



State Relations, Media, and the Power of Civil Society after the fall of The New Order Regime in Indonesia

Nuruddin Hady^{1*}, Mohd Hairry Bin Ibrahim²

¹University of Malang, Malang, Indonesia

²Sultan Idris Education University, Perak, Malaysia

Abstract

The role of civil society power in the history of reform in Indonesia cannot be underestimated because the economic crisis did not solely cause the fall of Suharto's New Order regime. Still, the role of civil society forces was very large and well consolidated. This study used qualitative research. The theory used is the theory of power relations. The results of the study found that in the era of Soeharto's New Order, the relationship between the state and civil society was still not seen to play its role; it can even be said that the existence of civil society was very weak and weakened by the regime, although at the end of the New Order, civil society was well consolidated which eventually gave birth to the reform movement and was able to overthrow Suharto's regime. The results also found that, after the reformation in Indonesia, the civil society movement experienced a golden age at the beginning of the reform because the position of civil society was quite strong and well consolidated in overseeing the course of the democratic system. However, in recent years civil society movements have stagnated and even seem weakened because they are in the circle of power.

Keywords: state relations, civil society, post-new order

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***Corresponding author:** nuruddin.hady.fis@um.ac.id

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INTRODUCTION

The state is a political instrument to realize the common good and prosperity (Usman, 2015). While the state is, in Austin's view, a relationship between the ruling and the governed. Meanwhile, Vinogradoff refers to the state as a society organized to act under the rules of law (Iver, 1980). In the arena of state power, Linz and Stephan (1996) mention that the presence of four main actors characterizes the arena of polity: First, the state, which in some literature is placed as a public agency. Second is political society, in which there are political parties. Third, economic society, is always engaged in the logic of capital and markets. Fourth, civil society, which has the characteristics of self-government (voluntarism) and is independent of state influence (Zuhro 2016). The three domains, namely political society, economic society, and civil society, are very influential for the benefit of state power.

A state is called a democracy when an active force of Civil Society limits and strengthens state power. In another sense, a democratic country is a country that adheres to the form or mechanism of a government system by realizing people's sovereignty over the country to be run by the government of that country (Rosana, 2016). In a democratic society, the state must obtain the approval of the civil society in making and implementing its policies. On the contrary, Civil Society also needs an effective state in implementing its policies (Zuhro 2016). Which in Indonesian is translated as civil society, which Jean L. Kahin and Andrew Arato interpret as a condition of life of a society that stands above the principles of egalitarianism and universal inclusionism (Asfar, 2001). Nurcholis Madjid uses the term civil society to refer to civil society, characterized by volunteerism, self-sufficiency, self-sufficiency, high independence when dealing with the state, and attachment to legal norms followed by its citizens (Hikam 1996).

The rapid process of democratization in various parts of the world since the second half of the 1980s, which Samuel P Huntington (1991) called the third wave of democracy, or what Schmitter (1995) called the fourth wave of democracy because the democratization process extended until at least the mid-1990s. With these changes, the role of civil society in the process of democratic transformation is very decisive. However successful the process may not infrequently be determined by the willingness of the power elites - particularly the military, to descend voluntarily. Strict restrictions imposed by government agencies or the

military on the lives of citizens can undermine individual freedom (Rafael, 2014). But it is undeniable that the process of willingness of the power-holding elite is caused by the insistence on the power of civil society. Whether through peaceful actions or movements involving physical violence (Hikam 1996).

The success of civil society in overthrowing the totalitarianism regimes of several Eastern and Central European countries, such as the victory of civil society in Poland in the June 1989 elections (Smolar 1996), attests to the effectiveness of the idea in inspiring the emergence of civil society movements to subvert totalitarian rulers, including the success of civil society movements in overthrowing authoritarian regimes in several southern and Central American countries. It was through this civil society movement that the process of democratic transformation occurred in the Eastern and Central European region (Smolar 1996); in the history of reform in Indonesia, the role of civil society forces cannot be underestimated because the fall of Suharto's New Order regime was not solely caused by the economic crisis in 1997/1998, but the role of civil society forces, especially intellectual and student forces.

