On 21 May 1998, one of the most effective and enduring of the world’s Cold War military-based authoritarian regimes came to an end. On that morning, Indonesia’s President Soeharto read a simple statement announcing his resignation and handing over power to his deputy, B. J. Habibie. He did so against a dramatic backdrop: the Asian financial crisis had brought catastrophe, student protesters occupied the national parliament, the smoke was still rising from parts of Jakarta’s skyline after days of rioting a week earlier, the previous evening fourteen of his cabinet ministers had told Soeharto they were no longer willing to serve under him, and the chief of the Armed Forces had declared that his troops were in danger of losing control of the streets.

Political tensions had been mounting in Indonesia for more than a decade, prompting many attempts to prognosticate on what would come next (see especially Bourchier and Legge 1994). However, few people had predicted that Soeharto’s regime would collapse in such a dramatic way. Even on the eve of Soeharto’s resignation, many seasoned observers of Indonesian politics believed that the president would, at least, be able to engineer a political succession to his liking or that the most likely heir to his power would be the military, which conventional wisdom held to be the single-most powerful institution in Indonesia. Few expected full-blown democratisation. The pessimism regarding Indonesia’s democratic potential was due not simply to the mesmerising effect of the longevity of Soeharto’s regime, but also to its many apparent successes in remaking Indonesia’s social, political and economic structures, to say nothing of its leader’s reputation as a master politician.

In fact, no less surprising than the manner of Soeharto’s resignation was what came next. Habibie took over the presidency amid much questioning of commitment to reform and ability to hold on to power. His many critics noted that he had been Soeharto’s ‘golden-haired boy’, enjoying privileged access to the palace and loyally serving his mentor for some two decades. Moreover, Habibie was a *wunderkind* technocrat with little knowledge of social and political issues.
In his first televised speech as president, the diminutive Habibie sat at a large desk with his name plate displayed prominently in front of him and looked, both figuratively and literally, dwarfed by the challenges of his office. But in the months that followed, President Habibie announced far-reaching reforms which effectively dismantled most of the New Order’s foundations. Liberalisation of the press, repeal of repressive political laws, and democratic elections all followed in short order. The military announced it was withdrawing from formal politics and the police were separated from the Armed Forces and given primary responsibility for domestic law and order. Dozens of new political parties, and literally thousands of NGOs, labour unions, farmers’ associations and other civil society organisations sprang into existence. Radical new decentralisation laws were passed devolving extensive political and economic authority to Indonesia’s several hundred districts. Anti-corruption bodies were formed and military human rights abuses investigated (though successful prosecutions were few).

Habibie’s presidency ended in October 1999, but his three successors Abdurrahman Wahid (1999–2001), Megawati Soekarnoputri (2001–2004), and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2004–present) continued the reform process, albeit in a less vigorous and sweeping manner than Habibie. The constitution has been thoroughly revised, a Constitutional Court established, the first direct presidential elections were held in 2004 and direct elections for provincial and district heads began in 2005, hundreds of politicians and public officials have been jailed for corruption (including at least seven former ministers), a measure of civilian control has been established over the military and progress has been made in cleaning up Indonesia’s notoriously corrupt judicial and prosecutorial systems. With these reforms Indonesia can now claim to be the most democratic nation in Southeast Asia. Not only have its elections been largely free of violence and manipulation, but public support for democracy remained above 80 per cent, according to well-regarded opinion surveys.

Twelve years later, it is clear that Soeharto’s resignation in 1998 marked a dramatic discontinuity in Indonesia’s modern political history that was as momentous as (and far less bloody than) that which saw Soeharto’s rise to power in 1965–66. The Indonesian political system has changed, seemingly irrevocably. It is today a flourishing democracy with a vibrant civil society and political life. Yet, the legacy of the Soeharto period remains strong and pervasive.

This continuing influence of the Soeharto years was highlighted in a dramatic way in the first months of 2008, almost precisely ten years after Soeharto’s resignation, as the former strongman fell seriously ill and eventually died in Jakarta. Dealing with the venality and human rights abuses of former authoritarian regimes and their rulers is a major challenge for many new democracies. It is symbolically loaded because it can underline the desire of the new rulers to break definitively with the ideas and practices of the past; but it can be difficult to achieve this
goal if powerful political and economic forces seek to protect their interests or legacy, or a significant body of public opinion looks back at the authoritarian rule with nostalgia or fondness. Only in a few cases, therefore, have former dictators been charged and convicted (Roh Tae-woo and Chun Doo-hwan of South Korea were two such exceptions).

