on Indonesian identity, is ultimately to promote the rights of ethnic Chinese as Indonesian nationals.

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CONCLUSION

This study attempts to analyze and interpret the essence of the Chinese Indonesian movements in the post Suharto Era. It mainly focuses on the relationship between these activisms and the Chinese's new understanding of their Indonesian identity. In other words, it is primarily interested in how the ethnic Chinese minority group in the Reform Era attempted to define themselves as Indonesians to justify their demand for equal rights as a part of the nation. This study argues for the historical importance of these movements as they represent a radical change that took place in a democratizing society.

There are many aspects of the movements that this study does not discuss. First of all, it does not elaborate on its discussion of the participation of ethnic Chinese in the political scene, which is one of the most important and symbolic changes in the lives of this minority group in post-Suharto Indonesia. It only notes that there has not been a political figure of Chinese descent that appeals to the grass-root majority Indonesians, since until today ethnic Chinese politicians are commonly known only among the middle upper urban class and intellectuals. The emergence of an ethnic Chinese politician with massive Pribumi support would be a major indicator that ethnic tension between Chinese and Pribumi has significantly decreased. The possibility for the emergence of such a figure, along with the socio-political aspects that would come long with it, is an interesting topic for future research.

Furthermore, due to limitation of data and research, this study primarily observes the Chinese's political participation only in the urban areas while barely discussing those in the rural areas or provincial level. The author is aware, however, that there have been several ethnic Chinese officials and candidates in provincial and local governments across the archipelago. Political participation in the provincial

level may be the best avenue for ethnic Chinese to merge themselves into Indonesian politics, as the career in provincial government becomes more attractive particularly after economic decentralization in 2004. This can be an interesting and useful topic for future research in order to give another view of the Chinese Indonesian movements.

Another important but often-overlooked aspect of change is the role of popular culture as a medium to the new acceptance of ethnic Chinese in Indonesian society. Post - Suharto era popular culture has not only been enriched by the appearance of ethnic Chinese Indonesian musicians, actresses, and TV personalities, but also popular culture commodities from Taiwan and Hong Kong. The most celebrated of all is perhaps the boom of F4-Mania in 2003-2004, the Taiwanese so-called "boy-bands" who became the idols of non-Chinese Indonesian teenagers. Other examples include the popularity of Chinese beauty pageant contests in provinces with a large number of ethnic Chinese minorities. The popular culture phenomenon is arguably among the earliest symbols of change with regards to acceptance of the Indonesian public toward ethnic Chinese. The relationship between popular culture and the Chinese movements is surely an interesting and noteworthy topic to explore.

Perhaps the most important subject that has not been largely explored is the relationship between Chinese Indonesian organizations and the PRC. There are so many aspects that can be thoroughly researched including social, political, and economic aspects of such relationship. I am most interested in examining the relationship through an anthropological perspective, particularly using the framework of Aihwa Ong's concept of transnational identity from her book *Flexible Citizenship* (1999). Perhaps it is through this framework that the notion of Chinese "chauvinism" can be explained in a different perspective.

The story of ethnic Chinese Indonesian movements is about the struggle for recognition of their identity as a minority in the Indonesian society. No other ethnic group has experienced what the Chinese did throughout the nation's history. The traditional stigma of Chinese identity is that of an opportunist outsider with no loyalty to Indonesia. As we saw in Chapter 1, animosity against the Chinese can be traced back to the colonial period. During the Sukarno Era, their ambiguous status of citizenship between that of China and of Indonesia led to physical displacements of the Chinese and scrutiny among Indonesians toward the Chinese's national loyalty. Furthermore, the spirit of revolution evolved into a form of economic nationalism among many Pribumi Indonesians who sought an end to Chinese Indonesian economic dominance. The end of the Sukarno era saw the emergence of the New Order regime that antagonized communist China as well as the Chinese in Indonesia.

The Chinese Indonesian Movement during the Reform Era was without a doubt a turning point in the history of ethnic Chinese communities in Indonesia. It was the first time that socio-political atmosphere in Indonesia allows the Chinese to openly explain themselves as a community, express their heterogeneous Chinese socio-cultural identities, and at the same time demand equal rights as Indonesian citizens without widespread scrutiny. Such is a freedom that had never been granted by the indigenous government and people before, even since Indonesia gained their national independence.

What should be highlighted from the Chinese Indonesian Movements, however, is the way they challenge the very definition of Indonesian national identity itself. The effect of 32 years of New Order rule has crystallized the way the Indonesian majority interpreted nationalism. The Chinese, on the other hand, were continuously being challenged by the status quo's interpretation of national identity. Due to this constant challenge, the Chinese were the ones who realized early on that Indonesian nationalism can and should be interpreted differently, namely by putting

more weight on the notion of pluralism so that it is in balance with the notion of unity.

It is true that discrimination against them still exists in today's society, which prevents them from being treated equally. At the same time, it is critical for Chinese Indonesians to remember that, while continuing their struggle to achieve equal rights, they must maintain their identity as Indonesians by continuing to participate in nation building and prevent the rise of Chinese chauvinism among themselves.

The story of the Chinese Indonesian Movements is a prime example of drastic social reform as a result of the democratization of a nation. What democracy has brought to all Indonesians, Chinese and non-Chinese alike, is a continuous discourse of what it means to be a part of the Indonesian nation, a discourse that was discontinued by the New Order regime for 32 years. The Chinese are at the frontline of this discourse due to their position in Indonesian society, and their movements will continue to challenge the way Indonesians understand their national identity for years to come.