Mikaela Nyman (2006), in her study of the influence of civil society forces in democratization in Indonesia concluded that the economic crisis of 1997/1998 was a very decisive moment for the democratization process in Indonesia, but the roots of the democratization process were already established long before the economic crisis and the role of civil society forces that seek to build opposition to the government, although the path taken in opposition between one another is not always the same, but they seek to open the political system in a more democratic direction (Marijan 2011). The power of civil society that can consolidate well has proven capable and, at the same time as a momentum that can accelerate the process of changing national leadership caused by the fall of the Soeharto New Order regime.

In its development, the role of civil society manifested into various types of dynamic social and religious movements not only to control the domination of the state but also to play a major role in the development of the state and the process of democratization. This article tries to find and analyze the role of civil society after the fall of Soeharto's New Order regime which seems to have shifted no longer as a balancing force in exerting pressure on the state, but the power of civil society has

entered the vortex of power, even the mass media has become an inseparable part of power, so that control over the government has become weak.

Therefore, Jeffrey Winters (2011) assessed that after the fall of Soeharto, Indonesia was a lawless democracy and even switched to an oligarchic system. As a result, the laws expected to restrict and control the government do not work at all. This article tries to find and analyze the relations of the state, media, and civil society after the fall of the New Order regime in Indonesia.

METHODS

This research method uses qualitative research methods, namely research that intends to understand the relation state and civil society in the arena of power. Sugiyono (2013) Calls qualitative research post-positivistic because it is based on the philosophy of postpositivism. The presentation of data from this study uses a descriptive format intending to describe, summarize the sharing of conditions, especially relation state and civil society in the arena of power.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Adam Ferguson, a scientist from Scotland, first introduced the concept of "civil society". This concept was later developed by Hegel and, subsequently Karl Marx. It's just the difference. If Ferguson based his thinking on ancient Greek philosophy especially from Plato and Socrates that recognized the existence of transcendental elements, Hegel and Marx completely put the concept within the framework of a philosophy of enlightenment that viewed historical processes behind closed doors and ignored elements beyond rationality of a transcendental nature, both of traditional and religious origin (Nasution 2007).

Marx's thought was continued by Antonio Gramsci, famous for his concept of hegemony, by placing civil society into a superstructure that included political organizations, churches, school systems, sports teams, media, and families (Gramsci, 2006). In Antonio Gramsci's view, the state provides an important mechanism in linking civil society with the economy, and the operation of power. The power of civil society is useful in maintaining an unequal society, and even a well-articulated civil society will be necessary even after a major upheaval.

In the arena of power, civil society in which there is a mass media becomes one of the main actors, in addition to the state, political culture, and economic actors

whose relations greatly influence the interests of state power. In the context of democracy in Indonesia, the existence of a robust civil society is also very important for the resilience of democracy. In many places, civil resistance, in collaboration with civil society and the media, in the view of Fox and Halloran (2016), can protect democracy through investigation, transparency of information and advocacy (Anggraini 2017).

Cheema and Popovski (2010), are of the view that a strong civil society helps create fundamental beliefs and social ties that in turn, strengthen contestations and fights that allow democracy to remain strong in the face of pressure. Even the relationship between the power of civil society and the state is expected to be able to influence the products of state law that better protect small and weak communities. The existence of civil society is seen as something natural, created because of a process of individual interaction in a free public space and guaranteed by the state (Anggraini 2017).

While the state is said to be democratic in the view of Jeffrey Winters (2011) when supported by the superation aspect of law, because democracy without law has a criminal impact. The law here is precisely subject to the ruler. Mary E. McCoy (2019) added that press freedom could be used as a barometer of the health of democracy in a country, press freedom being the main actor in maintaining democratic resilience over time. Titi Angraini et al. (2017) emphasized that citizen involvement and the existence of a strong civil society are essential for democratic resilience. In many places, civil resistance, in collaboration with civil society and the media, "protects" democracy.