In Indonesia, although President Soeharto had been forced to resign in ignominy he was also able to live out his final decade in more or less quiet obscurity. There were attempts to charge him with corruption, but he was able to avoid criminal prosecution on the grounds of ill-health. His lawyers even won a multi-million dollar libel case against *Time* magazine over a cover story alleging he had spirited billions of dollars to foreign bank accounts (though this was later overturned on appeal). When the former president was on his death bed in early 2008, a parade of senior Indonesian political figures passed by his bedside and praised his contribution to the nation. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono visited him in hospital and at his funeral seemed genuinely saddened, telling those assembled that ‘We have lost one of the nation’s best sons, a loyal fighter, true soldier and honourable statesman… We say thanks for his great contribution and meritorious service to the nation during his life and forgive all his faults’.¹ While some public intellectuals and political activists wrote critically about the former President and recalled the many unresolved problems he had bequeathed to the nation, overall the public mood—especially as captured in the media was laudatory and nostalgic.

The manner of the former strongman’s passing, and the public controversy which surrounded it, put on display the highly ambiguous views which many Indonesians, both in officialdom as well as the general community—hold about Soeharto. It also revived scholarly debate about the deeper influence of his regime on contemporary Indonesia. For if the political transformation experienced by Indonesia since 1998 has been dramatic, the elements of continuity are just as visible. For all the new political institutions which have been established, there are also obvious signs that many underlying styles and structures persist. Pervasive corruption, ‘money politics’, pockets of repression, thuggish intimidation of opponents and elite dominance are just some of the most obvious phenomena which make some analysts and Indonesian political actors talk of the ‘persistence of the New Order’ or the ‘failure of reformasi’.² The new political system is not a revitalised version of the New Order; but nor is it a complete antithesis.

It is against this backdrop that this book seeks to achieve three aims. First, it will reflect on the place that the New Order regime occupies in Indonesia’s modern

history. The New Order was in power for more than half of the sixty-three years since Indonesia gained independence in 1945. It still looms massively in Indonesia’s post-colonial history. The passing of a decade since its demise gives us the necessary distance and perspective to begin rethinking the nature of the regime and its place in the longer time scale of modern Indonesian history.

Second, the book seeks to analyse the legacy of that period for Indonesia’s new democracy. Several of the contributors examine the ways in which Indonesia’s reformasi period has repudiated the practices and structures of the New Order era, but also the ways in which it continues them.

Third, in doing these things, the editors and contributors also seek to pay tribute to Harold Crouch, one of the chief scholarly analysts of the origins, nature, demise and aftermath of the New Order regime, who retired as professor of political science at the Australian National University in 2005. Earlier versions of the chapters in this volume were first presented at a conference in November 2005 marking his retirement. In writing for this book, Professor Crouch’s colleagues and students wish to honour his contribution to the field of Indonesian political studies.

The New Order and its place in history

Youthful supporters of the army first coined the term the ‘New Order’ in 1966. By the 1990s, the term had become an anachronistic reminder of the regime’s age, its inflexibility and its inability to adapt. But it did serve as a reminder of the scope of the ambitions which had accompanied the regime’s birth. In the late 1960s the New Order regime emerged from a coalition of political and social forces which opposed President Soekarno, the Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI) and the country’s leftward drift during the previous decade. At the core of this coalition was the army leadership, but many intellectuals, businesspeople and anti-communist political groups also supported it. Seeing their first goal as being the elimination of the Communist party and its supporters (a goal achieved by the massacre of approximately 500,000 persons and detention of another 600,000 in 1965–66), Soeharto and his supporters then set about stabilising the economic situation and undermining other potential political challengers. It was only by the end of the 1960s and the start of the 1970s that a new political format began to settle into place (Feith 1968; Crouch 1979).

The army was the backbone of the regime, especially early on. Although military officers became less important in the regime’s upper echelons in its later years, the army remained crucial for repressing and forestalling dissent right to the end. Most of the working apparatus of the regime, however, was provided
by Indonesia’s vast and ramshackle civilian bureaucracy which carried out the regime’s developmentalist policies and held even the smallest villages in its stultifying grip. Layers of civilian politicians and intellectuals provided expert advice or links to broader social constituencies.

