

Golkar: The Embodiment of New Order that Still Appeals

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Abstract

At the end of Suharto's long authoritarian rule in 1998, few would throw their support for Golkar – the former government-backed party. Golkar (Golongan Karya or lit. functional group) changed its name to Partai Golkar (Golkar Party), but the stigma of being the former government's main hand in controlling and manipulating elections has stuck on. However, against popular belief, the party has managed to continue its electoral success. This article explores the factors behind the continued popularity of Partai Golkar. Investigating its history, close connection with the military, and the changes the party had been undergoing since the start of the reform (reformasi) era, this article argues that the success of the party has been supported by the adoption of new image, the prevalence of money politics, and the strength of the party outside the main island of Java.

Key words: Indonesian politics, Golkar Party, election, reformasi, party popularity

Indonesia's new order era (1966-1998) is associated with rapid economic development, but also with Soeharto's authoritarian rule, corruption, strong military rule, and extensive government control.ⁱ Pro-reform movement brought an end to new order in 1998 and strengthened anti-Soeharto sentiments. Golkar or *golongan karya* (literally means functional group), the new order government's party, received the same negative reaction and was predicted to die soon after 1998.ⁱⁱ However, two elections in the reform era (*era reformasi*) have proven that Golkar is still popular among voters.

This essay attempts to find out why Golkar has been able to still maintain a top two position amongst other parties, despite the fall of Soeharto as its main pillar.ⁱⁱⁱ I argue here that there are three main reasons for this trend. Firstly, Golkar's money politics, intimidation, and threats to force people's votes are still practiced.^{iv} Suryadinata notes that although the election in general was seen as free and smooth, results were questionable because of the irregularities and offences (Suryadinata 2002:96). Golkar is known for committing offences and the report from 1999 election showed that it still applies such methods to increase its votes. Secondly, Golkar has arguably been successful in projecting a new image that appeals to the masses. Golkar has a new slogan, adopted more democratic measures such as voting, and is more careful in selecting candidates.^v Thirdly, the support from outer islands,^{vi} which have been given more electoral weight in their votes since the 1999 election, has sustained Golkar's popularity.^{vii} Golkar performed well in outer islands because it is more established there compared to the other parties (because of the floating mass concept), and especially compared to newer post-Soeharto parties that have only been in politics since 1998.

This essay explores the strength of Golkar by investigating the history of the organisation, which demonstrates the initiative behind its formation and the organisation's evolution and institutionalisation as government's electoral vehicle. The role of the military in its organisation is also dealt with to show the support that Golkar has received throughout the decades. This continuous support is an essential part of the organisation's enduring popularity. Results from Indonesia's first two elections is also investigated to look at how the electoral system has also helped Golkar in continuing to gather strong support in the outer islands.

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History

Reeve argues that the foundation principles of Golkar, which are collectivism and family principle, had been stated by four prominent Indonesians: Ki Hajar Dewantoro, professor raden Supomo, Soekarno and Mohammad Hatta – the first idea announced before the second world war.^{viii} However, Indonesia's first president, Soekarno; was seen as the pioneer for the formation of Golkar with his 'bury the parties' speech in 1956 (Reeve, 1985:116). Feith notes that the statement came as a result of frustration of the multi-party system with parties rivalry dominating political scene. Soekarno suggested that parties are no longer needed in a sovereign state, and stated the wish to have a simpler system.^{ix}

Soekarno's idea came up again after PKI (*partai komunis* Indonesia or Indonesian communist party) became very powerful around early 1960s. He needed to have a balance of power and at the same time moving away from his perceived closeness with PKI. ABRI at that time had the same interest of reducing PKI's influence and strengthen its *kekayaan* concept – to legitimise its personnel to have both civilian and military roles (institut studi arus informasi, 1996:44-46). Soekarno and ABRI then announced the formation of *sekber* Golkar (*sekretariat bersama golongan karya* or joint secretariat of functional groups) on 20 October 1964, which was basically a fusion of various professional/occupational organisations (Reeve, 1985:217-243).

Initially Soekarno wanted *sekber* Golkar to uphold nasakom values (nationalism, religion, and communism). Soekarno claimed that the Indonesian revolution was based on Pancasila – and its aspiration was aimed at realising a socialist community (Pandiangan, 1996:40-41). Soekarno's nasakom ideology was not entirely acceptable by the citizen, but Soekarno's position as the great leader of revolution got a lot of respect, and thus his idea was enforced (Pandiangan, 1996:40-41). However, with the dwindling popularity of Soekarno and the fear of the resurgent of communism after the alleged coup by PKI, *sekber* Golkar decided to uphold Pancasila (Indonesia's basic five principles) instead, as its ideology (Pandiangan, 1996:41-46).

