

Dissonant Politics in Iran and Indonesia

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Introduction: From Tehran to Jakarta

The election of Mohammad Khatami in May 1997 surprised Westerners and Iranians alike. To appreciate the enormity of this event, one must emphasize that Khatami's assertion that Islam would be *strengthened* by getting the state *out* the business of imposing religion defied the most sacred premises of the Islamic Revolution. That Iran's new president, himself a cleric, argued for the rule of the "people" while affirming the right of Khomeini's heir, Ayatollah Khamanei, to serve as the "Supreme Leader," suggested the sudden emergence of a profound ideological divide at the very pinnacle of the state.

Yet such anomalies were hardly new, nor unique to Iran. In Tehran, as much as in Rabat, Amman or Jakarta, politics pivots around the strategic manipulation of symbolic contradictions. That this dynamic has received so little attention reflects an abiding conviction --particularly among students of Islamic politics -- that authority systems must ultimately be based on one *dominant* form of legitimacy or domination.ⁱCalifornia Press, 1977), 297. Thus John Esposito and John Voll argue that by reinterpreting "core concepts...central to the political positions of virtually all Muslims," Islamists have forged notions of "Islamic democracy" which are as coherent and legal-rational as any secular vision of democracy.ⁱⁱnot simply reformulations of Western perceptions in some Muslim idiom," 31. Similarly, scholars who hold that Islam's quest to link politics to religious norms *precludes* democracy nevertheless argue that efforts to blend democracy and Islam will either provoke a backlash from traditionalists

ⁱThis conviction is central to Weber's own concept of domination. As Reinhard Bendix has noted, while "in Weber's view every historical relation between rulers and ruled contains heterogeneous elements" (or bases of authority), "the predominance of one or another of these elements in the organization and rule ...is related to certain more or less enduring historical configurations." See Bendix, *Max Weber An Intellectual Portrait*, (Berkeley: University of

ⁱⁱJohn Esposito and John Voll, *Islam and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 23. While the authors acknowledge that the "Western experience continues to have great influence on the Islamic debates," they believe that the "older modernist approach to Islamic democracy" is now giving way to "coherent theories and structures of Islamic democracy that are

determined to protect Islam from Western encroachment,ⁱⁱⁱ*Political Evolution of Egypt 1804-1952* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961). or, by forcing a choice between tradition and modernity, will inadvertently legitimate secular ideologies.^{iv}University Press, 1962),344. Viewed through this linear prism, one can only predict that the struggle for political reform in Iran will either fail, or as one Iranian scholar suggests, “open the gates of the secular city.”^v www.iranian.com/Sep96/Opinion/Democracy_September_1996.

This paper challenges this conventional wisdom by investigating the *dissonant institutionalization* of symbolic contradictions in Islamic polities. This dynamic, I argue, invites forms of political change that have often been misunderstood or unanticipated precisely because they are messy and indeterminate. To grasp this non-linear dynamic requires a paradigm shift in how we think about authority structures, the states which support them, and the various forms of political change and ideological innovation that such states promote or hinder. Towards this end, I begin by sketching a theory of dissonant politics. Taking a cue from “new institutionalist” analysis, I highlight the tendency of dissonant states to bequeath *multiple legacies* or paths.^{vi}in *Comparative Analysis*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-33. These competing paths, I argue, create institutional and symbolic space through which elites redefine contending visions of political community. This dynamic, I argue, hardly makes democracy or pluralism inevitable. Indeed, the manipulation of institutional and ideological legacies often facilitates the “survival strategies” that autocrats use to undermine pressures for a substantive transition to competitive democracy. Yet, I

ⁱⁱⁱNadav Safran’s *Egypt in Search of Political Community: An Analysis of the Intellectual and*

^{iv}Albert Hourani held that by equating Islam with those ideas and institutions that secured the public interest (*maslaha*), the reformists inadvertently invited a “*de facto* separation of the sphere of civilization from that of religion,” that opened “another door to secular nationalism.” Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge

^vAhmad Sadri, “Reintroducing the Wheel,” *The Iranian*,

^{vi}See Kathleen Thelen and Seven Steinmo, “Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics,” in Thelen, Steinmo and Frank Longstreth (eds.), *Structuring Politics : Historical Institutionalism*

argue, this same dynamic can also create space for inter-elite accommodations that can slowly transform politics in ways often unaccounted for in the conventional transitions literature.

To explore these changes I will trace the genesis and evolution of institutional and symbolic legacies in Iran and Indonesia. Following this, I consider how recent struggles to redefine these legacies have facilitated the efforts of regime and opposition elites to discredit, challenge or renegotiate the rules of the game. In Iran, the struggle of the “Islamic Left” to reinterpret Khomeini’s legacy in a more pluralistic light helped set the stage for a reform movement. But because this movement has clashed with a rival institutional-ideological path that was controlled by the “Supreme Leader” and his allies in powerful state institutions, its efforts to liberalize the political system have been stymied. In contrast to this example of *bi-polar* dissonant conflict, Indonesia provides an example of *multi-polar* competition between and within competing Islamic and secular groups. In this article, I focus on the competition between two of the most important Islamic groups, one of whose leaders -- Abdurrahman Wahid -- played a key role in forging a contentious experiment in confessional power sharing virtually unprecedented in the Islamic world. In the conclusion I recap some of the theoretical lessons suggested by this study. I then briefly contrast politics in dissonant states to their conceptual opposite: *harmonic states*. By narrowing the space for regime-opposition accommodations, and by glorifying the notion of the state as the sole voice of the community or *umma*, harmonic states invite a “fight to death” between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces. While Algeria offers the most dramatic example of this destructive zero-sum logic, it may not be the last one to pay the high costs that ensue from a legacy of harmonic authoritarianism.

Dissonant Institutionalization: A Theoretical Sketch

This article is informed by Theda Skocpol’s assumption that “various sorts of states...give rise to various conceptions of the meaning and method of ‘politics’ itself, conceptions that influence all groups and classes in national societies.”^{vii}(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 22. What I would like to do is push this famous observation one step further by conceptualizing how particular *types* of states facilitate particular *types* of political and ideological change. For this purpose, Joel Migdal’s work provides a useful point of departure.

^{vii}Theda Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research,” in

Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*,

Spurning all linear theories, he argues for an “anthropology of the state” that investigates how the organizational and symbolic ties that link state and society promote distinctive patterns of political change. Migdal neither assumes that the state is a coherent entity that creates and enforces preferences, nor that it is a prisoner of society’s competing social forces. Instead, he argues that different levels of stateness affect the goals and strategies that regimes and oppositions pursue. Migdal suggests that political change depends on whether the balance of power between state and society produces “total transformation” of the second by the first, “state incorporation” of existing forces, “societal incorporation” of the state, or a total failure of the latter to penetrate the state.^{viii}Cambridge University Press, 1994), 7-36.

The above typological map elaborates upon Migdal’s earlier analysis of “strong societies and weak states.” Politics in many Third World countries, he argued, is structured by the presence of well entrenched religious, ethnic or cultural groups.^{ix}*Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988). Their use of organizational and symbolic resources limits the kinds of strategies and techniques that weak states can employ to mobilize, control or contain strong societies. Constrained by their societies, weak states are better at dominating than transforming, controlling than changing, surviving than innovating.

The notion of “dissonant institutionalization” turns this argument on its head. Whereas Migdal holds that competing socio-political forces often *constrain* ruling elites, I see the *prevalence* of such forces as a *spur* not only to regime survival, but within limits, to regime innovation and controlled change. Migdal’s “state incorporation” hints at this dynamic but is not equivalent to dissonant institutionalization. When state incorporation occurs, the state retains a measure of autonomy sufficient to achieve domination, but it is still compelled by societal forces to act in some ways and not in others. By contrast, dissonant institutionalization obtains when the state has abetted the institutionalization of *contradictory* visions of authority in organizations, parties or groups which maintain a degree of autonomy, or at the least some capacity to define preferences independently of the state. These groups can be

^{viii}Joel S. Migdal, “The State in Society,” in Migdal, Atul Kohli and Vivienne Shue (eds.), *State Power and Social Forces, Domination and Transformation in the Third World* (Cambridge:

^{ix}Joel. S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States State-Society Relations and State*

structured along corporatist lines, but corporatism is one of many institutional mechanisms found in dissonant states.^x *Associational Life in Twentieth-Century Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). Indeed, what makes the concept of dissonant politics useful is that it highlights a dynamic that can unfold in traditional monarchies such as Morocco, in populist authoritarian regimes such as Egypt, or in revolutionary or post-revolutionary states such as Iran.

Dissonant politics pivots around the institutional and ideological space that distances contending societal organizations both from the state, and from one another. The competition by the leaders of these organizations for popular support hinders the efforts of any one group to impose ideological hegemony, while relative autonomy and elite competition facilitates both the state's manipulation of competing elites, and the latter's efforts to manipulate the state. Still, it is usually the state which prevails. By encouraging contending elites to constantly negotiate particular policy questions, or to debate this or that symbolic issue, the state enhances its room for maneuver and thus benefits from the specter of institutionalized conflict.^{xi} should be noted that Coser's analysis focused on Western, pluralistic democracies. Divide and rule and elite accommodation are thus two sides of the same coin. Some of the most dissonant states in the Middle East are ruled by monarchs whose staying power stems from their ability to play off traditional and modern groups. The result, as the cases of Morocco and Kuwait suggest, is a game in which negotiations over particular socio-cultural issues (such as women's rights) gives competing groups a sense that their positions "count" *without* allowing them to pose a serious threat to the ruling powers.^{xii} "Political Dualism," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 5, No. 4, January 1998, 104-30.

Dissonant politics is a product of many factors, three of which bear particular comment. First, it is an outgrowth of strategies of indirect rule through which colonial powers promoted indigenous political elites. Thus in

^xA notion of dissonant politics seems to inform Robert Bianchi's *Unruly Corporatism*,

^{xi}See Lewis Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict*, (New York: The Free Press, 1956). It

^{xii}On the Gulf states see Michael Herb, *All in the Family: Absolutism, Revolution and Democracy in Middle Eastern Monarchies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999). On Morocco see Guilan Denoeux and Abdelslam Maghraoui, "King Hassan's Strategy of

Morocco the French not only tolerated Sufi (mystical) religious orders, Islamic reformist movements, and Westernized elites; they also supported a well respected monarch.^{xiii}1993, 3-18. The king's role as master arbiter was enshrined in the 1962 Constitution, which sanctioned the politically useful myth that the "Commander of the Faithful" stood above the political fray.^{xiv}Unpublished Manuscript, 13. Second, dissonant politics is a product of sharp socio-economic and cultural discontinuities between modern elites and the wider population. Because modern elites govern societies in which traditional religious, tribal or ethnic groups retain influence, the former have often had to accommodate the latter.^{xv} New States, in Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 254-310. Finally, globalization has played a key role in promoting dissonant systems. Said Amir Arjomand addressed this point in a seminal study that shows how the diffusion of Western constitutional models encouraged modernizing elites in Islamic polities to imbibe both legal-rational and traditional notions of authority. The resulting "inconsistency of ...principles and the appositeness of the relative weight then given to them in a particular constitution...set the parameters for the constitutional politics of the subsequent period."^{xvi} *European Sociology*, 33 (1992),39.