The New Order was a ‘repressive-developmentalist’ (Feith 1980) regime which built its modernising mission on an underpinning of backward-looking conservatism. Its political and economic mission was summed up by the numerous slogans, neologisms and acronyms it spawned: *dwifungsi* (the ‘dual—i.e., military and political—functions’ of the military), ‘floating mass’ (the passive role assigned to the rural population when it came to politics), ‘monoloyalitas’ (the unswerving political loyalty that all state officials were required to give to the regime’s Golkar party), ‘accelerated modernisation’, ‘take-off’ and the like. There is no doubt that the regime did bring about remarkable economic transformation: three decades of economic growth averaging more than 5 per cent, reduction in absolute poverty, the marked improvement in infrastructure, and health and medical services, and the coming into being of new urban middle class groups. Yet at the same time, the ’Pancasila ideology’ propagated by the regime was a straight-jacketing and profoundly conservative doctrine. It tried to freeze Indonesian society in the stasis of a mythic vision of the Indonesian past, which stressed consensus, harmony and tradition, but also obedience and passivity. This vision strove to obliterate the conceptual division between state and society, and to teach individuals and groups that their interests must always be subordinated to the greater ones of the state and nation. This ideological climate naturalised and legitimised the repressive political arrangements upon which the regime was founded; it also stifled initiative and creativity, providing an environment in which corruption flourished and conformism reigned.

During the decades it was in power, there were many debates among political scientists about the New Order. Most of these debates centred on two inter-related questions: firstly, the character of the regime and its relations with wider society and, secondly, the reasons for its success and durability. In the former endeavour, most observers agreed in seeing the New Order as representing the victory and dominance of a relatively narrow part of Indonesia society, consisting of the state and its officials, over the varied social and political forces which made up Indonesian society. Scholars used a wide variety of terms to describe this concept: the ‘beamtenstaat’ (McVey 1982); the ‘state qua state’ (Anderson 1983); the ‘bureaucratic polity’ (Jackson 1978); ‘bureaucratic authoritarian regime’ (King 1982); and so on. There were debates about the degree to which state officials were independent from wider social forces, especially from a growing capitalist class which was emerging from within the regime’s top leadership (Robison 1986), and how far they were responsive to wider business and elite groups when making policy (MacIntyre 1990). But there was broad
agreement that the regime was fundamentally exclusionary in its relations with the majority of the population and that a major goal of its political structures and practices was to maintain the bulk of the population in a state of political passivity.

On the second question, virtually all credible analysts agreed that political repression was a crucial part of the regime’s staying power: after all, the reliance on coercion to suppress challenges was obvious for all to see, not only in 1965–66, but also in such episodes as the ‘Malari affair’ of January 1974, the crackdown on students and other opponents in 1978 and the Tanjung Priok incident of 1984 in which more than 100 Muslim protesters were shot by the military. Others looked to the patrimonial distribution of rewards to supporters and potential opponents of the regime (Crouch 1979); the leadership role played by Soeharto himself (Liddle 1985); or the performance legitimacy provided by the technocrats and the economic growth they oversaw (e.g. Bresnan 1993). Still others looked to the ideas promoted by the regime, especially its ‘Pancasila ideology’, and debated their origins and effects (e.g. Morfit 1981; Bourchier 1997; Ramage 1995).

There was thus a sustained and deep research effort while the New Order was in power to understand the nature of this regime. It was not always easy for researchers to carry out this work: it was often difficult to gain access to remote geographical regions, or to informants or data related to politically sensitive topics. Foreign researchers faced the ever-present threat of being banned from Indonesia; domestic analysts could find their careers stymied, or suffer even worse retribution. Even so, the New Order era research effort has left a rich legacy for analysts of contemporary Indonesia and for historians. But it was also an effort which was marked, and constrained, by the preoccupations of the time. Arguably, also, analysts were especially bewitched by the apparent solidity and effectiveness of the New Order regime and were thus not only unprepared for its sudden demise, but perhaps also failed to recognise, or at least emphasise, some of its weaknesses and contradictions. And, of course, analysts writing when the New Order was its height were also less able than we are today to try to locate the regime in the broader sweep of Indonesian history, and to assess its lasting significance and legacy.