After the 1965 killing of six army generals and alleged coup by PKI, Soeharto took over the government, banned PKI, and new order was proclaimed in 1966. *sekber* Golkar, having developed from 61 to 291 sub-organisations, had the potential to be government's electoral vehicle; and at the same time Soeharto signalled that he preferred to deal with existing parties rather than to change the political structure. Nonetheless, it was still somewhat surprising when the government then decided to back *sekber* Golkar, without attempting to get the support from other parties.^x

After winning the 1971 election, the rest of the 1970s witnessed Golkar^{xi} concentrated on its internal consolidation. Golkar's first national convention (*musyawarah nasional* or *munas*) in 1973 decided on Golkar's basic constitution (*AD/ART* or *anggaran dasar/anggaran rumah tangga*) and general party programs. It was also at this stage that the *dewan pembina* (advisory council) headed by Soeharto, was formed (Pandiangan, 1996:60). Meanwhile, the government carried out what are called 'golkarisation' and 'de-party-isation' – with the nine remaining parties fused into two (PPP and PDI), and Golkar became the government's party (Reeve, 1985:323-324).

In the 1980s Golkar became more established after winning every election held in the new order era (see appendix 1). The approach of the organisation is top-down and its main strategy is the wide control of state apparatus and bureaucratic channel. Golkar's influence on the other two political parties was palpable, that in 1983 there was a proposal for Soeharto to become chief advisor (*pembina utama*) of PPP (united development party) (van Dijk, 1984:141). Reeve points out that as a party Golkar seemed like failure and 'burden' to civil service and military, but at the same time there is a 'golkar identity' emerging as its bureaucratic power increased; by then Golkar had to be involved in decision-making process all the way to the village level – failure to do so would have meant that decision was 'undemocratic' (van Dijk, 1984:345).

The 1990s witnessed a growing concern and criticism towards the government and Golkar as its party.^{xii} There was a growing resentment towards increasing and often intimidating government control. Among the highlights of the dynamics of domestic politics

was the government intervention in PDI's internal affair (*partai demokrasi* Indonesia or Indonesian democratic party) by rejecting the promotion of Megawati Soekarnoputri's^{xiii} as party leader and the endorsement of Soerjadi as government's candidate. A bloody clash occurred between supporters of both candidates resulting in riot and looting on 27 July 1996 (Liddle & Mallarangeng, 1997:167). Criticism towards government was also growing more intense and became more public with the jailing of Mukhtar Pakpahan and challenging of Abdurrahman Wahid's NU leadership.^{xiv} Mounting public resentment intensified especially after Soeharto showed the intention of staying on as president after the 1997 election. Waves of public demonstrations finally forced Soeharto to resign in 1998. As leader of *dewan pembina Golkar* and Indonesian president, as well as ABRI's highest leader, Soeharto was in control of the country (Saidi, 1993:50) and his departure left Golkar shaken-up and confused (institut studi arus informasi, 1999:99).

The new order government was determined to see Golkar's continuous success in elections to ensure its continuing reign. There was a strong and systematic attempt from the government to curb other political powers in the country and crush any potential threat. At the same time, Indonesian politics during the new order was also heavily influenced by the military as one of the most important players. For Golkar, support from the military was crucial in the intimidation and coercion against its political rivals. At the same time, the military also used Golkar as a vehicle to exert its power as well.

Military

ABRI gained reputable image as the frontrunner in Indonesian revolution, mainly before independence in 1945 and against PKI in 1965. Against PKI, ABRI needed Golkar to curb the development of communism with the formation of mass organisations (institut studi arus informasi, 1996:15-16). Samson argues that the common fear and negativities towards PKI later became the base of ABRI's 'monopoly of force' and people's common belief that only ABRI could maintain security and stability (Samson 1973:127). ABRI translated the respect it gathered to the right to have dual roles, civilian and military (institut studi arus informasi, 1996:25; Ambong XVIII/3:235-237). This concept of *dwifungsi* or dual-function has been defended and somewhat institutionalised in the state constitution (Karim, 1989:75). Over the years the role of ABRI became influential across many aspects, as permission from ABRI became necessary for daily activities such as looking for a job, opening up a business, to organising music concerts^{xv}.

The intertwined connection between ABRI and Golkar has resulted in various reactions. Comments and critics were made about the closeness between the two^{xvi}, and the government has made justifications for it – usually by claiming that co-operation was necessary to uphold Pancasila and Indonesian UUD (*undang undang dasar* or basic constitution) 1945 (institut studi arus informasi, 1996:17; Karim 1989:61, 78, 86). The variety and complexity of Indonesia were deemed potential to cause problems for unity – another reason used by ABRI to be more involved in politics as a 'uniting force' (institut studi arus informasi, 1986:54-59). Even the various aspirations from different groups within Golkar were seen as potentially damaging for organisation unity – one motive for ABRI to meddle in it (institut studi arus informasi, 1986:57). To further emphasise the closeness of ABRI and Golkar, the term *keluarga besar Golkar* (Golkar's big family, consisting of ABRI, KORPRI and Golkar) was introduced in 1973. Even within ABRI there was a desire for ABRI to have an independent position that is separate from the government and refrain from taking Golkar's side, but these opinions were always dismissed by Soeharto and pro-*dwifungsi* military officers.^{xvii}

ABRI was accused of taking Golkar's side, especially during elections, since 1971. Nishihara in his detailed account of the 1971 election notes that ABRI was especially assigned to maintain security for the election, in particular ABRI's sub-groups that are also indirectly part of Golkar (Nishihara, 1972:24). However, ABRI's actions have extended to intimidation and coercion to vote for Golkar. Liddle points out that Golkar's regional electoral organisations were usually staffed by army officers and civil servants, with the officers

typically holding higher posts. The department of defense specifically assigned these regional officers to watch the election and enforce 'golkarisation' (Liddle, 1985:82). Nishihara notes that this mechanism is why it is difficult to separate 'voluntary support' and intimidation/force to support golkar – as Indonesian villagers' daily activities, including voting for Golkar, as told by their village heads (Nishihara, 1972:45-46; Liddle, 1988:185). ABRI's support went to the extent of using intimidation and coercion when persuasion failed (Samson, 1973:127-128).