Over the last two decades this dissonant dynamic has been manifest in parliaments, the press, or even in the discourse of political elites. "New Media" such as the Internet and the satellite dish have accelerated this process by beaming contending visions of community to a growing audience.^{xvii}to address competing visions to different

^{xiii} See Michel Le Gall, "The Historical Context," in I. William Zartman and William Mark Habeeb, (eds.), *Polity and Society in Contemporary North Africa*, (Boulder: Westview Press,

^{xiv}J. Avelle, "Le Maroc se donne un monarchie constitutionnelle," *Confluent*, No. 27, 1963.

Cited in Abdeslam Maghraoui, "Morocco: From Symbolic to Democratic Legitimacy?"

^{xv}Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the

^{xvi}Said Amir Arjomand, "Constitutions and the Struggle for Political Order" *Archives of*

^{xvii}Akbar S. Ahmed and Hastings Donnan, "Islam in the Age of Postmodernity," in Akbar and Donnan (eds.), *Islam, Globalization and Postmodernity*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) 1-20. This dynamic is not entirely new. In her *An Islamic Response to Imperialism*,

audiences. In turn, this dynamic has shaped what I call the “*multiple imaginations*” of Islamist elites. Exposed to competing concepts of authority, some Islamic leaders have come to view ideological eclecticism as natural and even useful.^{xviii}(1975):621. For a Khatami in Iran or a Abdurrahman Wahid in Indonesia, the challenge is not so much to produce a coherent synthesis of Islam and democracy, or pluralism and piety, as it is to find ways to make *competing* notions of political and religious community *coexist*.

Renegotiating and Redefining Dissonant Legacies

While in dissonant systems elites, institutions and ideologies are in a state of constant competition and contention, absent a system-threatening crisis this discordant dynamic is unlikely to produce a major renegotiation of the rules of the game. Such a crisis can be economic, and/or ideological. While the first has been widely studied, the second merits close attention.^{xix} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). Controlled ideological dissonance can support an authoritarian system so long as rulers prevent disaffected elites from using symbolic fissures as a foundation for mass mobilization. This effort to “transform the institutional relations of society by exploiting...contradictions” is blocked not merely by repression, but also by the unifying influence of charismatic leaders.^{xx}*Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 232. By virtue of their personal allure, they intentionally or inadvertently obscure symbolic anomalies.^{xxi}Oxford University Press, 1983), 150-74. But when charismatic leaders are discredited by economic or political crises, or when they die or fall

Political and Religious Writing of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din “al-Afghani” (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), Nikki Keddi, examined the efforts of this 19th century Islamic reformer

^{xviii}See Ronald Glassman, “Legitimacy and Manufactured Charisma,” in *Social Research*, (winter

^{xix}Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman, *The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions*

^{xx}Robert Friedland and Robert Alford, “Bringing Society Bank in : Symbolic Practices and Institutional Contradictions,” in Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio (eds.), *The New*

^{xxi}Daniel Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini: The Struggle for Reform in Iran* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). Also see Michael Fischer, “Imam Khomeini: Four Levels of Understanding,” in John Esposito (ed.), *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, (New York and Oxford:

prey to a coup, such momentous events can provoke sharp struggles over contending ideological *legacies*.

To grasp this phenomenon we must move beyond the deterministic and one-dimensional notion of “path dependency” that animate institutionalist analyses. The view that “once a critical choice has been made it cannot be taken back”^{xxii} Dynamics,” *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 2, January 1984, 223-46, p. 240. fails to account for the fact that different authoritarian states are more or less path dependent. Dissonant states create *multiple* institutional-ideological paths that create *unintended* opportunities for *path innovation*. By housing competing visions of authority in diverse arenas such as the press, founding constitutions, parliaments, universities, or religious institutions, they create windows of opportunity which competing elites can exploit to discredit, redefine or renegotiate the prevailing political order.

What are the likely consequences of such contests? Here I would like to suggest two provisional hypotheses. First, by inhibiting efforts to impose ideological hegemony, states that are *substantially* dissonant -- *i.e.*, those which maintain considerable symbolic and institutional distance from society’s competing socio-cultural groups, and which promote a *multi-polar* symbolic field– create more space for renegotiating the rules of the game. Conversely, states which are *moderately* dissonant– *i.e.*, those which narrow the symbolic and institutional distance between state and society, and which constrain the degree of ideological and institutional dissonance by limiting competition to a *bi-polar* ideological field, create less space for renegotiating the political/symbolic order. In short, the chances for a more dramatic renegotiation of the political field will be greater in the first than the second. Second, the particular institutional mechanisms which regimes use to manage dissonance also affect struggles to renegotiate the rules of the game. States which rule through centralized control organizations such as single party systems will be relatively *more* constrained than those which use corporatist, monarchical or other institutions to distance themselves from the process of ideological or symbolic reproduction.

The above model suggests a counter-intuitive dynamic: the more dissonant an institutional and ideological legacy, the more opportunities there are for “regime survival strategies” through which rulers encourage inter-elite accommodations that *prevent* a full transition to multi-party democracy.^{xxiii} ways we each conceive of “survival.”

^{xxii}Stephen D. Krasner, “Approaches to the State: Alternative Conceptions and Historical

^{xxiii}Daniel Brumberg, “Reform Strategies in the Arab World,” in Rex Brynen et.al, *Political*

See Migdal's *Strong Societies and Weak States*, 26-7. In short, I am suggesting the phenomenon of "semi-autocratic regimes" is hardly an anomaly.^{xxiv} to which regime-opposition accommodation and competition defined politics in both states. On the contrary, as far it is manifest in the Islamic world, it can be explained theoretically, i.e. by reference to a shared set of institutional and symbolic structures. That said, there is no guarantee that survival strategies will succeed. Some dissonant states will create conditions advantageous to sustaining liberalized autocracy, with others might engender dynamics that eventually allow regimes and oppositions to negotiate a "contingent institutional compromise" or political pact.^{xxv} (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 136. What I want to emphasize, however, is the *indeterminacy* of dissonant systems. While they create space for change, a comprehensive *causal* theory that correlates particular types of dissonant legacies with particular types of political reform must await a fuller analysis of dissonant politics in a myriad of states, including Bangladesh, Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon Morocco, Iran and Indonesia. By focusing on the latter two cases, this article offers a modest yet crucial first step towards a comprehensive theory of dissonant politics.

Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World, Volume I (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), 229-60, and Brumberg, "Survival Strategies vs. Democratic Bargains: The Politics of Economic Stabilization in Contemporary Egypt," in Henri Barkey (ed.), *Economic Crisis and Political Response: The Politics of Economic Reform in the Middle East*, (Boulder: St. Martins Press, 1992), Well before I wrote the above two articles, Joel Migdal had used a similar term -- "strategies of survival" -- but in a much broader sense. As I became familiar with his work only much later, I was not able to incorporate a comparison of the similar and different

^{xxiv}One of the few comparative studies of this phenomenon can be found in Martha Brill Olcott and Marina Ottaway, "The Challenge of Semi-Authoritarianism," Working Papers, The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, <http://www.ceip.files/publications/wp7.asp> It is no coincidence that Iran and Indonesia are both primary cases in the working paper, given the extent

^{xxv}Adam Przeworski, "The Games of Transitions," in Scott Mainwaring, *et al* (eds.), *Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective*

With this caveat in mind I begin by tracing the institutional and ideological paths that state-building bequeathed in Iran and Indonesia. I then consider how such legacies shaped different patterns of political/ideological change. We shall see that despite the distinctive Islamic ideologies and regime control mechanisms that operated in each country, in both dissonant institutionalization encouraged political leaders to redefine the very authoritarian ideologies which they had previously advocated. However, these intriguing examples of *path innovation* had their limits: in both cases, the particular mechanisms that regimes used to control, coopt or manipulate contending forces gave reform battles distinctive and often beguiling stamps. In Iran, an example of *moderate dissonance*, a *bi-polar* power struggle emerged in tandem with a fragile and implicit power sharing arrangement at the very pinnacle of the state. In Indonesia, where dissonance was *substantial*, a *multi-polar* power struggle set the stage for a formal experiment in multi-party alliance making and consociational power sharing that was unprecedented in the Islamic world.

Bi-Polar Dissonant Institutionalization in Iran

Iran's 1978-79 Islamic revolution was led by an alliance between two overlapping socio-ideological forces. On the "Islamist Left" was a disparate movement of university students, professors, independent intellectuals, and some radical clerics, all of whom to various degrees had been exposed to Western notions of politics.^{xxvi} particularly Marxist notions of collective versus individual rights. Their leader was Ali Shariati. A political essayist and aspiring Iranologist, during years of study in Paris he had absorbed a *multiple* vision of revolutionary politics that combined Marxism, existentialism and Shi'ite-Islamic utopianism. Although no democrat, Shariati advocated a radical, instrumentalist and rationalist approach to Islam. He held that it was the mission of the *lay* intelligentsia to remold Islamic symbols into a total ideology that could mobilize the masses against the Western powers and their local allies.^{xxvii} (1980). While this nativist ideologization of Islam paradoxically echoed revolutionary and totalitarian

^{xxvi} I use the term "left" because of the influence that Marxist ideology had on these Islamists,

^{xxvii} Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: New York University Press, 1993). Ali Shariati, *An Approach to the Understanding of Islam, Translated by Venus Kaivantash*, (Houston: Free Islamic Literatures,

traditions rooted in the West,^{xxviii} *Nativism* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 52-76. It was also inspired by the messianic symbols that animate Twelver Shi'ism, a branch of Islam which holds that the Prophet Muhammad's message will only be fully revealed upon the return of the Mahdi or 12th Imam. To the right of Shariati and his allies was a group of clerics who had little exposure to the West, and who believed that they alone grasped Shi'ism's verities. Led by Khomeini, the "Clerical Right" borrowed many of Shariati's symbols and ideas while assailing Shariati's radical instrumentalism and his implicit affinity for Western notions of mass participation.^{xxix} *Essays on the Islamic Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

During the sixties and early seventies this alliance between Islamic Left and Clerical Right gained a foothold in many religious seminaries and universities. That it did so owed much to the legal, moral and charismatic authority that Shi'ism accorded to the leading interpreters of the law.^{xxx} *Pahlavi Period* (Albany: State University Press, 1980). Because Shi'ites gave financial support to *different* "sources of emulation" or *maraje'-e taqlid* (sometimes referred to as "Grand Ayatollahs"), contending visions of Shi'ism sunk *institutional* root outside of the state. The support given by the British, Russians and the Americans to secular autocrats such as Shah Reza Pahlavi did little to undermine such pluralism. Thus even though Khomeini effectively silenced the Grand Ayatollahs –all of whom opposed his theory of *velayat-e faqih* or "Rule of the Jurist" -- and repressed many leaders of the Islamist Left, he did not completely dispense with the competing visions of authority he had inherited in 1979. Instead, Khomeini and allies absorbed these visions into a system whose contours were laid out in the 1979 Constitution.

