Framing Megawati: a framing analysis of Megawati Sukarnoputri in the Western news media, 1998-1999

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Framing Megawati:
A framing analysis of Megawati Sukarnoputri in the Western news media, 1998-1999

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree

DOCTORATE OF PHILOSOPHY

from

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

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B. A. (Hons) University of Wollongong

HISTORY AND POLITICS PROGRAM
2010
DECLARATION

I, Jo Maree Coghlan, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the School of History and Politics, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The documents had not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

..............................

Jo Maree Coghlan

9 March 2010
What difference does it make to the dead the orphans, and the homeless
Whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty and democracy?

Mahatma Gandhi
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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>American Broadcasting Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABRI</td>
<td>Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAKOR</td>
<td>Bandung Student Coordinating Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBS</td>
<td>Columbia Broadcasting System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>Critical Discourse Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNRT</td>
<td>National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPR</td>
<td>People’s Representative Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAMI</td>
<td>Indonesian Student Action Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FKMY</td>
<td>Yogyakarta Student Communication Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FKMS</td>
<td>Surabaya Student Communication Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRETILIN</td>
<td>Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNP</td>
<td>Gross National Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMI</td>
<td>Islamic Student Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICMI</td>
<td>Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERFET</td>
<td>The International Force for East Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITB</td>
<td>The Bandung Institute of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAMI</td>
<td>Indonesian University Students Action Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAMMI</td>
<td>Indonesian Islamic Student Action Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KNI</td>
<td>Komite Nasional Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KOSGORO</td>
<td>Multi-Purpose Cooperation Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KORPRI</td>
<td>Civil Service Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPU</td>
<td>Indonesian General Election Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPR</td>
<td>People’s Consultative Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBC</td>
<td>National Broadcasting Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NU</td>
<td>Nahdatul Ulama</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAN</td>
<td>National Mandate Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>PBB</td>
<td>Crescent Star Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDI</td>
<td>Indonesian Democratic Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDI-P</td>
<td>Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PK</td>
<td>Justice Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKB</td>
<td>National Awakening Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMKRI</td>
<td>Indonesian Catholic Student Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMII</td>
<td>Indonesian Muslim Student Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>PNI</td>
<td>Indonesian Nationalist Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>United Development Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRD</td>
<td>Democratic People’s Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMID</td>
<td>Indonesian Student Solidarity for Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOKSI</td>
<td>Central Organisation for Independent Employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNTAET</td>
<td>The United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor</td>
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is dedicated to the two most important people in my life, my son Ozzie who gave my life meaning and purpose, and my partner Scott who gives it hope and a future. To both of these most remarkable and inspiring men: Thank you for completing me. I love you both.

My life has been one well travelled, along the way inspired by many. Space does not allow me to mention all, with the exception of one: Hussein Al-Matta, a man of coverage and faith, whom I have only the best wishes for a peaceful life. An asylum seeker who faced the horror and injustice of Australia’s immigration regime, his journey will forever remind me that evil will happen when good people do nothing.

My thanks and appreciation goes to my supervisors Di Kelly, Anthony Ashbolt and Adrian Vickers and to my fellow postgraduate students at the University of Wollongong whose friendship and camaraderie made this process rich and fulfilling. From the University of Wollongong, I would like to thank Charles Hawksley, Julia Martinez, Mike Donaldson, Greg Melluish, Stephen Brown and Andrew Wells for their support. I also appreciated the personal support and encouragement I received from Terri Mylett and Steve Ramsey.

To the Denton family, in particular Glenda Denton and to the Beveridge-Davis family I also thank for their support. Lastly, my thoughts turn to my grandmother Margaret Coghlan, I hope that she can now be proud of me.
ABSTRACT

In the tradition of Robert Entman, this framing analysis seeks to evaluate the arbitrary and subjective power of the news media in shaping public knowledge about political leadership. It does so by assessing how the Western news media framed reporting of Indonesian political leader, Megawati Sukarnoputri between 1998 and 1999: a period encompassing the end of the Suharto New Order and the election of the Wahid-Sukarnoputri government. Public knowledge is conceptualised as the way audiences broadly think about and structure their ideas, feelings, fears, and beliefs about political actors. The objective is to demonstrate that framing is universal and inescapable, and often to the determinant of the public sphere.