Another important aspect of the ABRI-golkar relationship is in the permeability of transfer of personnel between two organisations, and most of the time dual posts were allowed (Pandiangan, 1996:153). Military figures have somewhat dominated golkar's chairmanship since its formation. Military officers have held golkar chairman post since 1964, from Juhartono, Sukowati, to Sudharmono (Pandiangan, 1996:44,50). Top posts in national council were held by military personnel (Pandiangan, 1996:34-35), and down to district level, golkar offices were usually chaired by military officers.^{xviii} The most significant evidence of the dual-leadership in ABRI-golkar was Soeharto as both *ketua dewan pembina golkar* (golkar's advisor council chairman), and as Indonesian president who by constitution automatically held ABRI's highest command.

Outside golkar, ABRI officers also dominated governmental posts such as governors and cabinet ministers. Crouch notes that in 1965, among 25 provinces Indonesia had 12 governors from the army. Soeharto frequently also appointed ministers and top officials from the military.^{xix} Crouch also argues that much of government's business was also in the hands of ABRI – especially a group of generals known as SPRI (private staff) of Soeharto, who is in charge of finance, economics, foreign and domestic intelligence. The power of this group led to accusations that SPRI was a 'supercabinet', and it was disbanded in 1968, with key members retained as ASPRI (private assistants) (Crouch, 1972:213).

The success of golkar as an electoral machine was not possible without ABRI's and government's support. ABRI has maintained control over golkar through its leadership and influence in government. To function and succeed as a party, observers note that independence from ABRI must be upheld by golkar (Ambong, XVIII/3:243; Gaffar et al., 1993:12). Because of the structural confusion in leadership among ABRI, golkar, and the government itself; it was difficult to determine who was controlling who. The only obvious winning side is Soeharto, who was in control of all three.

Floating Mass and Its Manipulations

Prior to the introduction of the floating mass concept, Indonesia's socio-political organisations typically chose the form of mass parties – their priorities were to attract as many members as possible. The government claimed that this created national instability, and so the concept of floating mass was introduced. Pro-government scholar claims that the concept was introduced in 1975 (Babari, XV/4:606), while observers note that it was already enforced before the 1971 election (Uhlir, 1997:55; Reeve, 1985:291). The bill was passed eventually as act no. 3, 1975 stipulated that executive boards of political parties and golkar shall exist down to district capitals and municipal towns only – basically forbade any political activities at community level. In sub-districts and villages a commissioner may be appointed to be assisted by a few assistants, but they are executives of political parties and golkar (Babari, XV/4:606; Hansen, 1976:149).

Socio-political organisations were then made cadre parties and no longer mass parties – preventing membership size development. The parties then must be selective in their choices of candidates, and masses should be floating mass concentrating on economic issues instead of participating in politics. In practice, golkar was allowed to work in village level as local government officials were automatically golkar and KORPRI members.^{xx} Golkar also enlarged the range of its cadres by enforcing the concept of *karyawan*, previously only for civil servants but in 1980s was extended to workers (*buruh*) (Reeve, 1997:167-168).

Because of the floating mass regulation, other parties had no chance of familiarising their candidates to voters, while golkar, with better resources, had the advantage of attracting more popular candidates. Ministers and top government officials' names were spread

geographically to be provincial candidates (Budiman, 1990:29-32). Around the 1977 election, Golkar had also been more sensitive to popular demand and tried to draw PPP supporters by accommodating Moslem votes with endorsements from Islamic figures such as Gus Dur, Nurcholish Madjid, and Ridwan Saidi.^{xxi} These actions further demonstrated the determination of the government to ensure Golkar's success.

While other organisations were banned from recruiting, the government supported Golkar's recruitment drives. In terms of recruitment^{xxii}, in 1973 Golkar was reported to train 560 cadres in ten provinces (Reeve, 1985:326) while in late 1980s there seemed to be a move to open membership to the masses (Reeve, 1997:154). During the chairmanship of Sudharmono, it was reported that Golkar had issued membership cards for over 26 million people, and nine million cadres – each had the task of recruiting 6-7 votes (Reeve, 1997:54). Golkar claimed to have training method and membership mechanism, but the claimed large number created questions about quality of the cadres (Reeve, 1997:172). Nonetheless, association with Golkar was attractive because it usually meant a great boost for career – political or business, and thus Golkar loyalists feared there were people who were not genuine about their support for Golkar and only wanted fast-track careers (Reeve, 1985:286-287).