Yet since the end of the New Order, we have seen few truly revisionist accounts of the regime, nor accounts which try to put that period in historical perspective or to reflect on its place in Indonesian history. To be sure, there have been many post-1998 studies on the New Order period, on topics as varied as the

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3 For critical reflections along these lines see especially Klinken 2001. But see also Emmerson nd. who argued that Western analysts were unreasonably (and almost invariably mistakenly) anticipating the end of the regime during the New Order years.
life of Soeharto (Elson 2001); Islamic politics (Hefner 2000); opposition to the regime (Aspinall 2005); its interpretation of history (McGregor 2007); and the ‘coup’ of 1965 (Roosa 2006). These books all make important contributions to the historiography of the New Order period. But most of them were based on research projects which began during the New Order itself, or in its immediate aftermath, arguably without the lengthy critical distance which begets deep reflection, and almost certainly only beginning the task of reassessing the place of the New Order in Indonesia’s political life.

In the early 1960s, a famous debate took place between Herbert Feith and Harry Benda, two of the most prominent members of a new generation of Western experts on Indonesia. Benda criticised Herbert Feith’s book, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, which had traced the political conflicts that led to the collapse of democratic government at the end of the 1950s, for asking the ‘wrong question’. It was not appropriate, Benda argued, to ask ‘what went wrong’ with Indonesian democracy, because this mistakenly assumed that the democratic system which Indonesia adopted on achieving independence was suited to the country and would naturally sink deep roots there. It was more appropriate, Benda argued, to expect that Indonesia would find ‘a way back to its own moorings’ (Benda 1982:18), by which he meant its pre-colonial history of autocratic and feudalistic rule. Their exchange was analysed by subsequent generations of Indonesian studies students and attained canonical status in the Indonesian studies literature when included as the opening of the volume, *Debating Indonesian Politics: Thirteen Contributions to a Debate* (Anderson and McVey 1982).

Viewed from the vantage point of the present, it now appears that Feith’s question was right all along, and that ‘in the *longue durée* the historical exception may be the authoritarian New Order’ (Klinken 2009:142). Certainly, academic tides have not flowed in favour of Benda’s views. Few scholars now would trust his metaphor of culture or historical tradition as an anchor point, untouched by the present and always ready to pull it back into the past. On the contrary, as many analysts of the New Order have argued, the image of an authoritarian grand Javanese tradition was itself to a large extent a political construct, propagated and sustained by the bureaucratic class which benefited from the image of societal passivity and benign ruler-ship it encouraged (e.g. Pemberton 1994, Bourchier 1997). More obviously, the tides of political history also eventually turned against Benda. Certainly, the alacrity with which Indonesians have taken to the new democratic system since 1998 suggest that Indonesia’s political ‘moorings’—to the extent that the term has any cogency—may turn out to be democratic ones.

Indeed, there are many obvious parallels between the messy and rickety democracy of Indonesia in the 1950s and the current political order. Nobody
yet has carried out a sustained historical comparison between the 1950s and the current era of democratic government, but the picture that Feith described in his 1962 book bears many similarities with the present. These include the basic complexion of at least some of the _aliran_—or political ‘streams’—which constitute the main forces in Indonesian political life, and even the geographical bases of their strength in electoral competition which to a large degree is unchanged since the 1950s (King 2003). The fractured and multi-polar nature of the party system is another point of comparison (Mietzner 2008b), as are the dynamics of patronage and coalition-building among elites at the local level (Klinken 2009). What is missing today is the growing political polarisation of the 1950s, as well as the open search for alternatives to democratic rule: both phenomena which were embodied in the rise of an ambitious new power in the military, and in the equally rapid growth of the PKI. In short, Indonesian democracy today lacks precisely those attributes which led to its decline in the 1950s.