This document provided for a *faqih* or Ruling Jurist whose nearly unlimited powers derived from the "people's" embrace of Khomeini and his messianic message; a judiciary and "Council of Guardians" controlled by the conservative clergy; and a Majles whose members were elected every five years.^{xxxi} 1996). Although the

^{xxviii} See Mehrzad Boroujerdi, *Iranian Intellectuals and the West, The Tormented Triumph of*

^{xxix} For an analysis of Khomeini's use of Leftist terms see Ervand Abrahamian *Khomeinism*,

^{xxx} Shahrough Akhavi, *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran: Clergy-State Relations in the*

^{xxxi} Albert P. Blaustein and Gisber H. Flanz, *Constitutions of the Countries of the World, The Islamic Republic of Iran, 1979* (Dobbs Ferry: Oceana Publications, 1980). On the Majles, see Baktiari, *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida,

Constitution held that the Council of Guardians could veto any legislation it deemed “un-Islamic,” the Majles played a crucial role by providing the central arena through which leaders of the Islamist Left and the Clerical Right voiced ideologies and negotiated differences. Khomeini stood at the pinnacle of this institutional mess. His charismatic (and constitutional) authority gave him the means *and right* to referee Majles conflicts. By both encouraging and limiting such conflicts, he displayed his utopian vision of “Islamic Unity” while enhancing his authority as the master arbiter. Thus Khomeini himself became a vehicle of dissonant institutionalization. In his speeches and edicts, he communicated competing notions of authority, sometimes upholding his revolutionary notion of clerical rule, sometimes resorting to a more traditional approach which called for limiting the clerics’ role in politics, sometimes taking refuge in mystical visions, while on other occasions singing the praises of the Majles as “representative” of a presumably united entity called the “people.” Khomeini was a contradictory leader of a contradictory system, but his own charisma hid and thus perpetuate ideological dissonance.

Dissonant Politics: The Battle Over the Revolution’s Multi-Dimensional Legacy

The death of Khomeini in July 1989 changed everything. Henceforth, the gates were open for a battle not only over his multiple legacy, but over the contending visions of authority that had been institutionalized in the Constitution and even in Khomeini’s rhetoric. The clerical right immediately went on the offensive, as was demonstrated by the alliance that was forged between the new President, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, and Khomeini’s heir, Ayatollah Khamanei. When these two men pushed for an economic reform program that undermined the Islamist Left’s quasi-socialist policies, leaders of the Left in the Majles attacked Rafsanjani directly while implicitly defying the authority of the new *faqih*, Ayatollah Khamanei. But note how this battle was fought: Islamic Leftists invoked Khomeini’s repeated insistence that “The center of all law and power is the Majles. It guides all and it should do so,”^{xxxii}27, 1980. to defend the principle of popular sovereignty and constitutional rule, while the Clerical Rightists invoked Khomeini’s notion of *velayat-i faqih* to bolster their claim that Khamanei’s word was final and absolute.

Rafsanjani and Khamanei responded to the Islamist Left’s assaults by conducting a purge of the Majles in

^{xxxii} Foreign Broadcast Information Service, South Asia (Henceforth: FBIS-SAS), 80-103, May

advance of the May 1992 elections. Invoking its right to “supervise” these elections, the Council of Guardians disqualified over 1000 radicals from running for office. In retrospect, it is clear that this purge set the stage for today’s reform movement. Accused of being “insufficiently Islamic,” several prominent Islamist Leftists began rethinking basic questions such as the relationship between church and state or the question of individual versus collective rights. That such revisionism unfolded on the floor of the Majles magnified its effect. After all, here were men with impeccable revolutionary credentials invoking, as one deputy put it, “Montesquieu and other political and social thinkers” to legitimate their assertion that the regime should “not violate the Constitution.”^{xxxiii} 1992. Originally published in *Resalat*, April 23, 1992. Moreover, that Islamist Leftists defended their constitutional rights over (and implicitly against) the traditional authority of the *faqih* by again invoking the very name of Khomeini gave credence to criticisms that went far beyond mere politics. Indeed, a key feature of the 1991-92 Majles debates was the implicit defense of ideological pluralism that some deputies articulated.

Such maneuvers were not born out of pure principle. Islamist Leftists had often invoked their “constitutional rights” to block the right’s attacks. But the intensity of the Islamist Left’s criticisms of the regime’s autocratic behavior, and its focus on questions of individual freedoms as opposed to the collective (and thus qualified) “freedoms” that Islamic Leftists had long advocated, suggested that by 1992 some “Children of Revolution” (as they were called) were moving from Islamic Bolshevism to Islamic Menchivism. This trend was an outgrowth of dissonant institutionalization; it stemmed from a redefinition *from within* one ideological path that had been shaped by the very elites who were now trying to redefine it. And it was precisely because they had chartered this path that transforming it proved tricky. For apart from the *other* imposing path that Islamist Leftists had to contend with -- the Clerical Right’s control of powerful institutions such as the Office of the *Faqih*, the Judiciary, and the Council of Guardians-- Islamic Leftists faced an imposing dilemma: how to advance notions of political participation, the rule of law, and rational political dialogue without appearing to betray the very revolutionary principles of “Islamic” government and cultural independence which Khomeini had championed.

Two “Children of the Revolution” played key roles in addressing this dilemma: Mohammad Khatami and Abdolkarim Soroush. Although the first was a cleric and the second a lay intellectual, both were Islamic Leftists

^{xxxiii} *Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, Near East South Asia (FBIS-NES) 92-098-S June 17,

whose *multiple political imaginations* had been shaped by their exposures to Western political thought. Although they had occupied key positions in the ideological apparatus of the state, they were eventually persecuted by the very state they had once defended. In August 1992 Khatami resigned his post as Minister of Islamic Culture when the new Majles prepared to impeach him for failing to defend Islamic values. Soroush—an academic who had once been close to Shariati, and who how had helped to reorganize the universities during the first years of the revolution—was forced in 1996 to resign his post at Tehran University after his writings provoked a violent response from regime hard-liners and their thugs in the para-military “Hezbollah.”

While there were significant differences between Khatami and Soroush, both men held that the most effective way to *prevent* young people from becoming disaffected from Islam was to get the clergy out of the business of imposing Islamic ideology.^{xxxiv} FBIS NES 95-241-S. Faith and politics had to be separated to prevent the second from corrupting the first.^{xxxv} 17. This implicitly reformationist stance allowed each to argue that religious freedom would secure rather than undermine religious authenticity *i.e.*, that Khomeini’s quest for cultural independence would be served by *more* rather less pluralism. That such pluralism might invite Western influence was a dilemma that both men addressed, although in different ways. Khatami argued that when confronted by a global revolution in technology and communications, the only way to instill in the young a sense of dignity was to give them the critical and rational faculties to address the West. This goal, he argued, could not be attained by “building fences around people’s consciousness.”^{xxxvi} Soroush echoed but went far beyond this thesis. Touching a raw nerve, he reminded his fellow Islamist Leftists that much of the existentialist language they had used to vilify the West was hardly Islamic. “In their zeal for opposing the West,” he noted, “they want to denounce modernism...with reasoning taken from foreigners themselves!”^{xxxvii} in FBIS-NES-95-109-S, 7 June 1995. Moreover,

^{xxxiv}See Soroush’s controversial article on the clergy in *Kiyan*, April-May 1995, as translated in

^{xxxv}Mohammad Khatami, *Hope and Challenge, The Iranian President Speaks* (Binghamton N.Y., Institute of Global and Cultural Studies, 1997), “The West,” Khatami wrote, “has...cast aside the deification of repressive thinking that had been imposed on the masses in the name of religion,”

^{xxxvi}*Ibid.*, 47.

^{xxxvii}Soroush, “Knowledge Seen as Basis of Modernism,” *Kiyan* (22 June-August 1994), translated

Soroush took the idea of “saving Islam by distancing cleric and state” much further than Khatami could, given that the latter was a cleric. Soroush did this not only by making the classic Weberian argument that religious knowledge was distinct from the scientific knowledge and thus could not provide a basis for modern politics; he also reached into Shi’ite mystical tradition to argue that God was a divine mystery whose “essences” could never be expressed in man-made ideologies.^{xxxviii} translated in FBIS-NES-96-022-S, February 1, 1996. By redefining the mystical aspects of Khomeini’s (and Shariati’s) ideology in ways that pointed towards *individual* rather than mass charismatic experience, Soroush tried to forge a vision of political reform that was both spiritually inspiring and politically rational.

The Limits of Path Innovation in Post-Khomeini Iran

The revisionist ideas advanced by Khatami and Soroush were echoed by a growing body of lay intellectuals, and by several leading clerics such as Ayatollah Mohammad Montazeri and his student Mohsen Kadivar. This lay-clerical alliance directed its message to the colleges and universities. By 1996, the two offered a mass arena through which the reformists could mobilize nearly one million students. Moreover, despite the state’s efforts, it had failed to completely purge the universities of Western-trained academics, or to remove social science and humanities curricula which included significant doses of Western political theory.^{xxxix} *East Report*, Vol 29, No 3, (fall 1999): 12-16. Thus Khatami’s victory in May 1997 was not fortuitous. On the contrary, he won 70 percent of the nearly 30 million votes cast because he articulated the disaffection of both the children and grandchildren of the revolution.

Despite this progress, the struggle that Khatami and his allies waged from the Spring of 1997 through the Spring of 2000 demonstrated that dissonant institutionalization was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, Khatami and his allies had reinterpreted a major path of the Revolution to legitimate a pluralistic agenda. That they did so through, rather than against, Khomeini’s eclectic vision showed that a state which had aspired to ideological hegemony had bequeathed a dissonant legacy. But that same state had also generated a *competing* institutional-

^{xxxviii}See “Soroush on Meaning, Foundation,” in *Kiyan*, (August-September, 1995), 4-13,

^{xxxix}Azadeh Kian-Thiébaud, “Political and Social Transformations in Post-Islamist Iran,” in *Middle*

ideological legacy that was quintessentially “path dependent.” This dependency took the form of powerful organizations and constituencies which sought to defend the institutional and ideological prerogatives of the new *faqih*, Ayatollah Khamanei. A clerical elite which had invested political and social capital in powerful organizations such as the Council of Guardians, the Judiciary, and in wealthy charitable foundations (such as the Martyrs’ Foundation), would not give up such sunk costs which without a fight.