It has to be noted that election participation rate has always been high – the minister of home affairs claiming Indonesia possibly had the highest in the world after the 1997 election (Schiller, 1999:1). Indonesian government claimed that the high turnout means that Indonesians loved development and that was why they chose to vote for Golkar as a development agent (Gaffar et al., 1993: 87, 90, 91). However, the underlining motivation of voters remained questionable – whether it was voluntary, obligatory, or forced. Civil servants were Golkar members and usually required to cast their votes in the workplace, intimidating them to vote for Golkar. For general public, there was pressure to vote as failure to do so could result in difficulties in daily life, ranging from dismissal from jobs to delay in renewal of identity card (Nishihara, 1972:44; Schiller, 1999:4-5).

It is thus clear that the government was doing everything it could to pave the way for Golkar to be its successful electoral vehicles. As a result of the various blatant violations against free elections, Indonesians were highly intimidated by Golkar. At the same time, Golkar as an organisation received too much support that it was unable to function independently. Thus when Soeharto stepped down in 1998, there was very little chance for Golkar to continue its success. Against all odds, in a short period of time Golkar had been able to reinvent itself to develop its presence as a formidable force in Indonesian politics.

Results from Last Elections

For Golkar, election results during new order period was a result of a system of support from the government and military. Reeve argues that the 1971 victory was a result of the deployment of ABRI resources, internal affairs, Ali Murtopo OPSUS, and government measures – and not the product of Golkar's own effort (Reeve, 1985:291; Liddle, 1988:181). Nishihara pointed out that Golkar had finished its essential campaigning before the official campaign period had even started (Nishihara, 1972:3). The general election institute consisted of government officials who were all Golkar members and military officers dominated leadership in election-supervising bodies – one important figure to be noted is Ali Murtopo, in charge of what was called OPSUS (*operasi khusus* or special operation). Supposedly meant to educate parties about election practices, Murtopo misused his power by reinforcing Golkar and intervening other parties' conventions creating splits and chaos (Nishihara, 1972:21). Candidates were screened by government resulting in an imbalance representation favouring Golkar (Nishihara, 1972:25-29). Golkar also received more funding and allowed more chance of mass-rallies, while other parties were restricted to limited media air-time – even campaign speech-text were subject to approval (Nishihara, 1972:34-35).

Internally, before the 1971 election Golkar set up a *bapilu* (*badan pengendalian pemilihan umum* or body for the managing of elections) that was especially established to help Golkar to win by maximising votes from Golkar's sub-groups (Pandiangan, 1996:154). Before the 1977 election, the government forced the remaining^{xxiii} nine parties to converge into PDI (*partai demokrasi Indonesia* or Indonesian democratic party) and PPP (*partai*

persatuan pembangunan or united development party) (Hansen, 1976:148) – the only two allowed and required to adopt Pancasila as ideology. By 1997, Indonesian elections had become, observer notes – ‘the most comprehensively engineered electoral process in the world’, with the institutionalised structural manipulation to ensure Golkar’s win (Schiller , 1999:3).

However, Golkar’s popularity has proven to be enduring. Below is a comparison of Golkar’s results in the last new order election in 1997, and the two elections in the reform era, in 1999 and 2004.

Table 1.
Comparison of Golkar’s vote results in 1997, 1999, and 2004 elections

Provinces	Votes		Change from	(New provinces)	Votes	Change from
	1997	1999	1997 to 1999		2004	1999 to 2004
Aceh	1,360,379	154,373	-89%	<i>NAD</i>	340,971	120.87%
North Sumatra	4,648,928	1,128,529	-76%		1,133,411	0.43%
West Sumatra	2,214,666	459,528	-79%		577,323	25.63%
Riau	1,879,977	632,609	-66%		709,090	12.09%
				<i>(Kepulauan Riau)</i>	90,034	
Jambi	1,208,090	400,495	-67%		316,039	-21.09%
South Sumatra	3,361,164	781,517	-77%		802,097	2.63%
				<i>(Bangka Belitung)</i>	87,698	
Bengkulu	747,140	190,731	-74%		178,513	-6.41%
Lampung	3,424,949	636,570	-81%		772,890	21.41%
Jakarta	4,451,503	541,346	-88%		433,966	-19.84%
West Java	16,709,824	5,439,334	-67%		6,718,830	23.52%
				<i>(Banten)</i>	943,050	
Central Java	11,671,667	2,300,625	-80%		2,803,991	21.88%
Yogyakarta	1,102,256	258,745	-77%		266,444	2.98%
East Java	12,620,089	2,510,025	-80%		2,691,619	7.23%
West Kalimantan	1,298,746	511,513	-61%		459,252	-10.22%
Central Kalimantan	843,065	221,940	-74%		223,498	0.70%
East Kalimantan	807,678	336,629	-58%		368,782	9.55%
South Kalimantan	1,164,085	357,278	-69%		323,298	-9.51%
Bali	1,727,810	196,984	-89%		320,710	62.81%
West Nusa Tenggara	1,484,697	735,733	-50%		491,394	-33.21%
East Nusa Tenggara	1,867,339	759,156	-59%		758,869	-0.04%
East Timor	334,718	168,592	-50%			-100.00%
South Sulawesi	4,023,937	2,481,914	-38%		1,847,306	-25.57%
Central Sulawesi	937,551	585,592	-38%		431,929	-26.24%
North Sulawesi	1,648,075	811,899	-51%		642,994	-20.80%
				<i>(Gorontalo)</i>	254,525	
South East Sulawesi	822,163	505,345	-39%		329,376	-34.82%
Maluku	888,948	326,115	-63%		233,884	-28.28%
				<i>(Maluku Utara)</i>	97,401	
Irian Jaya	938,463	308,632	-67%	<i>(Papua)</i>	304,281	-1.41%
Total	84,187,907	23,741,749	-72%		24,480,757	3.11%