Tracing the roots of Indonesia’s present conditions in the democratic politics of the 1950s, is not the aim of this book. These simple and by no means original observations, however, point to a task which will become more pressing for historians and political scientists of Indonesia as time goes by: that of rethinking the place and significance of the New Order regime in Indonesia’s modern history. The chapters in the first part of this book represent a modest contribution to this effort. Whether the New Order period will ultimately be viewed as an authoritarian interlude between two more democratic, and ultimately more significant, periods in Indonesia’s history is a question that will only be answered with the passage of more time, and the answer will depend greatly on the successes and failures of Indonesia’s new democratic order. For the last twelve years, the dominant trend in Indonesia has been to view the New Order not as a failed experiment with authoritarianism, but as a looming presence, whose influence pervades and shapes all levels of post-Soeharto politics and continually threatens to drag Indonesia back into the past.

**The legacy of the New Order**

A second main purpose of the current book is therefore to consider the ways in which the New Order period has left its mark on today’s Indonesia. In this regard, the main contradictions of Indonesia’s democratisation are well-known even to casual observers: the combination of dramatic democratic transformation of the formal political system, with continuation of many of the corrupt, predatory and sometimes repressive practices which characterised authoritarian rule, especially at the local level. Such a combination is, of course, not uncommon
in countries which have undergone democratic transitions in the developing and post-communist eras, and attempts by scholars of Indonesia to understand Indonesia’s transformation thus mirror and draw upon a wider literature.

At the level of democratic reform, Indonesia has transformed dramatically. The New Order regime retained some of the outward appearances of democratic rule, such as regional and national legislative assemblies and regular elections (regimes which dispense with such procedures altogether are indeed rare in a modern world). Yet ‘Pancasila democracy’ was designed in such a way that it never threatened the core of the regime. Only three political parties were allowed after 1973, and there was much intervention within the two ‘opposition’ parties—PDI and PPP—to ensure that they would never threaten the regime’s dominance; a majority of members of the legislative body which elected Soeharto every five years were his own appointees anyway. If all else failed, a formidable security apparatus had extensive power to take action against critics and opponents of the government, often with a blatant disregard for legality.

In these regards, Indonesia has now been dramatically transfigured. Basic political freedoms in areas like the rights of organisation, assembly and expression have been greatly expanded. Freedom House in 2006 for the first time declared Indonesia to be ‘free’. The last national elections in 2009 were contested by 38 political parties representing a range of interests and each vigorously contesting for its share of power. There has been a boom in civil society organisation with a proliferation of new labour unions, farmers, ethnic or regional groups, and a plethora of NGOs coming into being. Far-reaching decentralisation has led to a dramatic flowering of democratic competition at the local level (Aspinall and Fealy 2003; Nordholt and Klinken 2007). The army has formally disengaged from politics. It is now hard, for example, to imagine Indonesia undergoing that classic symptom of authoritarian backsliding experienced by Thailand in late 2006: the coup d’état.

On the other hand, as also noted in many analyses, the reformasi movement has failed to achieve many of the goals its most radical exponents set down in 1998–99. The military may have abandoned the formal political realm, but the institution is in some respects a law unto itself, raising a majority of its own funds from a range of legal and illegal economic activities with little oversight and control from the executive government and legislature, and with soldiers routinely engaging in corrupt and illegal economic activities, and, on occasions, violating the rights of citizens with impunity. The press is now free, but journalists are subject to various forms of harassment and intimidation by private actors; others are bribed to ensure that their reporting favours the powerful (Hadiz and Heryanto 2005). Corruption is all-pervasive and ‘money politics’ exerts strong, but not always absolute, influence over electoral
outcomes in many regions. Meanwhile, many of the individuals and groups that dominated Indonesia during the Soeharto regime have reinvented themselves and still figure prominently in economic and political affairs.

With such a mixed record to choose from, it is not surprising that scholarly analysis has been sharply divided. Of all commentators, Vedi Hadiz and Richard Robison have been perhaps the most emphatic in pointing to the failings of democratisation and the elements of continuity with the New Order regime, describing the new power structure as a ‘reorganization’ of oligarchic power (Robison and Hadiz 2004). As Hadiz (2003:593) puts it

the institutions of Indonesia’s new democracy have been captured by predatory interests precisely because these were not swept away by the tide of reform. In fact, old forces have been able to reinvent themselves through new alliances and vehicles...