How would this battle be waged, and what would be its outcome? To answer these questions we must compare the constitutional powers of the *faqih* and the President. In 1989 those powers had been redefined in revisions of the Constitution which *in some ways* undercut the Supreme Leader’s authority while bolstering that of the President. By holding that the *faqih* no longer had to be a *marja* or “religious source of emulation,” the 1989 Constitution created the possibility that a popular cleric might emerge as a rival to the *faqih*. Moreover, by abolishing the post of Prime Minister, the 1989 Constitution left the President as the sole *national* representative *directly* elected by popular mandate. The *faqih*, by contrast, was indirectly elected by a clerical body known as the “Council of Experts.” The Council’s central role in choosing the Supreme Leader signaled that henceforth the *faqih*’s legitimacy derived in the main from *traditional* authority and institutions.^{xl} *charismatic* foundations of Khomeini’s authority. In short, the 1989 Constitution set up a potential conflict between a president whose authority derived from modern, legal-rational procedures and principles, and a *faqih* whose formal authority emanated from a traditionalized office and ideology. That said, the potential for a “*faqih* versus president” conflict seems to have been anticipated in the 1989 Constitution. By expanding the institutional powers of the *faqih* over bodies such as the military and the police, it gave the Supreme Leader the means and right to limit the president’s authority.^{xli} Khomeini

^{xl}I write “in the main” because the *faqih*’s authority, as defined in the 1989 Constitution, also has legal-rational foundations. Among his qualifications, he must not only to be a man of “scholarship, as required for performing the function of *mufti* in...fields of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence); he must also possess the “better jurisprudential and political perspicacity.” By contrast, Article Five of the 1979 Constitution stated that Khomeini had been “recognized and accepted by the majority of the people as...leader,” thus giving ultimate legal sanction to the

^{xli}See Mohsen M. Milani, *The Transformation of the Velayat-e Faqih Institution: From*

to Khamanei,” *The Muslim World*, Vol. LXXXII, July-October 1991, No. 3-4, 175-90. That this strengthening of patrimonialism occurred in tandem with *increased* democratization within one wing of the revolutionary family, and that this dynamic was *partly* abetted by the very same constitution that reinforced the *faqih’s* formal powers is precisely the point: this dissonant arrangement helps to explain the contradictory political contest that unfolded during the three years that followed Khatami’s May 1997 election.

Power Sharing/Power Struggle: Khamanei and Khatami

That contest can be summarized as one of fragile and limited power sharing at the zenith of the state, and an open-ended power struggle within and between that state and society. Following his election, Khatami tried to increase his leverage by forming a cabinet that offered Islamic Leftists significant posts, and by encouraging a boisterous reformist press. The mission of the press was to compensate for a Majles that was still controlled by conservatives. An “Islamic” civil society, as Khatami called it, would mobilize the youth and thus help set the stage for a reformist victory during the Winter 2000 Majles elections. Yet Khatami had to be careful; if this process proceeded too quickly, it would not only provoke a backlash from the conservative clerical elite and security establishment; it might also compel the *faqih* to turn against the president. Since such a development would probably result in the political demise of one or both of these leaders, Khatami and Khamanei had a shared incentive to restrain their militant allies and build an effective *entente* while at the same time maintaining their credibility as spokesmen for contending wings of the Islamic Revolution.

This balancing act worked fairly well during the first two years of Khatami’s presidency. While Khatami promoted the opposition press, called for a “dialogue of civilization” and made speeches in favor of Majles “rights,” freedom of opinion and the rule of law, Khamanei attacked the West, issued periodic threats against the reform movement, and condoned the judiciary’s periodic closures of opposition newspapers and the arrests of their editors. But when such acts encouraged their most militant followers to push the proverbial envelope, Khatami and Khamanei would draw together. For example, after a July 1999 attack by security forces on a dorm at Tehran University, Khatami called for restraint from the students while Khamanei praised the president while warning his hard-line allies that they should not take the law into their own hands.^{xlii}<http://www.sba.widener.edu/zang/default.html>. For both Khomeini and Khatami, the peaceful coexistence

^{xlii}See Charles Kurzman, “Student Protests and the Stability of Gridlock in Khatami’s Iran,” in

of Iran's increasingly contentious forces had to be maintained.

Yet it soon became clear that this fragile *entente* had succeeded in part because Khamanei's conservative allies still controlled the Majles. Because they could be depended on to pass draconian legislation (such as a press law that sparked the July 1999 student riots at Tehran University), Khamanei's militant allies remained confident that they could block the reform movement. Thus in the run up to the February 2000 Majles elections it was widely expected that the Council of Guardians would again disqualify a large number of reformists from running. However, while the Council failed to do so (in part because the reformists had flooded the election arena with thousands of candidates), in the aftermath of the first round --during which the reformists won 180 out of 290 seats--the conservatives regrouped. Within two months all 17 opposition newspapers had been closed down, while the Council of Guardians had reversed 10 reformist victories on this or that pretext. Moreover, given that by April the Council had still not validated the crucial Tehran results (where nearly every one of the 30 available seats had been won by the pro-reform Iran Participation Front or IPF) it seemed that the popular will might still be thwarted. It took Khamanei's direct intervention to assure that the second round of elections was held, and that most of the Tehran seats were awarded to the IPF. While this dramatic act allowed the reformists to take control of the Majles in May 2000, it also reminded reformists that their fate hung on the *faqih's* words and good will. This point was driven home two months later, when Khamanei blocked the attempts of the Majles to revise the draconian press law. In one form or another, dissonant politics had recreated itself, thus limiting the ability of Iran's reformist to move from ideological innovation to political power.

Indonesia: Recognizing and Institutionalizing Multi-Polar Diversity

"Indonesia," Fred von De Mehden writes, "is a nation of Muslims divided in their understanding of what is entailed in being an adherent to that faith."^{xliii} (New York: Routledge, 1995), 15. By itself, this statement would not distinguish Indonesia's Sunni Muslims from Iran's Shi'ites, whose lay and clerical leaders also advanced contending visions of religion and politics. The key difference is that Indonesia's Islamists established *mass* organizations which articulated contending visions outside the gambit of the state. Indeed, President Sukarno (who ruled from

^{xliii}Douglas E. Ramage, *Democracy, Islam and the Ideology of Tolerance* (London and New

1945 through 1965) and President Suharto (who ruled from 1966 to 1998) institutionalized the principle that domestic peace in Indonesia *required* a distancing of church and state, and state and society. This factor makes Indonesia a case of *substantive, multi-polar* dissonance.

The distancing of culture and state that unfolded during the fifties and sixties was impelled by Indonesia's plural nature. For quite apart from the obvious and sometimes violent cleavages that divides Indonesia's Muslims -- who constitute 90 percent of the country's 200 million citizens -- from its Christian and Chinese minorities, were divisions *between* Muslims. Indonesia is a country with 300 ethnic groups and 250 distinct languages spread across some 3000 islands.^{xliv} *Communications in Indonesia*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 3-22. Within this rich quilt, a key symbolic divide exists between Muslims who favor blending indigenous Javanese-Hindu and mystical or "Sufi" traditions with Islam, and those who spurn such syncreticism in favor of a unitary vision of Islam. In 1960 Clifford Geertz described this division in terms of "*santri*" versus "*abangan*," or devout versus nominal Muslims. The authority of the *abangan*, he argued, stemmed from a pre-Islamic symbolic system whose patrimonialist ethos was deeply rooted in rural Java.^{xlv} While decades of urbanization and increased education blurred the *santri/abangan* distinction, a socio-cultural and ideological divide remained between "traditionalist" and "modernist" Muslims. Much of Indonesian politics has been shaped by the efforts of Presidents Sukarno and Suharto - as well as their allies and opponents inside and outside the state -- to institutionalize and manipulate these two visions of Islam.

These manipulative strategies were abetted by the legacy of Dutch colonialism. The Dutch reached a *modus vivendi* with the traditional clerics or *kiai* according to which the latter could maintain control over local bureaucratic and religious organizations so long as they accepted the authority of the secular government.^{xlvi} (1993). Although Indonesia's Japanese occupiers tried to unify Islamic organizations by creating the Masyumi Party, the

^{xliv}Karl Dr. Jackson, "Bureaucratic Polity: A Theoretical Framework for the Analysis of Power and Communications in Indonesia," in Karl D. Jackson and Lucian W. Pye, *Power and*

^{xlv}Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

^{xlvi}Karel Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism and Indonesian Islam, Contacts and Conflicts 1596-1950*, Translated by Jan Steenbrink and Henry Jansen, (Amsterdam-Atlanta, GA: Rodopi,

latter was always a loose alliance of competing groups, the most important of which was *Nahdlatul Ulema* (The Renaissance of the Ulema or NU) and the *Muhammadiyah*. Created in 1926, the NU was led by a coalition of rural clerics from East and Central Java and urban politicians from Java's cities. The NU was "traditionalist" in that its leaders held that the example or *Sunna* of the Prophet Muhammad as codified in the four orthodox schools or *mazhab* of Sunni Islam provided *the* authoritative foundation for political life. But NU's vision was syncretic in that many of its rural adherents – some 30 million by the late seventies – maintained heterodox Javanese-Hindu and quite possibly Sufi mystical practices. By contrast, *Muhammadiyah*, established in 1906, was led by politically active clerics and lay Islamic thinkers who opposed the "non-Islamic" practices of NU's members. These men were influenced by the ideas of Mohammad Abduh, the turn of the century Egyptian Islamic reformer. Although a liberal, many of Abduh's disciples – such as Rashid Rida – were authoritarian. Like Iran's Shariati, Rida strove to transform Islam into a comprehensive mobilizing ideology that could compete with the "isms" of the West.^{xlvii} *Dutch Colonialism*, (Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1989) 134-79. It was this reformist example that inspired *Muhammadiyah's* leaders, and thus earned the movement the adjective "modernist," an ambiguous term that obscured the movement's illiberalism.

Although *Muhammadiyah* and NU were competitors, their differences were at times obscured by their competition with the secular-nationalist parties. Yet as shall see, in as much as NU sought to prevent the state from becoming a vehicle of Islamization, its leaders often felt more comfortable supporting the ruling Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI) and/or its various successors and rivals, such as the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) and Golkar, (the official ruling party established in 1967). By mediating between *Muhammadiyah* and the nationalist parties, NU helped sustain a multi-polar ideological field that encouraged inter-elite competition, negotiations and accommodations.