Source: KPU website

The present election law in Indonesia is a combination of proportional and district system, meaning an advantage for Golkar who has an existing functioning structure down to the village level (Schiller, 1999:88-89). Aside from that, the outer islands were given 49.4 percent of the seats distribution, while they only represent 40 percent of total population (Schiller, 1999:88). The outer islands have traditionally been Golkar's stronghold – Harold Crouch, a prominent expert on Indonesia, after 1971 election connected the outer islands support with the fact that in these areas 'the local military was much less subject to checks and balances than in Java'.^{xxiv} Arguably, that condition did not change until 1998 when Soeharto resigned, and the fact that outer islands remain strong Golkar supporters seem to have prevailed at least until the 2004 elections. In the 1999 election Golkar lost 38 -89 percent votes in the provinces, the least losses were in Sulawesi (provincial average of 41 percent) and the most in Java (provincial average of 78 percent). Golkar performed well in Sulawesi, Sumatra, and Irian Jaya; where Suryadinata noted government machinery was strong.^{xxv} Golkar received the second most votes with 22.44 percent votes, PDIP had 11.30 percent more. The 1999 election was deemed a fair and democratic one, but independent observers still noted various violations, mostly committed by Golkar resulting in absolute majority wins in parts of Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara, and Sumatra (Suryadinata, 2002:95 -96).

In the 2004 election, Golkar was victorious – beating PDIP with 21.62 percent against 18.31 percent votes. Arguably, Golkar's win was more because PDIP's drastic votes drop, as Golkar's 1999 and 2004 votes were quite stable. Golkar recorded the biggest increase in Aceh, Bali, west Sumatra, Lampung, central Java, and east Kalimantan. Thus, interestingly the outer islands have been important for Golkar in the last two elections, but there has been variety in the areas of stronghold. Nonetheless, Golkar's results were far cry from 60-70 percent reached during Soeharto's time.

Golkar of the Future

Soeharto's exit in 1998 meant opportunities for the emergence of new parties – as subsequently Indonesian government lifted the ban against forming political parties and around 145 parties were formed afterwards (Suryadinata, 2002: 74). Parties like PAN (*partai amanat nasional* or national mandate party) and PKB (*partai kebangkitan bangsa* or national awakening party) had large mass bases while parties like women's party (*partai perempuan*) and youth progressive party (*partai remaja dan pemuda progresif*) had none and were created rather spontaneously (Suryadinata, 2002: 75). After a process of selection, only 48 parties were deemed fit to contest in the 1999 election (see appendix 2).

The freer environment meant real and stricter competition for *partai* Golkar^{xxvi} – for the first time it would not have the support of ABRI and the government (Suryadinata, 2002:123). ABRI has stated its determination to 'keep a distance' from all political parties including partai Golkar, as a part of the popularly demanded reform process (institut studi arus informasi, 1999:174). The existence of independent observer in the election has also pressured *partai* Golkar to count on its own ability during the voting process to win, and refrain from election violations.^{xxvii}

Internally, *partai* Golkar had to go through difficulties with organisational consolidation and leadership rivalry. Soeharto had not been discreet with succession issue, so when he left there was a split in the organisation – the main divider being ideology as one group was more secularist, while the other was Habibie-loyalist pro-Islam (institut studi arus informasi, 1999:173). The party decided to hold a munaslub (*musyawarah nasional luar biasa* or extraordinary national convention) to settle organisational matters (institut studi arus informasi, 1999:138). Party figures Akbar Tanjung and Edi Sudrajat battled for support for leadership and eventually Akbar won. Sudrajat left the party afterwards and formed his own party, PKP (*partai keadilan dan persatuan* or justice and unity party). One of *partai* Golkar's main sub-groups, MKGR (*musyawarah kekeluargaan gotong royong* or Family Mutual Help Association) had also left the party soon after Soeharto's departure (institut studi arus informasi, 1999:181).

Partai Golkar realised that in order to stay competitive, it needs to project a new image – something that is somewhat in line with reform demands. Soeharto's children were

dismissed from the organisation, and advisory council (*dewan pembina*) – usually the ultimate decision-making body headed by Soeharto himself – was abolished (institut studi arus informasi, 1999:172). There is still a Supervisory Council (*dewan penasehat*), but with limited authority and role (institut studi arus informasi, 1999:172). The party had also changed its form to a political party and chosen a new slogan “*golkar baru bersatu untuk maju*” meaning “The new golkar, united to progress” (institut studi arus informasi, 1999:234).