This thesis argues that the Western news media broadly framed Indonesia in the late stages of the 1990s as in ‘crisis’, in itself this is perhaps surprising. The Western media has a propensity to report the Third world as in perpetual political crisis, bordering at times on anarchy. In this case, it is argued that by framing Indonesia in crisis a ‘social reality’ emerged that ‘named’ certain ‘truths’ about Indonesian politics and its leaders. It hypothesises that embedded in this social reality, the New Order (Suharto and later Habibie) were framed as responsible for the state of economic and political crises and were judged as morally and politically unable to solve the problems being experienced in Indonesia. Captured within this ‘reality’ was a set of privileged meanings that imagined a Megawati presidency as the remedy and solution. Whether a future Megawati presidency was an advantage or disadvantage to Indonesia is not the scope of this study, rather it demonstrates how framing functioned to assemble emotional and political meaning about Megawati and her values, character and motivations during 1998-1999.

In examining how episodic, crisis and issue framing shaped social realities about Indonesia and its political leadership, this study also argues that frames reflected Western assumptions about Indonesia but more so about gendered post-colonial leadership. As a result, the frames produced in this period were stereotypical, oversimplified, decontextualised, reliant on the juxtapositioning of actors in binaries of ‘good’ and ‘evil’ and reflective of mediatised rituals of drama, tragedy and emotion. This resulted in the production of public knowledge about Indonesia generally, and Megawati specifically, that was discursive.
INTRODUCTION

Thesis description and aims

This study explores the concepts and practices of framing to examine how the Western news media shaped a social reality about Indonesian politics in ways that privileged meanings about political leader, Megawati Sukarnoputri in 1998 and 1999. The aim is to demonstrate the structural links between how political leaders are framed, how framing can function to assemble and maintain meaning, and how that meaning shapes public knowledge. Public knowledge is conceptualised in this project as how citizens/audiences broadly think about and structure their ideas, feelings, fears, and beliefs about political actors. Framing, the practice that crystallises problems, predicts effects, makes moral judgements, and suggests likely outcomes, is a significant factor in how audiences evaluate political leaders, particularly in relation to their legitimacy, accountability and responsibility. How the Western news media frame political leaders and what impact this has on how audiences develop and sustain understandings about their character, motivations, policy prescriptions and value to the public sphere is the central aim of this thesis.

In order to evaluate the impact of framing on public knowledge, this study examines how five Western newspapers framed Megawati between 1 January 1998 and 31 December 1999. Using quantitative and qualitative methods, the primary study evaluates 478 news reports published in The Age and The Australian (Australia); The New York Times (United States); and The Independent and The Times (Britain). The secondary case study evaluates 626 news reports published in the same newspapers in September 1999. It examines the aftermath of the East Timorese Independence ballot to determine if this issue had the potential to disrupt or weaken preferred meanings about Megawati.

Three central frame schemas are adopted to assess how news frames shaped meanings about Indonesian politics generally and Megawati specifically. These are “episodic frames” (Chapter Three), “crises frames” (Chapter Four), and “issue frames” (Chapter Five). “Episodic frames” examine how meanings about Megawati were shaped within an apolitical and ahistorical context. “Crises frames” evaluate how social realities were constructed about Indonesian politics in ways that privileged meanings about Megawati above all others. “Issue frames” examine how public policies were framed in ways evaluative of the key political actors, in this instance, Megawati and President Habibie (1998-1999). The objective of each frame schema is threefold: to establish how framing functions to shape meanings; to posit that no actor or issue is immune from framing; and to demonstrate the influence of the news media in shaping public knowledge about the character, motivations and legitimacy of political leaders.

This study evaluates both the content and structure of news frames. In the first instance, it examines how frame devices and frame reasoning shape the content of news reports in ways that embed preferred meaning. How the structure of news frames impacts on meaning and knowledge is assessed in relation to the “elite orientation of frames.” This is conceptualised as the influence of a small number of journalists, reliant for the most part, on elite sources. The objective of assessing both content and structure is to determine if both similarly shaped meanings about Megawati or if differences in frame content and frame structure disrupted or weakened preferred meanings about Megawati.