After Indonesia won independence in 1945 Sukarno attempted to accommodate (and control) this multi-polar field by using several devices, one of which was an eclectic ideology known as "Pancasila." A Sanskrit term meaning "five principles," the first principle of Pancasila was "belief in God." While all Indonesians were expected to follow one of the monotheistic religions, it was understood that all religious practices would issue from society

^{xlviii} "Alfian" *Muhammadiyah: The Political Behavior of a Muslim Modernist Organization Under*

rather than the state. This principle was favored by the nationalists, communists and by the NU. The second principle, “a just and civilized humanity,” articulated the desire of socialists and nationalists (i.e. *abangan* Muslims) to align Indonesia with the international community. The third principle, Indonesian national unity, emphasized the desire of Sukarno and his allies in the nationalist and NU camps to forge a common identity that would coexist with other religious and ethnic identities. The fourth principle, an “Indonesian style-democracy” based upon the ideals of *musyawarah* and *mufakat* (consultation and consensus), addressed the sensibilities of both traditionalist and modernist Muslims. Derived from the *Quran*, these two terms symbolized a cooperative vision of political community in implicit opposition to what many Muslims deemed to be the conflictual foundations of Western liberal democracy. Pancasila’s fifth principle, one dear to nationalists and communists, but which had widespread support, called for social justice.

It has been noted that Pancasila was *not* “meant to be internally consistent.”^{xlviii} Press, 1995), 234. For Sukarno and his allies, it offered a symbolic compromise which Indonesians could interpret in various ways, providing that they accepted the unifying principle that *implicitly* animated Pancasila, namely that no group could use the state to impose its culture, religion or ideology on society. Thus Pancasila served a function similar to that of the Iranian constitutions of 1979 and 1989, or to that of Khomeini’s eclectic ideology. By inviting and institutionalizing contradictions, it created a medium of symbolic competition which could be harnessed to reinforce (or renegotiate) public order.

To sustain such order, Sukarno used two additional instruments. First, he deployed his charisma to both legitimate and control symbolic anomalies. Unlike Khomeini, who exhibited but could hardly tolerate contradictions, Sukarno thrived on them. “I have,” he declared, “made myself the meeting place of all trends and ideologies. I have blended...them until they finally became the present Sukarno.”^{xlix} Second, Sukarno created a presidential regime that gave the executive almost unlimited powers. Although this development was preceded by a chaotic experiment in multi-party politics, during “Guided Democracy” (1958-1965), the lower and upper houses of

^{xlviii} Mochtar Pabotinngi, “Indonesia: Historicizing the New Order’s Legitimacy Dilemma,” in Muthiah Alagappa, (ed.), *Political Legitimacy in Southeast Asia*, (Stanford: Stanford University

^{xlix}, Ibid.

parliament (DPR and MPR), were replaced by a body whose members were appointed by the president. Backed by the military, Sukarno created a “bureaucratic polity,” whose essential features -- a strong presidency, military control and bureaucratic centralism -- endured during the ensuing four and a half decades.¹

The emasculation of the legislature meant that henceforth Indonesia’s parliament would never provide an arena of controlled ideological contestation comparable to that of Iran’s Majles. Yet under Sukarno and Suharto political parties did play a role in sustaining dissonant politics. In one incarnation or another, they articulated the “distinctive visions of polity” that contending socio-cultural communities espoused.^{li} *and Communications in Indonesia*, 187. They did this by maintaining shifting degrees of institutional and ideological distance from the state. Relative autonomy facilitated an elaborate game by which Indonesia’s presidents and their allies tried to divide or coopt their opponents, while the latter tried to use state bodies such as the Ministry of Religion to advance their agendas. In the resulting confluence of party and elite politics it became “all too easy for rival claimants to power to conclude that the only rational way to engage in politics is to work behind the scenes, forging alliances with ascendant factions in the ruling elite and taking care not to push for broader political participation.”^{lii} *Nation-States*, 12.

Conflict and Accommodation Under Sukarno

While we cannot analyze this game in detail, we must highlight how three of its central features eventually facilitated a transition to power sharing and democratic reform: first, the competition between modernist and traditionalist Islamic parties to defend their constituencies and ideologies by using the state while at the same time

¹DPR stands for Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat or People’s Representative Council, MPR stands for Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat or Peoples Consultative Assembly. On the workings of Indonesia’s “bureaucratic polity” see Karl D. Jackson, “Bureaucratic Polity: A Theoretical Framework for the Analysis of Power and Communications in Indonesia,” in Jackson and Pye (eds.), *Political Power and Communications in Indonesia*, 2-22.

^{li}R. William Liddle, “Participation and Political Parties,” in Jackson and Pye, *Political Power*

^{lii}Robert W. Hefner, “Islam in an Era of Nation-States: Politics and Religious Renewal in Muslim Southeast Asia,” in Robert W. Hefner and Patricia Horvatic (eds.), *Islam in an Era of*

trying to maintain distance from it; second, the various attempts made by ruling and opposition elites to re-appropriate the dissonant legacy bequeathed by Sukarno; and third, the efforts of Suharto and his allies to divide or coopt opposition elites in a manner that enhanced the regime's autonomy and defused calls for political reform.

From the early sixties until the late seventies Indonesia's leaders pursued a strategy designed to divide and coopt the opposition, and to isolate Islamic leaders who espoused radical changes or the establishment of an Islamic state. NU leaders *facilitated* these efforts. While paying lip service to the notion of an Islamic state, they feared that establishing such a state would give their modernist rivals in *Muhammadiyah* a vehicle through which to "purify" NU's eclectic view of Islam. During the fifties Islamic separatist revolts reinforced the perception among NU leaders that an open democratic system would empower their modernist rivals. This concern led NU to quit the Masyumi Federation (in which *Muhammadiyah* played a leading role) and to back Sukarno's "Guided Democracy." In short, given the absence of credible alliance alternatives,^{liii} could offer the PNI a credible ally. See Liddle, "Participation and Political Parties," 174-75. and animated by a conservative ideology that valorized the quest for political order, NU's clerics sought the protection of an authoritarian state.^{liv} Studies, Monash University, 1994) 88-97. The state paid NU back by awarding it's chairman control over the Ministry of Religion, and by excluding NU's leaders from periodic reorganizations of the political parties. Still, the NU could not halt a descent into ideological and ethnic conflict to which Sukarno himself contributed. He did so by trying to imbue Pancasila with a Javanese and thus implicitly anti-Islamic interpretation.^{lv} Islamic leaders retaliated by assailing Pancasila, a dangerous development which prompted Sukarno to rely on the Indonesian Community Party (PKI). Such miscalculations set the stage for the September 1965 coup engineered by Suharto and a wing of the military.

^{liii}In the 1955 elections, Masyumi obtained 57 seats or 23 percent, NU 45 seats or 18.4. percent, the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI) 27 seats or 21 percent, and the Indonesian Communist Party 39 seats or 16.4 percent. Since the NU spurned both the communists and Masyumi, and it

^{liv}Greg Fealy, "'Rowing in a typhoon' Nahdlatul Ulama and the Decline of Parliamentary Democracy," in David Burchier and John Legge, *Democracy in Indonesia, 1950s and 1990s*, (Monash, Australia: Monash Papers on Southeast Asia No. 31, Centre of Southeast Asian

^{lv}Ramage, *Democracy, Islam and the Ideology of Tolerance*, 17.

Rationalizing Dissonant Politics: State/Society Dynamics under Suharto

Suharto attempted to succeed where Sukarno had failed by repudiating the latter's quasi-socialist economic policies, by further centralizing the system of bureaucratic control, by enhancing the power of the military, and by purging both communist and Islamic militants. This purge was accomplished by a cynical maneuver: in 1965 and 1966, Sukarno's allies mobilized Islamic groups, and particularly the student wing of the NU (*Ansar*) in an anti-communist campaign. When the bloodletting ceased with some 500,000 dead, NU leaders were rewarded; whereas nearly every ministry was reduced in scope and power, the Ministry of Religion was expanded. Moreover, while Suharto revived the lower and upper houses of parliament, he imposed controls that not only assured the government of a majority, but also gave the regime almost unlimited powers to select candidates for both the ruling Golkar Party and for the "opposition" parties. In the run up to the 1971 elections, Suharto used these powers to purge of Islamists from which NU emerged virtually unscathed.

Yet while the state became more autocratic, dissonant politics endured as each faction within the ideologically eclectic elite tried to repackage the ideological legacies of the previous era. A key element in this contest was the battle to re-appropriate Pancasila. In the late sixties Suharto, as well several leading intellectuals and military officers, began advocating the view that Pancasila constituted an "organic" ideology that reflected the intrinsic "personality" of the Indonesian people. Retaliating against this apparent effort to impose Javanese-Hindu identity, the Islamic parties (including the NU) called for reintroducing a controversial section of the "Jakarta Charter." A statement of principle which called upon Muslims to follow *Shariah* (Islamic law), its insertion in the 1945 Constitution had been rejected by Sukarno. The attempt to reintroduce the Charter's *Shariah* section demonstrated that the recent banning of the Masyumi Party had not silenced the Islamic issue. Pressed by their followers, the leaders of *Muhammadiyah* and NU had to join forces.^{lvi}22. This development again put the NU in the awkward position of allying with its modernist foes. NU tried to skirt this dilemma by endorsing a compromise calling for Islamic parties to affirm that the "Jakarta Charter 'inspires' the 1945 Constitution...without attempting to

^{lvi}See Allan Samson, "Conceptions of Politics, Power, and Ideology in Contemporary

Indonesian Islam," in Jackson and Pye, *Political Power and Communications in Indonesia*, 221-

further define or modify it.”^{lvii} But this solution neither pacified the government nor its radical Islamist opponents. As a result, NU found itself on the receiving end of hostility from both. In late 1971 the government ended NU’s 18-year control of the Ministry of Religion by appointing an intellectual technocrat as minister.

Path Innovation in the NU: From Traditionalism to Liberalism?

These events had a transformatory effect on NU that was similar to changes that would unfold within Iran’s Islamic Left twenty years later. By the early seventies, the politicization of NU’s leadership had provoked a profound process of rethinking among a group of students and political activists. Known as the “Generation of 66,” they had expected to benefit from their implicit alliance with the New Order. Instead, they found that Muslims had been drawn into a morass of political conflict that was deflecting NU from promoting its cultural and ethical goals. Seeking to remedy this problem, several intellectual/political activists began to redefine NU’s traditionalist ideology. In the ensuing decade, they showed that a symbolic-institutional path that had long played a central role in Indonesian’s dissonant politics could be pushed in new directions.