Arguably the most difficult task for *partai golkar* was to escape Soeharto and his practices. Soeharto as the highest authority was in control of much of its daily matters, that even golkar’s administrative staff was appointed by Suharto (institut studi arus informasi, 1999:116). His children were once partai golkar’s main treasurer and leader of DPP (dewan pimpinan pusat or central leadership council). Alongside with the dismissal of his children,^{xxviii} it has to be noted that voting has been adopted by the party, a clear example being in the election of Akbar as a leader (institut studi arus informasi, 1999:119,136). However, money politics is still rampant, and people’s decision can still be bought – Akbar’s victory was allegedly partly a result of vote buying just before the voting process (institut studi arus informasi, 1999:148).

Partai golkar’s effort to leave ‘old practices’ is then somewhat half-hearted – it tried to satisfy pro-reform demands but at the same time retain some tradition that seem convenient. One traditional exercise that *partai golkar* wanted to retain is the customary support of civil servants, a strong base of support for the organisation; proving that the party is not completely ready to abandon bureaucratic support from government officers (institut studi arus informasi, 1999:230; Zenzie, 1999:244). However, to attract votes, Marzuki Darusman, a charismatic party figure, stated that the organisation would pursue the investigation of Soeharto’s personal wealth and corruption allegation against him; although the follow-up of this move is questionable as Suharto has never been brought to court (Zenzie, 1999:96-98).

Conclusions

Generally it can be said that partai golkar is weakened in the post -Soeharto era, votes for the party had declined compared with the level where it was during new order era. Support for the party has been put up for grabs with the emergence of new post -Soeharto parties and the generally more liberal political atmosphere in Indonesia. Public scrutiny received greater freedom and thus the party has to be more careful in pleasing the masses. At the same time, its funding resources which was one of Soeharto’s *yayasans* (foundations) Dakab, was handed to the government (Zenzie, 1999:177-180).

In such environment, partai golkar has managed to still record top two positions in the elections, thanks to the influence of its organisations right to the village level. The existence of party branches in district level has sustained the level of awareness among voters. The party projection of its new image has arguably helped to maintain votes for the party.^{xxix} It has been tactful in promoting candidates whom are relatively distant from Soeharto and have a clean image, such as Marzuki Darusman^{xxx} and Sultan Hamengkubuwono X^{xxxi}. There seems to also be reasons specific to the last two elections for partai golkar’s high number of votes. It can be argued that in the 1999 election ‘old habits’ were hard to break for some, people who are used to voting for golkar kept voting for it, possibly because it was just simply more well-known especially compared to post-Soeharto parties. As for the 2004 election it can be argued that there was some sense of dissatisfaction towards the leadership of reform government and instability has made people long for the stability associated with new order government (Shari, 2004:58).

Although partai golkar’s position as a popular party should remain safe for the next few years, it should do more than what it is now. Former chairman Akbar Tanjung’s reputation was seriously tarnished with graft allegation, although it was overturned in the end.^{xxxii} Competition from parties such as PKS or prosperous justice party and partai demokrat or democratic party might be even fiercer in the next election. Overall it seems to still be a matter of image and how to formulate a winning combination of the attractive candidates, progressive programs, and actions to convince voters to stick with partai golkar.

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APPENDIX 1
Results of Indonesian Elections during New Order, 1971 -1997
(in percentages)

Party	1971	1977	1982	1987	1992	1997
Golkar	62.8	62.11	64.34	73.16	68.1	74.51
PDI	10.09	8.60	7.88	10.87	14.9	3.06
PPP	27.11	29.29	27.78	15.97	17.0	22.43
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Leo Suryadinata, *Interpreting Indonesian Politics* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1998), p. 199

APPENDIX 2
Parties Competing in 1999 Election

Name	Ideology
Partai Indonesia Baru (PIB or New Indonesia Party)	Pancasila (Islam)
Partai Kristen Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian Christian National Party)	Pancasila
PNI-Supeni (Indonesian National Party led by Supeni)	Pancasila
Partai Aliansi Demokrat Indonesia (PADI or Indonesian Democrats Alliance Party)	Pancasila
Partai Kebangkitan Muslim Indonesia (Kami or Indonesian Muslim Awakening Party)	Islam
Partai Ummat Islam (PUI or Islamic Community Party)	Islam
Partai Kebangkitan Ummat (PKU or Muslim Community Awakening Party)	Islam
Partai Masyumi Baru (New Masyumi Party)	Islam
Partai Pesatuan Pembangunan (PPP or United Development Party)	Islam
Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia (PSII or Indonesian Islamic Union Party)	Islam
Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan (PDI-Perjuangan or Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle)	Pancasila
Partai Abul Yatama (PAY or Abul Yatama Party)	Islam
Partai Kebangsaan Merdeka (PKM or Independent National Party)	Pancasila
Partai Demokrasi Kasih Bangsa (PDKB or Love the Nation Democratic Party)	Pancasila
Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN or National Mandate Party)	Pancasila
Partai Rakyat Demokratik (PRD or Democratic People Party)	Social Democracy
Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia-1905 (PSII-1905 or Indonesian United Islam Party-1905)	Islam
Partai Katolik Demokrat (PKD or Democratic Catholic Party)	Pancasila
Partai Pilihan Rakyat (People's Choice Party)	Pancasila
Partai Rakyat Indonesia (PARI or Indonesian People's Party)	Pancasila
Partai Politik Islam Indonesia Masyumi (PPIM or Indonesian Masyumi Islamic Party)	Islam
Partai Bulan Bintang (PBB or Crescent Star Party)	Islam
Partai Solidaritas Pekerja (PSP or Workers' Solidarity Party)	Pancasila
Partai Keadilan (PK or Justice Party)	Islam
Partai Nahdlatul Ummat (PNU or Nahdlatul Ummat Party)	Islam