In selecting Megawati as the principle focus of this analysis, it provides a context to assess how Western news reporting engaged with the phenomena of Asia’s “roaring tigresses.” Except for Afghanistan and Brunei, women have led governments or opposition groups in the region’s predominantly Islamic countries (Indonesia, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Pakistan, for example). Women have both led struggles against dictatorships and participated in competitive,

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democratic elections. However, for the most part, scholarly research and media commentary has focused on their achievements in terms of their lineage to slain husbands and fathers and their symbolism. In relation to the latter, Derichs and Thompson’s claim:

Although they enjoyed a dynastic aura, it was expected that real control of the party, movement, or faction would be retained by men. Female leadership was perceived as largely symbolic. Their ability to unite the faction through their integrative character was considered more important than their actual political skills.\(^5\)

In Fleschenberg’s review of Western gender-related leadership theory, she posits that power is not distributed equally among the sexes but more so that “many sources of power, such as expertise and legitimacy, are primarily the result of the way the individual is perceived by others.”\(^6\) How Western audiences perceived Megawati as a post-colonial political leader in a predominately-Muslim nation because of how she was framed in the news media, is a central interest of this project. How news frames reflected Western assumptions about gender and race, as well as stereotypes regarding female political equality in Islamic states, and the role of female leaders in patriarchal, paternalistic, and newly emerging democracies is of specific interest.

The period of 1998 and 1999 was selected to evaluate the fluidity of Western news framing during a period of rapid political transformation in Indonesia. Apart from the resignation of President Suharto (1966-1998) in May 1998 and the 1999 June general election and October presidential and vice-presidential election, the period signalled the end of the Pancasila Demokrasi (the New Order’s control of the electoral process). It also saw the introduction of reforms in relation to the Indonesian media and on the government’s policy on East Timor. Ostensibly, the reforms were designed to give legitimacy to Habibie. Arguably, however, they failed to do so. In relation to Megawati, the period marked a torrent of Western media commentaries that posited the likelihood that she would succeed Habibie and become Indonesia’s third president.

\(^5\) Derichs and Thompson, “Dynasties and Female Leadership.”
\(^6\) Fleschenberg, “Dynasties and female political leaders in Asia,” p. 6.
Megawati was formerly the Chair of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) before leading the breakaway party, the Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle (PDI-P). She had been a member of the People’s Representative Council (DPR) since 1987. She is the first-born daughter of Indonesia’s first president, Sukarno (1945-1966). Between 1987 and 1993, Megawati was a relatively quiet political figure in Indonesian politics, often absent from national debates and described as an “unlikely candidate” to become President. In 1996, Megawati was removed from the Chair of the PDI in what is referred to as the Medan Coup, probably at the behest Suharto. Megawati’s status as the daughter of Sukarno proved problematic for Suharto and his New Order regime. Because of her removal from the Chair of the PDI (and the way it was done) after 1996 Megawati emerged as a popular political figure in Indonesia.

In the lead up to the turbulent period of 1998-1999, particularly from 1996 onwards, Megawati appeared to symbolise the incongruous nature of Suharto and his New Order. With Suharto’s resignation in May 1998, Megawati was reasonably well positioned to assume the Presidency. However, a series of parliamentary machinations led to the election of Abdurrahman Wahid (1999-2001), the leader of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and the founder of the National Awakening Party (PKB) as President. Megawati was elected Vice President. Following the impeachment of President Wahid in July 2001, Megawati was appointed President by the People’s Consultative Assembly (MPR). In 2004, Megawati was named by Forbes Magazine as one of the most powerful women in the world before losing the Presidency to Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

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9 Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is Indonesia’s largest Islamic organisation. It was founded in 1926 by Hasym Assyari (Wahid’s father) and Wahab Chasbullah to promote traditionalist Islam. For a broader discussion of NU see R. Bush, Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power within Islam and Politics in Indonesia, (Singapore: ISEA, 2009). The National Awakening Party (PKB) was founded in 1998 and is largely based on NU’s constituency. See G. Barton, Abdurrahman Wahid: Muslim Democrat, Indonesian President: A View from the Inside, (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2002).
The central argument of this thesis is that the Western news media “named” certain “truths” about Indonesian politics. In doing so it shaped a “social reality” about Indonesia politics that deemed the New Order (firstly Suharto and later Habibie) as responsible for the state of economic, political and social crisis and judged it as morally and politically unable to resolve the situation. In shaping this social reality, a Megawati presidency emerged in Western news frames as the solution to the state of crisis.