Others, especially those who emphasise institutional design, take a far more sanguine view of the achievements of democratisation. For example, Douglas Ramage (2007:135), the Country Representative of the Asia Foundation in Jakarta, has described Indonesia as a ‘stable country with a democratic and decentralised form of government… and continuing on a path of democratic consolidation…’ (see also MacIntyre and Ramage 2008). Most political scientists writing on Indonesia, drawing on the wider literature on democratic transitions and consolidation, have tried to steer a middle course and have made various attempts to characterise post-Soeharto governments as a ‘hybrid regime’ (Aspinall 2003); patrimonial democracy (Webber 2006); or a patronage democracy (Klinken 2009).

This volume

Rather than being a typical festschrift consisting of tribute pieces on unconnected topics, the editors and Harold Crouch wished to produce a volume which was thematically coherent. We therefore chose as our concern a topic which has long been at the centre of Harold Crouch’s own research: the New Order regime. We asked contributors either to re-examine the New Order period or to reflect upon its legacy for Indonesia’s contemporary politics and society. The editors and contributors do not claim that this book is a comprehensive attempt to do these things. In designing the overall shape of the volume the editors tried to strike a balance between thematic unity and the varied interests of the contributors who were brought together by their admiration for, and debts to, Harold Crouch.

The book is divided into two sections. In section one, contributors begin the task of re-examining the New Order. The first two contributions bring to light aspects
of Soeharto’s career that have not yet been subject to close scholarly analysis, indicating the degree to which the life of the long-serving autocrat remains a fertile topic for scholarly research, despite the many endeavours already made in this regard. The section begins with an essay by David Jenkins, representing a small part of a larger research project by Jenkins on the biography of Soeharto. The chapter focuses on the early fundraising activities of Soeharto, activities which have previously been poorly understood but which throw much light on Soeharto’s later behaviour as president, and on the character of the regime he founded. Jenkins’ discovery of an early pattern of ‘stand-over tactics, extortion and straight-out theft’, not only help us to understand Soeharto’s subsequent career, but they help us to locate him, from an early stage in his career, in the twinned histories of military predation and ‘premanism’ (gangsterism), which have become important topics of scholarly inquiry in the post-Soeharto period.

In the second chapter, Ken Ward keeps the analytical focus on Soeharto, but does so by way of a close analysis of the former president’s philosophy of power and his attitudes to Javanese ‘tradition’, as expressed in a revealing speech Soeharto made when he was at the height of his power in 1982. This important speech, one of the few made by the president in what he thought was a private setting to be captured verbatim, has never before been subjected to close textual analysis. In it, Ward reveals ‘a high-water mark of his advocacy of a view of Indonesia inspired by Javanese concepts’, capturing the inner logic of a period of official politics when the New Order regime saw political Islam as one of its prime enemies, a period that contrasts dramatically with the contemporary era of an increasingly Islamic public sphere in Indonesia. Yet, this early period has important legacies, too, for contemporary Islamic politics. In the next chapter, Sidney Jones examines some of those legacies by tracing the origins of the terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah to the radicalisation engendered by the New Order regime’s repression of political Islam in the 1970s and 1980s. In this chapter, Jones confronts the analytical puzzle that Indonesia’s violent jihadist movement arose most powerfully in the post-Soeharto democratic period, whereas in most Islamic countries such movements emerge to challenge authoritarian regimes. Close analysis of the New Order period, however, makes Indonesia appear closer to the norm than first sight would have it. Jones uncovers trial documents from 1982 in which the grand-father of contemporary Indonesian jihadism, Abdullah Sungkar, condemns the autocratic practices of Soeharto’s regime, helping us to locate his movement’s origins in the ‘complete frustration of an Islamist politician, decisively and permanently excluded from the system.’

The economists Hal Hill and Dionisius Narjoko examine the New Order’s economic record, especially the connection between industrialisation and the opening the economy to global markets. In contrast to the generally negative
assessments of the political scientists and historians in the volume, they see the New Order experience in a more positive light, as one where ‘an open trade and investment regime and efficient supply-side investments were beneficial for Indonesia’. Next, Robert Cribb presents a reflective and iconoclastic essay on the New Order’s historical origins and its place in the wider sweep of Indonesian history. Rather than seeing the New Order, with its bureaucratic approach to politics, as a continuation of the earlier period of Dutch colonial rule, as was previously argued by several scholars when the New Order was at its height, he points to critical discontinuities, including in the New Order’s stress on conformity and meritocracy, both values that were anathema to the Dutch colonial order. Finally, Professor Jamie Mackie revisits the theme of patrimonialism, which was one of the key concepts Harold Crouch used to explain the dynamics of the New Order regime. Seeing not only patronage, but also the distribution of ‘quasi-traditional fiefdoms to favoured subordinates’ as central to the concept of patrimonialism, Mackie finds its analytical utility to have stood the test of time. It is a fitting tribute to both Professor Mackie and to Harold Crouch that this chapter be positioned as the keystone of the volume.