PNI-Front Marhaenis (PNI-Front Marhaenis, under the leadership of Probosutedjo)	Pancasila
Partai Ikatan Penerus Kemerdekaan Indonesia (IPKI or Independence Vanguard Party)	Pancasila
Partai Republik (PR or Republican Party)	Pancasila
Partai Islam Demokrat (PID or Democratic Islamic Party)	Islam
PNI-Massa Marhaen (Indonesian National Party -Marhaen Masses)	Pancasila
Partai Musyawarah Rakyat Banyak (Murba Party)	Pancasila
Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (PDI or Indonesian Democratic Party)	Pancasila
Partai Golkar (Golkar Party)	Pancasila
Partai Persatuan (PP or United Party)	Islam
Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB or National Awakening Party)	Pancasila
Partai Uni Demokrasi Indonesia (PUDI or Indonesian Democratic Union Party)	Pancasila
Partai Buruh Nasional (PBN or National Labour Party)	Pancasila
Partai MKGR (MKGR Party)	Pancasila
Partai Daulat Rakyat (PDR or People's Sovereignty Party)	Pancasila
Partai Cinta Damai (PCD or Peace Loving Party)	Pancasila (Islam)
Partai Keadilan dan Persatuan (PKP or Justice and Unity Party)	Pancasila
Partai Solidaritas Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia (PSPSI or All - Indonesian Workers Solidarity Party)	Pancasila
Partai Nasional Bangsa Indonesia (PNBI or Indonesian Nation's National Party)	Pancasila
Partai Bhinneka Tunggal Ika Indonesia (PBI or Indonesian Unity in Diversity Party)	Pancasila
Partai Solidaritas Uni Nasional Indonesia (Suni Party)	Islam
Partai Nasional Demokrat (PND or National Democrats Party)	Pancasila
Partai Ummat Muslimin Indonesia (PUMI or Indonesian Muslim Party)	Islam
Partai Pekerja Indonesia (PPI or Indonesian Workers Party)	Pancasila
Source: Leo Suryadinata, Elections and Politics in Indonesia (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002), pp. 78-84	

APPENDIX 3

Parties Competing in 2004 Election in Indonesia

Party Name	Ideology
Partai Nasional Indonesia Marhaenisme (PNI Marhaenisme or Indonesian National Party Marhaenisme)	Marhaenisme
Partai Buruh Sosial Demokrat (PBSO or Social Democratic Workers Party)	Pancasila
Partai Bulan Bintang (PBB or Crescent Star Party)	Islam
Partai Merdeka (PM or Independent Party)	Pancasila
Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP or United Development Party)	Islam
Partai Persatuan Demokrasi Kebangsaan (Partai PDK or United National Democracy Party)	Preamble of National Constitution 1945
Partai Perhimpunan Indonesia Baru (Partai PIB or New Indonesia Union Party)	Pancasila
Partai Nasional Banteng Kemerdekaan (PNBK or Buffalo Independence National Party)	Marhaenisme
Partai Demokrat (PD or Democratic Party)	Pancasila
Partai Keadilan dan Persatuan Indonesia (PKP Indonesia or	Pancasila

Indonesian Unity and Justice Party)	
Partai Penegak Demokrasi Indonesia (Partai PDI Indonesian Democracy Upholding Party)	Pancasila
Partai Persatuan Nahdlatul Ummah Indonesia (Partai PNUI or Unity of Indonesian Nahdlatul Ummah Party)	Islam
Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN or National Mandate Party)	Pancasila
Partai Karya Peduli Bangsa (Partai KPB or Nation -Caring Party)	Pancasila
Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB or National Awakening Party)	Pancasila
Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS or Prosperous Justice Party)	Islam
Partai Bintang Reformasi (PBR or Star Reform Party)	Islam
Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (PDIP or Indonesian Democratic Party Struggle)	Pancasila
Partai Damai Sejahtera (PDS or Prosperous Peace Party)	Pancasila
Partai Golongan Karya (Functional Group Party)	Pancasila
Partai Patriot Pancasila (Pancasila Patriot Party)	Pancasila
Partai Sarikat Indonesia (PSI or Indonesian Union Party)	Pancasila
Partai Persatuan Daerah (PPD or United Region Party)	Pancasila
Partai Pelopor (Pioneer Party)	Pancasila

Source: KOMPAS, Partai-partai Politik Indonesia: Ideologi dan Program 2004 -2009, (Jakarta: PT Kompas Media Nusantara, 2004)

ⁱ Indonesian government kept an especially strict control over political activities of citizens. Contents of books and mass media's broadcast were all subjects of government's approval (Uhlir, 1997: 84 -97).

ⁱⁱ One of Indonesia's pro-reform leaders, Amien Rais predicted that Golkar will 'enter the grave' (*masuk liang kubur*) (institus studi arus informasi, 1999: 99).