Among the various results of the 1998 reform movement, freedom is the most valuable and most meaningful, especially with the birth of Law Number 40 of 1999 concerning the press which affirms that press freedom is guaranteed as a human right of citizens, and the press functions as a medium of information, education, entertainment, and social control. Madjid (2003) mentions that freedom, whose concrete institutionalization gives birth to the *noktahs* of civil liberties In the form of freedom of expression, assembly, and association, must be consolidated in such a way that it is not easily shaken by unexpected socio-political changes in the future.

In particular press freedom and academic freedom, the "sacred space" of a democratic society, must be truly protected and developed with the highest degree of earnestness. It's just that the role of civil society in the new order era does not play a significant role, especially in influencing state policy. So there is what Nasution (2007) calls "demoralization" at the state level, which is seen by the increasingly rampant corruption, rampant collusion, and various other forms of misappropriation and commercialization of office. Even the so-called abuse of power is really nothing but a manifestation of the acute demoralization of power.

In the era of Soeharto's new order, the relationship between the state and civil society at the beginning of the New Order government still did not see its role, it can even be said that the existence of civil society was very weak and weakened by a regime supported by three forces, namely ABRI, Birokrasi and Golkar. With the jargon of "politics as commander-in-chief", the new order regime uses political and economic stability as a barometer of the running of democracy, which is used as an excuse to carry out repressive actions against parties or groups of people who try to criticize various government policies.

Various efforts were made by the government at that time to land its power, ranging from the policy of unification of the bureaucracy and the military into one command through the dual functions of its ABRI so that many regional heads, ministers, and other public positions were filled by the military elite. It was noted that after the 1971 elections, only four out of 26 provinces (15%) had governors with civilian backgrounds (Setiawan, 2013). It was in this context that the idea emerged of the need to organize civil and military relations in the arena of state power. Various efforts to place the military under civilian control began to be seen after the fall of the New Order regime by repositioning the DWI role of the ABRI function into a professional soldier who had to return to the barracks by leaving his social and political role.

Fatah (1998) refers to the power of the New Order as an arrogant power that was developed through four processes, namely; (i). Centralized power management; (ii). Autonomization, namely the New Order attempted to marginalize society from the process of making public policies and government processes in general; (iii). Personalization, in which centralized and autonomous power is then personalized in Suharto's hands; and (iv). Sacralization, where power is positioned as something sacred, which cannot be erroneous, which cannot be

mistaken, free from criticism, let alone overturned. During the New Order era, this arrogant power took a long breath, one of which was supported by a strategic alliance between the President, the military, the bureaucracy, the technocracy, and the investors. The new alliance experienced a serious rift when a severe economic and political crisis met with the sudden politicization and radicalization of students and the political middle class in February – May 1998 (Fatah 1998).

The unbalanced relations between the state and civil society in the New Order Era were also inseparable from the New Order's policy of fusion of political parties in 1973, one of the political policies in Suharto's New Order Era to simplify political parties in Indonesia by combining several parties. Politics into three socio-political forces based on their streams and ideologies. The main objective of this political party fusion is to create political stability in the life of the nation and state. Political participation that was so wide and uncontrolled through many political parties at that time was dangerous to political stability. Political party fusion policy is considered as the main condition for achieving Indonesia's economic development.

Besides that, the state also exercises hegemony over the power of civil society, especially the power of civil society from youth, religious and social organizations. Even in the New Order era, there was no freedom of the press. In the history of the New Order, approximately 70 newspapers were banned, and many journalists were also arrested and exiled by the government (Kompas, 2022).

Civil society only played a role as a balancing force in the late 1990s, which was marked by the birth of many non-governmental organizations; even though the state was still in a very dominant position, hegemonic and tended to be authoritarian, but the role of civil society was visible and capable of acting as a balancing force, one might even say vis a vis the state, thus giving birth to the reform movement which culminated in May 1998 with the support of the student demonstration movement and finally was able to overthrow Suharto's New Order regime.

The reform movement marked the victory of the civil society movement. The society that has risen from a position of silence, even though the New Order regime has tyrannized it for so long, marks an awareness of the importance of strengthening its political bargaining position with the state (Yusuf 2000). Political

reform wants to return the state format from an authoritarian system to a democratic system as a first step towards realizing civil society (Nasution 2007).