Each of the chapters in the first part of the volume, albeit in very different ways, suggest that the New Order period is far from being a closed book for historical inquiry. Instead, it continues to offer both opportunities for original empirical research, as in the chapters of Jenkins, Ward and Hill and Narjoko, and for reconsideration and reconceptualisation in the light of new theoretical insights and contemporary concerns, as in those by Jones, Cribb and Mackie. Moreover, rather than pointing to a new consensus, these chapters suggest that assessments of the New Order are likely to be as varying, and contentious, as they were when the regime was in power.

In section two, the contributors look at different aspects of Indonesia in the period since the demise of the New Order. The first two chapters focus upon the first post-Soeharto governments: Dewi Fortuna Anwar analyses the brief, but highly eventful, tenure of the Soeharto’s successor, President B. J. Habibie. One of the enduring puzzles of the Indonesian democratisation is how it came that Soeharto’s hand-picked successor should introduce the most far-reaching reforms of post-Soeharto era. Anwar, writing not only as a scholar but also as an insider in the Habibie government locates the answer not only in the strength of the protest movements unleashed by the fall of Soeharto—the conventional answer—but also in the personal style of Habibie the man. Edward Aspinall looks to the failings of reform in the following two administrations, those of Abdurrahman Wahid and Megawati Soekarnoputri, tracing these failings to the political socialisation their leaders had experienced as ‘semi-opponents’ of the New Order. The legacy of Soeharto era authoritarianism thus appears not only
in the political institutions bequeathed by it, but also in the political styles of those leaders conventionally seen as ushering in the country’s transition to a new democratic order.

The final four chapters each address directly the core question of scholarship on post-Soeharto politics: to what extent is Indonesia progressing toward democracy or, conversely, to what extent are its politics being captured by the conservative forces nurtured by the New Order regime itself. Jun Honna discusses one of the political forces which had been a central focus of Crouch’s earlier work: the Indonesian military, especially looking for signs of its continuing political influence at the local level. Focusing on the 1999–2004 period, his study is exemplary of the ‘elite capture’ school, and he finds considerable evidence of a continuing political role for the military, though he holds open the possibility of diminution in the subsequent period. Chris Manning provides a detailed study of the politics of labour reform in the post-Soeharto period, analyzing the effects on economic policy making and economic outcomes. To a large degree his concern is with the effects of labour policy on employment and poverty, but his analysis of the dramatically increased political clout of organised labour in the post-Soeharto period points to a degree of fluidity and openness in the new political order that, at least, seem to question narratives of continued and unchallenged elite dominance.

Marcus Mietzner provides a close study of the result of another milestone of post-Soeharto reform: the introduction of direct elections for heads of government at the local level. In a subtle analysis, he acknowledges that most candidates for government office at the local level originate from the established political elite, but he also points to a new willingness by voters to judge incumbents on the basis of their performance. Even if his analysis does not point to a displacement of the old New Order elite, it is suggestive of a degree of circulation within the elite, because ‘the introduction of direct local elections has empowered voters to determine the outcome of inter-elite competition for political office.’ Finally, William Case concludes the volume with a piece which pays fitting tribute to Harold Crouch’s long-standing interests in comparative Southeast Asian politics, by contrasting Indonesia’s democratisation with the experiences of other countries in the region. He argues that Indonesia’s low quality democracy fits into a broader regional pattern in which democratisation is both facilitated and undermined by ‘the weakness of social forces and the resilience of elites.’ In this perspective, the continuing legacy of the New Order is less a sign of that regime’s uniquely resilient influence, as part of a broader regional pattern whereby ‘Elites have found that democracy helps to cement their dominance’.
As Indonesia’s New Order fades into historical memory we hope that this volume will be not only a tribute Professor Harold Crouch, but also an early contribution to what will inevitably be a longer term academic debate about the nature and legacy of the Soeharto regime.