The development and maintenance of social realities in news discourses is inherent to framing. The need to make events, issues and actors meaningful to audiences ensures that public occurrences are interpreted and rendered into versions designed to facilitate audience understandings.\(^\text{11}\) This has significant consequences for how audiences develop knowledge about the social and political world and its political leaders. The consequences are magnified when the news frame is embedded with meanings that privilege some events, issues and actors as more meaningful than others. Signifying mechanisms contained within news frames regularly promote one meaning (privileged or preferred) and in some cases actively suppress other meanings (salience).\(^\text{12}\) It is these concepts of social reality and privileged meaning that constitute the core theoretical framework of this study.

In this analysis of how framing functioned to shape a social reality about the state of Indonesian politics, and in ways that privileged meanings about Megawati, this project makes three significant scholarly contributions. It provides a comprehensive examination of how frames functioned to shape social realities about Indonesia in ways that relied on “crisis” to posit the need for immediate and rapid democratisation and liberalisation. It is the first comprehensive analysis of how Megawati was framed in the Western media, more so, how she was framed with privileged meanings. It also provides a framework to demonstrate


the validity of framing as a critical tool to explore the power of the Western news media to shape emotional and political meanings about political leaders.

**Thesis genesis**

The genesis of this study emerged after reading Australian and international news reports regarding Megawati in 1996. It noted, for example, how Megawati was consistently reported in relation to her father, Sukarno. It also noted how her lineage was narrated in ways positing the emergence of a “people-power” movement similar to the “Yellow Revolution” that occurred in the Philippines in 1986. Generally, news accounts appeared to suggest that Megawati was a democrat and a reformer and as such, a leader likely to depose Suharto. Above all, suggestions of her broad public support were evident. There were however significant differences in content, language, tone, and moral judgements, particularly in coverage of the same event. This was most evident in 1996. Reports from 21 June 1996 bear out this claim.

Following Megawati’s ousting from the PDI in June 1996, the domestic and international media reported a series of riots, including the occupation of the PDI’s headquarters in Jakarta by Megawati supporters. The New Order banned the showing of footage on Indonesian television and foreign journalists were denied access to relay facilities to broadcast the footage live. Instead, footage was flown to Singapore and broadcast after the event. At the height of the clashes, 21 June 1996, *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported the events under the headline “Troops Crush Rally in Jakarta Political Crackdown.” Excerpts of the page one story read:

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13. The Yellow Revolution was a mass movement based initially on non-violent tactics, in response to the assassination of Senator Benigno Aquino in 1983. It is sometimes referred to as the EDSA Revolution, the later because the majority of demonstrations took place at Epifanio de los Santos Avenue in Quezon City, Manila, at times involving over 2 million Filipino’s. For comparisons with Indonesia see M. Thompson, *Democratic Revolutions: Asia and Eastern Europe*, (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 1-18.

Soldiers and riot police baton-charged supporters of embattled opposition leader Mrs Megawati Sukarnoputri in central Jakarta yesterday, injuring at least 10 people and bringing the spectre of violent political confrontation to the Indonesian capital. Witnesses said hundreds of troops and police armed with batons turned on the rally outside Jakarta’s main railway station about lunchtime and beat scores of demonstrators, who retaliated by showering the security forces with stones and bottles....More than 10 people had been taken to hospital, most with head injuries. Five journalists were also beaten, including a TV crewmember from CNN. “This is brutal, we are very angry,”...Megawati is “loved by the Indonesian people.”

Domestic reporting in The Jakarta Post on the same day provided this version of events, under the headline “PDI Supporters out of line in Jakarta”:

The Armed Forces said the thousands of supporters of embattled chief of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) Megawati Sukarnoputri went too far in their street rally here yesterday. “They stepped out of line,” said Chief of Jakarta Regional Military Command Maj. Gen. Sutiyoso of the demonstration by an estimated 8,000 people, which ended in a clash with security officers. He said that 25 of his men were seriously hurt in the incident. “We were not doing anything violent...my soldiers have also been in full control of themselves,” he added. He also said that his troops made allowances for the situation, letting the protesters march down some of Jakarta’s main streets at a busy time of day. “And yet they demanded more,” he said. Jakarta military spokesman Lt. Col. Didi Supandi said 55 security personnel were injured, 25 of them seriously. Sutiyoso acknowledged that a journalist was also hurt, but asserted that none from the protesters were injured. Separately, Chief of the Central Jakarta District Police Lt. Col. Aboebakar Nataprawira told the Post that 18 security officers were injured. He said there were no reports of other injuries or vehicles being damaged. He said that 57 participants were taken into police custody for questioning.