After the reformation in Indonesia which was marked by the collapse of Suharto's New Order regime, the civil society movement to oversee the functioning of the democratic system continued to experience rapid development. There are recorded as many as 431,465 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) registered at the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Law and Human Rights, and at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, either as associations, foundations, or community organizations working on all kinds of policy issues. Even though it continues to experience dynamics and development, the existence of civil society organizations in Indonesia after the collapse of Suharto's New Order regime has become the main driver of political, social, and economic reform, including on women's issues, environmental issues, human rights, freedom of religion or belief, freedom of information and anti-corruption issues.

At the beginning of reform, the civil society movement experienced a golden age, because the position of civil society was quite strong and well consolidated in overseeing the running of the democratic system. However, in recent years the civil society movement has begun to stagnate and even seem to be weakened due to the weakening of civil society's criticism because they were in the circle of power, both during the Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono era and during Joko Widodo's.

Although the space for civil society participation has become increasingly open, conducive, and stable since the reforms, it still faces some obstacles to carrying out their role effectively. The problem faced by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Indonesia that is the main challenge is the issue of financial resources and financial sustainability. This is what probably makes many CSOs activists turn to political party administrators, volunteers, successful teams of presidential candidates, and not even a few who become commissioners in several State-Owned Enterprises. Civil society can have negative implications for democracy and democratization if what is dominant is ethnocentrism, radicalism, and power-oriented. (Asrida 2021) Mahfud MD (2023) mentions the emergence of many civil society movements that are used to enter the circle of power but also damage from within. (Kompas 2023) as a result, civil society which plays an active

role in influencing public policy, encouraging state and market sector accountability, and empowering citizens is neglected (Malelak 2014).

Another problem faced by the strength of civil society in Indonesia after the reform is that it is not well consolidated, even though it already has a fairly wide network, but the power of civil society is fragmented in addressing several important issues related to national and state issues. They carry their own agendas, not well coordinated and consolidated, so their movements are ineffective at influencing state policy. Such as the revision of the KPK Law, whose direction is to weaken the existence of the KPK RI and will further complicate the eradication of corruption. Likewise, when the issue of ratification of the Job Creation Law and several issues in the Criminal Code Bill that have been passed by the DPR RI.

While the mass media, which is actually very strategic in influencing society and can be used as a meeting point of many powers and interests, media ownership tends towards oligopoly and monopoly practices. Media in Indonesia tend to be cross-owned, that is, a corporation has a variety of media, both in type and number. For example, Media Nusantara Citra (MNC), Gramedia compass group, and Jawa Post Group. (Arsam: 2014). In fact, most of the mass media, especially television, are held by party elites and businessmen at the same time, so it is very difficult to maintain their independence, because it can be used to build public opinion that is tailored to the interests and direction of the owner's political support.

From a political economy perspective, there have been shifts in Indonesia after the New Order. State power is fragmented, both vertically and horizontally. Vertically fragmented along with the implementation of regional autonomy policies. Horizontally, it is fragmented because there is no longer a dominant political force within the political processes (Marijan 2011).

In addition, the challenge for the realization of a strong and consolidative civil society force in Indonesia is due to the thick paternalistic culture, because the openness of citizens or society in responding to a policy related to public issues and political interests will be determined by the influence of certain elites or figures they are averse to, not by autonomy based on rationality. Such a reality gave birth to the phenomenon of increasingly massive political dynasties, both at the national and local political levels.

The weak power of civil society after the collapse of Suharto's new order regime, in addition to further nourishing political dynasties, also gave birth to a political oligarchy that by Jeffrey A. Winters (2011) is defined as the politics of the defense of wealth by actors who own material wealth. Oligarchs and oligarchs arise because some actors manage to accumulate the resources of material power and then use some of them to maintain wealth with great repercussions for the rest of society. Oligarchs and oligarchs will disappear not through democratic procedures but rather if the highly unbalanced distribution of material resources is eliminated so as not to give too much political power to a handful of actors.