This movement’s chief theorist was Nurcholish Madjid, the former leader of the Islamic Student Association.^{lviii} *Nation-States*, 75-127. Madjid sought to create an inspiring alternative to the totalistic ideologies advanced by militant Islamists. The latter legitimated such ideologies by arguing that the doctrine of the transcendent unity of God (*tauhid*) demanded total political, social and ideological unity. As *Muhammadiyah* leader Amien Rais put it, because in Islam there can be “no differentiation between worldly and other-worldly,” there can be no “contradictions.” *Tauhid*, Rais insisted, demands “a society ...free from...exploitation, feudalism and rejection of differentiation among class, race..and so forth.”^{lix} *Development* (Commack, NY.: Nova Science Publishes, 1998), 75-6. Fearing that this intolerant vision would sap Islam of its spiritual force, Madjid tried to discredit it by standing the concept of *tauhid* (and secularism) on its head. *Tauhid*, he held, was *not* about politics. On the contrary, because “absolute transcendence pertains *solely* to God,” it should “give rise to an attitude of “desacralization” towards that

^{lvii}Ibid., 221.

^{lviii}Hefner, “Islamization and Democratization in Indonesia, in Hefner et. al, *Islam in an Era of*

^{lix}Howard M. Federspeil, *Indonesia in Transition: Muslim Intellectuals and National*

which is other than God, namely the world, its problems and values...To sacralize anything other than God is, in reality, *shirk* (polytheism).” To make this case for “desacralization” Madjid turned to mystical ideas that were rooted deeply in Indonesian society. Invoking a central tenet of mysticism, he argued that “because God is the Ultimate Absolute...beyond the ken of human comprehension,” it was a *sacrilidge* to assume that man could transform God’s mysteries into mundane ideology. The remedy was to embrace a form of “secularization” that would *strengthen* Islamic piety by “temporalizing”...values which are...worldly, and ...freeing the *umma* (Muslim community) from the tendency to spiritualize them.”^{lx}*Sourcebook*, (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 286 and 209. My emphasis.

Madjid’s choice of words may have been unfortunate. For most Muslim Indonesians, “secularism” connoted an attack on, rather than a defense of, religion. Yet if he did not anticipate this reaction, this was because Madjid was a man of *multiple imaginations*. While he celebrated the particularities of Indonesian Islam, his exposure to the ideas of American Protestant thinkers such as Harvey Cox led Madjid to make arguments *in terms* that most Indonesians could not easily grasp.^{lxi}Arizona: Program for Southeast Asian Studies,1997), 92. Nevertheless, because his overall *message* found a receptive audience among NU’s traditionalist followers, it began to stick. In the eighties traditionalism and modernism were grafted to produce what one scholar called “neo-modernism.”^{lxii}of a New Pluralism” in Bouchier and Legge, *Democracy in Indonesia*, 143-50.

The man most responsible for institutionalizing this ideological shift was Madjid’s colleague, Abdurrahman Wahid, also known as “Gus Dur.” The grandson of NU’s founder and son of its second leader, Wahid Yasyim, Wahid too was a man of multiple imaginations. After pursuing Islamic studies at Egypt’s Al-Azhar University

^{lx} From a talk given by Madjid in January 1970. See “Necessity of Renewing Islamic Thought and Reinvigorating Religious Understanding,” in Charles Kurzman (ed.), *Liberal Islam, A*

^{lxi}Hefner, “Islamization and Democratization in Indonesia,” 85. See also Madjid’s, “In Search of Islamic Roots for Modern Pluralism: The Indonesian Experiences,” in Mark. R. Woodward (ed.), *Toward a New Paradigm, Recent Developments in Indonesian Islamic Thought*, (Tempe,

^{lxii}Greg Barton, “The Impact of neo-Modernism on Indonesian Islamic Thought: the Emergence

during the sixties, he moved to Iraq where he studied Arabic literature and European philosophy at Baghdad University. He then lived in Western Europe for a time before returning to Indonesia. Wahid's affinity for Western European liberal thought, his gritty feel for the syncretic culture of Javanese Islam, and his intimate knowledge of NU's politics, made him an ideal candidate for linking the ideas of Indonesia's liberal Muslim intelligentsia to NU's mass base.^{lxiii}www.muslims.net/KMNU/pustaka/baku1/utama.html. But his decision to pursue this challenge was also motivated by Suharto's renewed campaign to impose a "Javanized" version of Pancasila. This campaign reached new heights in 1982, when the government proposed legislation requiring that all social and professional organizations adopt Pancasila as their sole guiding ideology or *asas tunggal*. When this policy provoked a vitriolic response from Muslim politicians and anti-Chinese riots in Jakarta in 1984, it appeared that irreparable harm had been done to Pancasila's ability to symbolize inter-confessional compromise.

The dilemma facing Wahid was how to revive Pancasila's dissonant spirit without appearing to endorse Suharto's efforts to monopolize the ideological field. NU's 1984 Congress not only provided a chance to address this dilemma, but to secure support for Wahid's neo-modernist vision. Seizing upon the disenchantment of NU's clerics with old guard of NU politicians, Wahid and his colleague Achmad Siddiq mounted a successful campaign to be elected general chairman and executive director of NU. They then convinced their followers to endorse two decisions: first, that NU would stop all participation in the state-controlled party system in order to focus its energies on promoting social and cultural reform on a grass roots level; and second, that NU would formally accept Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution as the final bases of state authority. But NU's leaders also stipulated that they had been adopting Pancasila because it provided a framework in which *all* groups could pursue their religious faith. As Siddiq put it in a famous formula that echoed Madjid's mystical liberalism, in so far as Pancasila was a "philosophy created by human beings" whereas Islam was "a revelation," the former could provide the foundation for freely pursuing for the latter.^{lxiv}

^{lxiii}Greg Barton, "The Liberal, Progressive Roots of Abdurahman Wahid's Thought," in Greg Fealy and Greg Barton (eds.), *Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity* (Monash: Monash Asia Institute, Australia, 1998). Published on the Internet at:

^{lxiv}Ramage, *Islam and the Ideology of Tolerance*, 54-5.

By design or default, Siddiq's formula served the interests of both the government and NU. In the ensuing two years, the government adopted his distinction between philosophy and revelation to convince other Islamic organizations that there was no contradiction between Islam and Pancasila. That Suharto decided at the same time to cease the campaign to Javanize Pancasila, and to declare it instead an "open ideology," encouraged other Islamic leaders to renounce the notion of an Islamic state in favor of a society-based movement for "cultural Islam." As for NU, by withdrawing from a political arena that had been manipulated by the state, it was now free, in Wahid's words, to develop "an alternative view of Pancasila," that was both non-sectarian and democratic.^{lxv}

NU: Between Autocratic State and Autocratic Islamists

Wahid and Siddiq pursued this goal with considerable success. Their efforts were facilitated by the growth of Indonesia's urban middle class, which provided a new cadre of activists, and by the creative ways in which Wahid introduced the use of *ijtihad* or "free interpretation" of the Quran to enlist the support of maverick clerics. This push for a more liberal Islam was also abetted by a counter-veiling Islamic trend that took its cue from populist-fundamentalist Islamic movements in the Middle East.^{lxvi} *Southeast Asia and the Middle East* (Gainesville, FL: University Of Florida Press, 1993). Led in part by Rais, and partly housed in *Muhammadiyah*, because this movement was based in the urban middle class, it competed with NU's attempts to broaden its following. Unlike NU, *Muhammadiyah* had remained active in the political system through its affiliation with the United Development Party or PPP, the sole Islamic party which remained after the 1973 reorganization of the party system. NU had quit the PPP in 1983, a move that caused great bitterness between the two because it undercut PPP's ability to compete in subsequent elections. This distrust also reflected the deep personal and ideological divide between Rais and Wahid. The latter denounced the former's xenophobic attacks on "Western civilization" and his verbal assaults on Indonesia's Christian and Chinese minorities, while Rais accused Wahid of "exaggerating differences among Muslims."^{lxvii} 1994). Wahid also discussed these points with me during a June 7, 1999 interview.

^{lxv}Ibid.,56.

^{lxvi}On this dynamic see Fred R. von de Mehdien, *Two Worlds of Islam Interaction between*

^{lxvii}Adam Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting Indonesia in the 1990s*, (Boulder: Westview Press,

One might assume that having benefitted from NU's official endorsement of Pancasila as the "sole basis" of the state, that the regime would now support Wahid rather than his Islamist rivals. But because Suharto remained committed to authoritarian rule, he was hardly inclined to back Wahid. Their relationship worsened in 1990, when Suharto endorsed the creation of the government-sponsored Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI). Chaired by Vice President B. J. Habibie, the ICMI's unstated purpose was to create a defacto alliance between the regime and Islamists that gave the former control over the latter. But the entrance of Rais and other Islamists into the ICMI raised fears within NU that advocates of an illiberal Islamic vision might seize control of the state. These concerns were fed by radical Islamic groups such as the Indonesian Islamic Preaching Council, whose leaders readily admitted that "After 1990, Soeharto became more conducive to Muslim wishes so we supported him."^{lxviii}(Unpublished manuscript provided), Adam Schwarz, 26. As for the ICMI, several of its members who came from the PPP and *Muhammadiyah* openly stated that the "purpose of the ICMI is to establish a new Masyumi," *i.e.*, an organization that would control all Islamic movements.^{lxix} Thus when *Muhammadiyah* endorsed Suharto for a fifth term, Wahid grew alarmed. Although the government had pressured NU to follow suit, during its 1992 congress NU refused to do so, choosing instead to reaffirm its commitment to Pancasila. Still, if during the ensuing six years the relationship between the two leaders had its ups and down, Wahid avoided actions that would irrevocably antagonize Suharto, a strategy that echoed his commitment to power sharing and ideological inclusiveness.^{lxx} created in part to provide a counter-weight to the ICMI.

The June 7, 1999 Elections: Dissonant Politics and Power Sharing

Wahid may have succeeded in transforming NU into a more liberal organization, but as was the case with Iran's Islamic Left, such path innovation took place in a highly constraining institutional and ideological context. Although there was no "Council of Guardians" in Indonesia, Wahid's efforts were hindered by the state's

^{lxviii} Interview, Ahmad Soemargono, August 1998, in "The Fall of Soeharto," Chapter 11,"

^{lxix} Ramage, *Islam and the Ideology of Tolerance*, 93.

^{lxx} In March 1991 Wahid, together with 44 prominent intellectuals, established the "Forum Democracy," an association that was made up of largely secular intellectuals. The Forum was

authoritarian institutions. Thus, for example, in 1994 the regime tried to unseat Wahid by supporting a rival candidate for the position of NU chairman. Yet Wahid and his allies enjoyed one advantage that Iran's Islamic Leftists lacked: the NU could be rapidly transformed into an organized political party. Thus when the economic and financial crisis that swept through Asia in 1998 provoked violent riots the burning of Jakarta's China Town, Suharto resigned in May. After the new acting president, B. J. Habibie, promised to hold democratic elections, NU came out of its political hibernation by forming the National Awakening Party or PKB.