ⁱⁱⁱ Soeharto's fall was predicted to be the end of Golkar because of his extensive control and support of the organization as Indonesia's (former) president (institus studi arus informasi, 1999:99).

^{iv} The independent observers reported that there were indications of Golkar practicing money politics in the 1999 election (Suryadinata, 2002:95-96).

^v One important aspect of improving image is the disposal of Soeharto's children from Golkar, and emphasising on public figures whom can attract votes such as Sultan Hamengkubuwono X and Marzuki Darusman – both are popular public figures and respected with clean reputations.

^{vi} The islands outside Java are referred to as outer islands.

^{vii} For example: one seat in Aceh required 82,385 votes while in central Java it needed 291,597 votes (Suryadinata, 2002:103).

^{viii} Ki Hajar Dewantara was Indonesia's education pioneer, professor Raden Supomo was an Indonesian law scholar and first minister of justice, Mohammad Hatta was Indonesia's first vice-president (Reeve, 1985:1).

^{ix} He mentioned the possibilities of having just one party, one mass movement with no party, or several parties on a rational basis (Reeve, 1985:16).

^x Reeve noted that PNI (*partai nasional Indonesia* – closely associated with Soekarno), or Parmusi (*partai muslimin Indonesia*) were seen as potential partners for Golkar (Reeve, 1985:264).

^{xi} Sekber Golkar became Golkar after the 1971 election (Pandiangan, 1996:56).

^{xii} Rudini, former internal affairs minister noted that there were signs of a growing dissatisfaction (institus studi arus informasi, 1996:14).

^{xiii} Affectionately known as *mbak* Mega (sister Mega), she is a daughter of Soekarno, whose charisma still lingers among Indonesians decades after his death.

^{xiv} Pakpahan is Indonesia's worker activist jailed in 1994 and Wahid or Gus Dur's NU (*nahdlatul ulama*) is Indonesia's largest muslim organization (Liddle & Mallarangeng, 1997:169).

^{xv} ABRI's 'protection' was deemed necessary even in business (institus studi arus informasi, 1996:25).

^{xvi} Army general Hartono had said in 1996 that every ABRI member was a Golkar cadre and former information minister, Harmoko once said that Golkar and ABRI were 'two but one' (institus studi arus informasi, 1996:50; Eklof, 1997:1190).

^{xvii} Seskoad (*sekolah staf dan komando angkatan darat* or army staff and command school) officers have officially urged ABRI to have a non-aligned position in 1970s (Said, 1998:538).

^{xviii} Golkar's DPD (*dewan pimpinan daerah* or regional leadership council) were dominated by ABRI figures, a clear example was during L.B. Moerdani's term as ABRI's highest commander (institut studi arus informasi, 1999:13).

^{xix} Some high profile examples were Moerdani as Menhankam (defence minister), and T ry Sutrisno as vice-president. Both men were top officers in ABRI.

^{xx} KORPRI (*korps karyawan pegawai republik Indonesia*) is Indonesian civil servants association, whom automatically had to support and vote for golkar (Uhlin, 1997:55; Samson, 1973:133).

^{xxi} The three gentlemen were popular Islamic figures. The strategy was replaced around 1997 with "muslim politics" – supporting muslim candidates regardless of party affiliation. In 1997 golkar had managed to convince popular muslim singer Rhoma Irama to leave P PP and join golkar (Reeve, 1997:155; Suryadinata, 1997:198).

^{xxii} Golkar decided to emphasise more on taking individual members while previously concentrated only on groups as members.

^{xxiii} There were 28 parties contesting the 1955 election, but Sukarno reduced the number to only ten (PNI, NU, catholic party, parkindo, partindo, partai murba, PSII, IPKI, PKI and perti) in 1959 and banned two (masyumi and Indonesian socialist party). PKI was banned in 1966, leaving only nine parties (Suryadinata, 2002:26).

^{xxiv} Since the 1971 election golkar had been very successful in outer islands, some areas recording 80 - 90 percent of the vote (Crouch, 1972:215).

^{xxv} Habibie, who was handed down presidency from Soeharto, is from south Sulawesi – providing a possible explanation for the popularity of golkar there (Suryadinata, 2002: 105).

^{xxvi} Golkar changed its name to *partai* golkar (golkar party) in 1999 in the attempt to have a more representative name as a political party competing in elections.

^{xxvii} The government had to undergo changes in bureaucracy, especially with pressure to be more transparent and with demand for decentralization.

^{xxviii} Mass media reported that Soeharto and his family felt betrayed by *partai* golkar and stated that they will not support it anymore (Chew, 2004:22).

^{xxix} Partai Golkar's effort to project a fresh image resulted in mass media's praises (Moreau 2001: 20).

^{xxx} Darusman is a popular human rights activist.

^{xxxi} Sultan HB X is a charismatic Javanese leader from Yogyakarta, who once led a rally to oppose New Order government. He was once a presidential candidate for Partai Golkar in the 2004 election, but withdrew soon afterwards.

^{xxxii} Akbar was convicted by the lower courts of misusing USD 4 million (in funds from state food agency Bulog in 1999. The Supreme Court ruled Akb ar was merely implementing his duty as a minister as ordered by then president B.J. Habibie (Business Times 2004: 19).