In looking at political oligarchs across multiple countries, Winters (2011) assesses that in States or political communities where law enforcement and property rights claims are weak, the same material resources can be used to buy security forces, to maintain networks of officials; to bribe police, prosecutors and judges; to the point of funding the masses to demonstrate in the streets as if political mobilization were from below. Oligarchs in places like Indonesia and the Philippines could actually calculate how much it would cost to do things like gather hundreds of thousands of people over a few weeks to shake up the government, or get the legislature to pass laws protecting oligarchs' property.

In that framework, it is natural that Azra, et al (2003), consider that the collapse of the authoritarian New Order regime did not in itself bring the Indonesian nation to the gate of democracy. The friction between the forces of civil society marked by the soaring frequency of social movement organizations (SMO's), the proliferation of political dynasties, and political oligarchs in Indonesia is a challenge for the forces of civil society to continue to guard the course of democracy in Indonesia so as not to return to authoritarianism.

Hatta (1996) once revealed that our democracy shows the opposition between idealism and reality. Idealism, which creates a just government that will carry out the best democracy and the greatest prosperity of the people. The reality of the government, which in its development seems to be moving further and further away from the real democracy.

It is in this context that it is relevant to suggest the opinion of Neumann (1975) when we want democracy to continue, then the issue of leadership and participation becomes an important study, leadership is the third central element of democracy besides popular participation, and political parties. Neumann (1975)

further posits that a living democracy is more than just a system that has achieved a thorny balance of power between political institutions and dynamic social forces.

In countries that adhere to democratic understanding, the idea of people's participation has an ideological basis: the people have the right to determine who will be the leader to determine general policy. The high participation indicates that citizens understand political life. On the other hand, low participation can be regarded as low concern and knowledge of citizens in political life or there may be limitations and no opportunities in political life. On the contrary, in totalitarian countries the idea of people's participation is based on the views of their political elites who see the people need to be guided and nurtured to achieve lasting stability (Prasojo 2005).

CONCLUSION

The role of civil society power in the history of reform in Indonesia cannot be underestimated, because the fall of Suharto's New Order regime was not solely caused by the economic crisis of 1998 which led to a political crisis, but the role of the forces of 'civil society', especially intellectual power and well-consolidated students, which in the end was able to subvert the authoritarian and hegemonic Soeharto New Order regime. Civil Society as one of the main actors in the arena of power should ideally be able to place a position as a balancing force between the realms of state power, political society, and economic society, because its relations greatly influence the interests of state power. A state is called a democracy when there is an active force of the Civil Society that limits state power. Likewise, mass media must remain a balancing force, both as a function of information media, education, entertainment, and social control. Thus, the ownership of mass media needs to be regulated more firmly in the Press Law. Therefore, to prevent the decline of democracy in Indonesia, a mass media is needed that maintains its independence and is not partisan, and on the other hand, a strong and well-consolidated civil society is needed that continues to exercise control over state policies that are not in favor of the interests of the people. Weaken the power of civil society these days because it is fragmented by momentary interests without considering larger political interests. In addition, to maintain democracy requires re-strengthening the participation of civil society, so that citizens who act together

with the ruler can ensure popular control over the government. Civil society should not be stuck with partial state political issues, but a concerted step is needed in addressing every public issue, so that its energy becomes stronger when dealing with political power and financier power.

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About the Author

Dr. Nuruddin Hady, SH., MH, is a lecture in Faculty of Social Science, The State University of Malang, East Java, Indonesia. He teaches Theory of Democracy, Law & Human Rights, Civil Society, Constitutional Theory, and Democracy of Pancasila. His main focuses are Constitutional Law and Human Rights. Some of his books are “Teori Konstitusi dan Negara Demokrasi”, “Negara Kesatuan Menggali Gagasan Para Pendiri Negara”, ”Hak Asasi Manusia Dalam Berbagai Perspektif”.

Mohd Hairy Ibrahim, PhD, an Associate Professor in Faculty of Human Sciences, Sultan Idris Education University, Perak- Malaysia. He has also been invited as an advisor and Consultant in Malaysian and International Agencies. He is involved in the International Urban Climate Association (IAUC), the United Management Association of Malaysia and the Malaysian Social Science Association (PSSM).

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