Joining the PKB in the June 7, 1999 DPR elections were the following: the ruling Golkar Party, whose leader was Habibie; the Struggling Democratic Party of Indonesia or PDI-P, led by the avowedly secular Megawati (who was Sukarno's daughter and thus very popular); the United Development Party or PPP, the official Islamic party; and Amin Rais' National Mandate Party or PAN, whose support came mostly from *Muhammadiyah*. In addition, there were a myriad of smaller parties such as the Crescent Star and Justice parties, both of which were Islamist groupings whose ideologies echoed the more "fundamentalist" orientation of the PPP.

The above line-up reflected the two most important divisions in Indonesian politics: between secularists and Islamists on one side, and Islamists and Islamists the other. Given this dissonant legacy, it appeared that an effective challenge to Golkar required alliances that transcended the secular-Islamist divide. Yet this outcome was hardly preordained. Indeed, Suharto's courtship of Islamists suggested an alternative: a conservative alliance between Golkar and PPP (and perhaps PAN) that would block a PDI-P/PKB alliance. But such a combination would certainly provoke a harsh response from the military, which opposed Suharto's efforts to coopt Islamists. Given that the military had 75 preassigned seats in the Consultative Assembly or MPR (which was slated to elect the President in the Fall of 1999), its position could not be ignored. Moreover, all of the above actors had to consider the main force pushing for immediate and broad democratic reforms: the students. Their daily demonstrations in front of the MPR showed that they were ready to do battle with the police and military to thwart any effort to block or water-down political reforms.

For the PKB, this messy political field offered opportunities. While it had never won more than 18.7 percent of the vote, NU's moderate credentials put the PKB in a position to chart a mid-way course between the secular PDI-P and the Islamic parties. Although a stroke had left him half blind and weak, Wahid tried to secure a "contingent institutional compromise" (or political pact) that would advance democratic reforms without ceding the

field to exponents of radical or precipitous changes. Thus in November 1998 he convinced Megawati and Rais to sign a manifesto that called for a package of moderate reforms. When student leaders then rejected the changes proposed by the MPR (which included reducing the military's DPR seats to 38 but left intact that much discredited system for indirectly electing the president), Wahid tried to defuse the situation by calling for a "national dialogue" between all the main players, *including* Suharto. Similarly, during the campaign PKB leaders declared that providing that Islam remained *separate* from politics, they wanted "all components in society (to) participate in government."^{lxxi} East Asia, May 8, 1999. This broad appeal of this inclusivist approach may explain why Wahid's nemesis-- Rais-- then signed a vague communiqué in which he, Megawati and PKB chairman Alwi Shihab promised to "unite...to continue reform."^{lxxii} *Cberymedia*, www.compas.com/kompas-certak/9905/03English. May 3, 1999, Since PAN's creation, Rais had worked hard to secure a more moderate and ecumenical image for himself and his party. But such efforts could not hide the key role that PAN played in *Muhammadiyah*, many of whose members despised Megawati's secular policies. Trying to walk this tightrope, Rais then signed a separate alliance agreement with the PPP. This move only alienated Wahid and Megawati while encouraging *Muhammadiyah's* supporters to vote for the PPP. As a result, PAN only won 7 percent of the vote, whereas the PDI-P prevailed with 34 percent, Golkar took 22 percent, PKB 13 secured percent, and PPP 11 percent.

The next order of business was for the 700-member MPR to elect a president. A body that met once a year, it consisted of the 462 recently elected DPR members, the DPR's 38 appointed military officers, and 200 hundred additional deputies chosen by a murky system of provincial and "functional" councils. Given Megawati's victory, she should have been the first choice for president. But two obstacles stood in her way. First, many Islamic leaders including some in PKB opposed electing a female president. The leaders of the PPP and PAN in particular feared that Megawati would pursue her father's anti-Islamic alliances and policies.^{lxxiii} and even the entire country.

^{lxxi}PKB Promises 'National Reconciliation if Elected, *The Jakarta Post*, May 9, 1999, in FBIS-

^{lxxii}"No problem for Amien-Megawati Partnership," interview with Amien Rais, *Kompas*

^{lxxiii}The disproportionate role of Chinese in PDI-P's leadership ranks fed this fear. As for Wahid, he publicly supported Megawati but privately feared that her candidacy would polarize the MPR

Interview with the author, June 11, 1999. (This fear was fed in part by Megawati's overtly secular orientation, and also by what many Indonesians held was the over-representation of Chinese politicians in the PDI-P.) Second, the existing election system gave Golkar's candidate, Habibie, an unfair advantage. The gerrymandered election system was not only designed to reward Golkar with more seats than was justified by its percentage of votes; it gave Golkar disproportionate influence over choosing the MRP's 200 additional deputies. Thus while Golkar won only 21 percent of the vote, it obtained 120 or 26 percent of the DPR's 468 elected seats. Along with the support from many of the 200 local and "functional" deputies, it was in a good position to forge a pro-Habibie alliance with Islamic parties, particularly the PPP, whose leaders were hardly advocates of liberal democratic reforms. Given that Habibie had continued to court Islamic leaders during the previous year, such a conservative alliance was not inconceivable.

But this was not to be. The military's pogrom in East Timor and the resulting insertion of United Nations troops in September 1999 forced Habibie to renounce his candidacy while it bolstered the authority of Golkar reformists who favored genuine democratic reform. Moreover, by discrediting the army, the East Timor debacle compelled the military to abstain from using its 38 votes. Meanwhile, Rais secured the support of the major Islamic parties (known as the "Central Axis") for *Wahid's* candidacy, a development which Wahid actively encouraged. That Rais backed a man he so disliked is easily explained: Wahid was the only leader who could bring Indonesia's contending voices around one table. But Rais was not out of the game. Having previously engineered his election as Speaker of the DPR, he was well positioned to influence Wahid's future moves.^{lxxiv}<http://www.conn.com/AsiaNow/asiaweek/magazine/99/1029/cover.1/html>. October 29, 1999. Thus the table was set. On October 20, 1999 Wahid was elected president and Megawati vice-president. He then assembled a government that included politicians from Golkar, PAN, PPP, PDI-P and PKB. With the possible exception of Lebanon, this consociational arrangement was unprecedented in the Islamic world.

Communal Violence Versus the Art and Ethos of Power Sharing

From the outset, Wahid's cabinet was beset by three problems: a severe economic crisis, escalating demands in the Outer Islands for independence or autonomy, and Muslim-Christian blood letting in the Maluccas Islands, where some 2,000 people had died since August

^{lxxiv}See Sangweon Suh and Jose Tesoro, "Maneuvering to the Top Amid Chaos,"

1999.^{lxxv}<http://www.economist.com/editorial/freeforall/20000708/su4532.html> July 8, 2000. The latter two fires were constantly stoked by the economic crisis: Demands for autonomy in Aceh (located on the northern tip of Sumatra), West Papua (previously known as Irian Jaya) and Riau echoed long standing perceptions that Java had exploited the mineral and agricultural wealth of the Outer Islands.^{lxxvi}63. Separatist sentiments were further inflamed by communal loyalties. For decades Aceh's Muslims, who were far more orthodox than those of Java, had struggled for autonomy from Jakarta. As for West Papua, some two thirds of its population were Christian Melanesians who resented Muslim-Javanese domination. Yet however vexing these two problems were, it was inter-communal bloodletting in the Maluccas Islands which presented Wahid with an immediate *political* problem. By inflaming Muslim public opinion in Java itself, the violence put pressure on the main Islamic parties to adopt a more sectarian stance towards the Christian and Chinese minorities.

Amien Rais of PAN and Hamzah Haz of PPP exploited such pressures. As leaders of the "Central Axis" parties that had backed Wahid, they apparently expected that the new, and seemingly enfeebled president, to do their bidding. Wahid disappointed them. He not only refused to blame Christians for the killings in the Moluccas; in the ensuing months he proposed several controversial ideas, such as lifting the 34 year-old ban on the communist party. The December 1999 resignation of PPP leader Hamzah Haz-- Coordinating Minister of People's Welfare and Poverty Alleviation-- underscored the growing gap between Wahid and the Islamic parties. After Haz was replaced by Basri Hasanuddin, who had no ties to PPP, Haz declared that without PPP's help, there was "no way" that Wahid "could have been elected president."^{lxxvii} *Gatra*, Number 4/VI, December 11, 1999 Haz's allies were more direct.

^{lxxv}During the 1998 East Asian financial crisis real GDP fell by 20 percent in 18 months as the economy contracted by some 13 percent. In 1999 the economy remained stagnant, with average incomes holding at about \$600.00 a year. See "Survey Indonesia, Gus Dur's Second Chance,"

^{lxxvi}Aceh has natural gas, Riau oil, East Kalimantan oil and timber, and Irian Jaya copper, gold and timber. As Adam Schwarz has noted, in both Irian Jaya and Aceh, "the wealth produced per inhabitant...is among the highest in the Indonesia. But in both provinces income and consumption per person...fall much lower in the national ranking." See *his A Nation in Waiting*,

^{lxxvii} [Http://www.gatranews.net/_english/VI/4/NAS3-4.html](http://www.gatranews.net/_english/VI/4/NAS3-4.html)

One PPP leader insisted that “Gus Dur’s move is for the purpose of destroying PPP,” while Rais warned his rivals not to “provoke the Central Axis into a fight, otherwise we would certainly retaliate.”^{lxxviii} *Gatra*, Number 4/VI, December 11, 1999

That retaliation came a month later, when at a Jakarta rally marking the end of Ramadan, Haz suggested to an audience of some 80,000 that the Central Axis parties should reconsider their support for Wahid. Rais agreed. After disclosing that PPP, PAN, the Crescent Star and Justice parties had signed a pact that called for uniting the four parties into one single party in advance of the 2004 elections, Rais turned to the situation in the Moluccas Islands. “Thus far,” he warned, “Muslims have been quiet patient, but even that has limits.” The President, he demanded, had to resolve the fighting “in one or two weeks,” or otherwise the Muslims might be “wiped out.” Amien and Haz then endorsed a proposal -- made by several leading clerics -- that unless the government quickly halted the violence, a holy war or *jihad* would be launched against Christians.^{lxxix} Nevertheless, such a call was obviously irresponsible and dangerous.

Haz and Rais surely knew that even the slightest hint of carrying out this threat would provoke a coup. While Wahid’s decision in January to retire General Wiranto— and thus remove him from the cabinet – made such a move less likely, the military retained the means to intervene. That it failed to do so may be attributed not merely to Wahid’s bold actions (which were wisely applauded by the United States), but also to the fact that despite their differences, the Central Axis parties had little choice but to cooperate with Wahid and Megawati. Wahid himself often undermined such cooperation by making unilateral decisions that dismayed cabinet members from both secular and religious parties. For their part, the Islamic parties continued to make life difficult for Wahid. Thus in April 2000, after Wahid again suggested that the ban on the communist party be lifted, Rais briefly threatened to

^{lxxviii} http://www.gatranews.net/_english/VI/4/NAS1-4.html

^{lxxix} <http://www.suaramerdeka.org/harian/0001/11/eng.2/html> and [0001/13/eng2.html](http://www.suaramerdeka.org/harian/0001/13/eng2.html)

Suara Merdeka, January 17, 2000 and January 13, 2000. Wahid bitterly denounced the call for jihad, as did other leaders of PKB. Moreover, Muslim leaders repeatedly insisted that the call for jihad meant mere that Muslims should wage a political struggle to defend their rights.

initiate impeachment proceedings against the president. Several months later, PPP leaders backed a controversial proposal (which, it should be noted, *both* Rais and Wahid rejected) to reintroduce the portion of the “Jakarta Charter” that called for the application of Islamic law.

However disconcerting, such developments have unfolded in a multi-polar symbolic-institutional field that has made it hard for any one faction to impose its will. Indeed, despite the push to introduce the Jakarta Charter’s *Shariah* section, the leaders of PDI-P, PKB and PAN continued to support the principle of keeping religion and state at arms length. Thus as I shall discuss below, it is unlikely that Indonesia will follow the sad example of Algeria, where the effort by militant Islamists to use democracy as a vehicle for imposing a counter-hegemonic project provoked a military coup and civil war. In Indonesia, political liberalization and power sharing are not Trojan horses for radical Islamization; rather they express a legacy of dissonant politics whose enduring logic is manifest in a politics of confrontation, brinkmanship and negotiation among forces that have long advocated contending visions of community.

Conclusion: Dissonant Versus Harmonic Politics

This article has provided several useful theoretical guideposts for understanding dissonant politics in Islamic polities. In particular, I have deployed the concepts of multiple “paths” and “imagination” to illuminate patterns of political change and negotiation that are not readily revealed by conventional analyses of regime transitions. But this has merely been a first step. Further studies of other dissonant states, such as Lebanon and Kuwait, must now be undertaken. If analyses of these and other dissonant states affirms my central hypothesis -- namely, that the institutionalization of multiple symbolic-institutional paths not only creates the space for regime-opposition accommodations, but also encourages ideological innovation within Islamic movements-- then we will be on our way to forging a comprehensive middle range theory of dissonant politics. With this caveat in mind, I would like to highlight three important lessons for the future study of comparative politics in general, and dissonant “Islamic” politics in particular, suggested by this study.

First, dissonant politics generates patterns of political change which do not move forward (or backwards) along one clear line. The notion that transitions involve the negotiation of a “bargained equilibrium” that allows political leaders to either move forward to democracy, or back to a more coherent and stable form of

authoritarianism, does not readily apply to dissonant states.^{lxxx} *Eastern Europe and Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 59. Yet if their politics are messy and indeterminate, dissonant states are hardly unique or “exceptional.” The seamless transition -- from authoritarian crisis, to political liberalization and finally to competitive democracy -- that many scholars once hoped would become a universal trend has not materialized. In a world in which there is no end of history, accounting for different political systems and the outcomes they generate remains a key challenge for students of comparative politics.

Second, while the multiple legacies bequeathed by dissonant states are never static, they are not the mere handmaidens of a wider economic logic that can be arbitrarily molded by political entrepreneurs. In Indonesia, the on-going economic crisis has certainly weakened the urban middle class and thus facilitated the efforts of the PPP to mobilize support for a more sectarian vision of Islam. By contrast, in Iran, economic crisis has strengthened support for the Khoradad Front, although efforts to impose economic reforms-- if they ever come -- may provoke a backlash against the reformists. Yet while the ideological legacies inherited by that the leaders of Iran and Indonesia have been affected by socio-economic conditions, these leaders have discovered that the *political logic* that animates these legacies cannot be completely reinvented. President Khatami, for example, has redefined the ideology of the Islamic left in a more liberal direction. But he cannot easily expunge from this ideology the calculated nativism which gave it such force. Similarly, while President Wahid has tried to push the long standing practice of elite competition in a more pluralistic direction, the well ingrained but destructive habit of viewing politics as a game of political one upmanship has endured.^{lxxxi} *Pos Pupang*, July 14, 1998,” in FIBS East Asia, July 24, 1998. In short, in both Indonesia and Iran, we have vivid examples of the shared “scripts” and “routines” which have received attention from new institutionalist scholars. What I have done is to show how such scripts and habits can be studied through a dynamic comparative lense that does not reduce them to reified structures that predetermine political outcomes.

^{lxxx} See Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in*

^{lxxxi} As Rais put it in May 1998, “I am going to play my own game...can play a good (game) with Gus Dur and Mega...” See “Amien Rais on Abdurrahman-Wahid Megawati Coalition,” *Kupan*

Third, this paper implicitly challenges the idea that the democratization in the Islamic polities hinges on forging a culturally “authentic” interpretation of democracy, one that will reflect a long-standing consensus as to what it means to be a Muslim. This notion not only exaggerates the extent to which such a consensus actually exists, it underrates the impact of globalization in shaping the ideologies and programs of leaders such as Khatami, Soroush and Wahid. These post-modern Islamists do not advocate a coherent synthesis of religion and politics. Instead, they offer ideological amalgams of contending symbols and traditions, some of which are indigenous, and others which have been absorbed from the West. This does *not* mean that local cultural traditions are necessarily antagonistic to democracy. On the contrary, as we have seen, liberals such as Soroush and Wahid have turned to local forms of Islamic mysticism to defend pluralism. But their goal has not been to “democratize” Islam, but rather *to get it out of politics*. Indeed, the paradoxical fact is that Soroush and Wahid have invoked religious traditionalism and mystical spiritualism as symbolic bulwarks *against* the “modernist” ideologies of populists such as Iran’s Shariati and Indonesia’s Rais, both of whose world-views were largely shaped during their years of graduate studies in West universities.

This is not to say that the amalgams espoused by Wahid, Soroush or Khatami must necessarily promote pluralism. By their very nature, such hybrids invite competing and even contradictory rationalizations for political action. The *multiple imagination* of Wahid, for example, contains both a modern notion of authority that speaks to the aspirations of the urban middle class, and a traditional ethos that speaks to the patrimonialist world-view of rural, Javanese Muslims. While the grafting of these two logics has often encouraged pluralism, it has at times pulled Wahid in an autocratic direction. Thus, for example, his tendency to unilaterally issue orders to his ministers -- a habit that reflects the patrimonialist ethos of a rural religious teacher or *kiai*^{lxxxii}http://www.gatra.com/_VI/39/LPT2-39.html *Gatra*, Number 39,VI, August 12,2000. -- may be welcomed by his traditional followers, but it is resented by his more modern colleagues. Thus far, Wahid’s considerable charisma has obscured or mitigated such tensions. But once he leaves office, NU leaders who lack Wahid’s personal authority may push his eclectic legacy in opposing directions. By its very nature, dissonant politics opens up new paths, while incorporating those that came before.

Such varied and often fragile outcomes may be a far cry from competitive democracy, but they are

^{lxxxii}See, for example, “In Search of Magic Power From Kiai,”

preferable to the stifling politics that predominates in “harmonic” states. These states institutionalize a vision of authority -- and a dominant political practice -- that is the very antithesis of dissonant politics. Rather than promote multiple paths, they institutionalize *path dependence* by absorbing competing Islamic institutions and ideas, and by championing the notion that the state is the sole vehicle by which the Islamic community can realize its shared identity and history. This dynamic not only narrows the space for path innovation and regime-opposition accommodation; by its very nature, it also invites counter-hegemonic movements whose ultimate goal is to compel the state to reassert its “mission” as the vehicle of cultural conformity. Faced by such counter-hegemonic movements, and lacking alliance partners who can mobilize organized support for genuine power sharing, the leaders of harmonic states are likely to face two bad choices: to crush their competitors, and/or absorb the latter’s message by encouraging greater Islamization.

Nearly all leaders have grappled with the paradoxical consequences that ensue when harmonic states are so successful at stifling alternatives that reformers are easily convinced that sticking to old paths makes more sense than creating new ones. The leaders of Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Malaysia have all contended with the beguiling legacy of harmonic institutionalization by repressing Islamic competitors while trying to control or monopolize the Islamic sphere. As for Algeria, its sad experience demonstrates how difficult it is to forge new institutional and ideological paths *ex post facto*. When in 1988 the former president of Algeria, Chadli Benjedid, initiated dramatic political reforms, he soon faced a mass movement whose crusade for a unified Islamic state echoed the National Liberation Front’s (FLN) own hegemonic project. By insisting that the state recapture its “historical” mission as the *sole* vehicle by which the Algerian people expressed its “authentic” identity, the Islamic Salvation Front or FIS acted as the *fiils* or son of the FLN.^{lxxxiii} *Démocratie* (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 1994), 143-65. Moreover, Benjedid’s efforts to promote an Islamic alternative to the FIS also failed, in large measure because that alternative -- the Hamas Party-- had little popular support, and did not provide a genuinely pluralistic alternative to the counter-hegemonic ideology of the FIS.^{lxxxiv} Algeria}, (Cairo: Dar al-Itisam, 1993) 59. Under such polarized conditions --

^{lxxxiii} Lahouari Addi’s “L’utopie Islamiste,” in his *L’impasse du Populisme, L’Algerie et la*

^{lxxxiv} See Hilmi Mahmud Qa’ud, *Al-Nizam al-Askari fi al-Jaza’ir*, [The Military Apparatus in

which played right into the hands of hard liners in the military -- hopes for political accommodation were almost doomed from the start.^{lxxxv} had no relationship to Hamas in Palestine.

This unhappy outcome has little to do with “Islam” or the legacy of “Arab” authoritarianism. The Arab nationalist ideologies propounded by Egypt’s Nasser, or the leaders of the Ba’ath Party in Syria, were as much influenced by the West as they were by Islamic ideals. In short, symbolic contradictions are hardly absent in harmonic states. What counts is whether such contradictions are *explicitly* recognized, and how they are *institutionalized*. In this regard, it should be noted that many harmonic states are as divided by ethno-religious identities or ideologies as other Third World societies. Yet there all the difference in the world between a Syria or Iraq, states which -- in Iliya Harik’s evocative words-- suffered “the imposition of uniformity on a pluralistic reality” by ethnic minorities who used the ecumenical language of Arab nationalism to defend particularistic interests; and a Lebanon or Indonesia, states whose leaders allowed competing socio-cultural groups to sink institutional roots in society, and at some distance from the state.^{lxxxvi} *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 3 (1972), 310. Whether by design or default, this dissonant pattern created possibilities for ideological innovations and accommodations that were not readily available to the leaders of harmonic states.

Notes:

^{lxxxv} See Abed Charef, *Algérie Le Grand Dérapage* (Editions de l’aube, 1994). “Hamas” in Algeria

^{lxxxvi} Iliya Harik, “The Ethnic Revolution and Political Integration in the Middle East,”