The differences between the two reports are stark by comparison. The Sydney Morning Herald account described Megawati as an opposition leader, compared to The Jakarta Post reference to her as a party leader: a significant difference in understanding her political status. Participants were either “demonstrators” or “protestors,” each suggesting varying interpretations of their motives. The event was described benignly as a “rally,” or more ominously, as an “incident.”

Blame was attributed to either the police and military or to Megawati supporters’, suggesting a moral judgement was being made.

The violence was the responsibility of either the police and military with “batons charged”, resulting in the participants responding with “stones and bottles” or, alternatively, that soldiers remained in control, only responding when provoked. The types of injured varied significantly, with the Australian publication focusing on participant injuries, while the Indonesian publication focused on police and military injuries. The Australian publication relied on witness statements, while the Indonesian newspaper relied on official sources. No arrests or property damage were mentioned in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, while both were reported in *The Jakarta Post*.

The distinct differences in reporting, suggested a terrain within which various interpretations and judgements were being made in relation to the event and in relation to Megawati. As Indonesian academic Ed Aspinall has argued, Megawati was a “perplexing character” for journalists. Aspinall suggests this was exemplified by her periods of silence in the face of ill-treatment at the hands of Suharto’s New Order. While an enigmatic figure, several other socio-political factors contribute to understanding why Megawati was of interest, particularly to the Western news media.

**Reporting post-colonial gendered leadership: ‘Daughters and wives’**

Megawati was among a number of post-colonial female leaders that came to power in Asia and the sub-continent in the 1990s. Most of them were daughters or wives of slain or imprisoned leaders. Gender appeared not to be impediment

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17 For example, Aung San Suu Kyi leader of the National League of Democracy in Burma was the daughter of the assassinated nationalist Aung San (1915-1947). Cory Aquino, President of the Philippines from 1986-1992, was the wife of assassinated Opposition Leader, Senator Benigno Aquino (1983). President of the Philippines Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is the daughter of former President Diosdado Macapagal (1961-1965) who was defeated by the authoritarian leader Ferdinand Marcos. Former Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga (1994-2005), is the daughter of former President S.W.R.D Bandaranaike (1956-1959), assassinated while in office. Her mother, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, was also a three-time former Prime Minister. Benazir Bhutto, Pakistan’s former President (1988-1990 and 1993-1996) was the daughter of executed Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto 1973-1977). Benazir Bhutto was herself assassinated in 2007. Khaleda Zia, the two-time Prime Minister of Bangladesh (1991-1996 and 2001-2006) is the wife of assassinated former President Ziaur Rahman (1976-1981). Sonia Gandhi, an influential Opposition Leader in India, is the wife of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi (1984-1989) who was assassinated 1991 and the
to their rise but rather proved to be a political advantage. Similarly, “patriarchal ideology” appeared not to have hindered women from achieving high office. For the most part, female leaders Asia and the sub-continent are generally perceived as “apolitical.” In Derichs and Thompson’s assessment:

They [female leaders] were best suited to lead a moral struggle against male machiavellis (sic). As the wives, widows, or daughters of male martyrs, these women rose to political power “over his dead body,” in Diane Kincaid’s ironic phrase. Murdered, imprisoned, or discredited Asian male politicians became political martyrs (at least for their supporters); their often ambivalent political backgrounds were conveniently overlooked as “their” cause was taken up by their female successors. At the same time the experience and abilities of these women was left unquestioned.\(^\text{18}\)

The rise of women leaders in Asia and the sub-continent has proved worthy of comment in the Western news media, especially given that many established Western democracies (including America and Australia) have not elected a female President/Prime Minister. Yet some of the poorest, most culturally conservative, and newest democracies have elected and continued to elect women into the highest office.

For the most part, Western news accounts note similarities and make comparisons, yet failed to acknowledge that each was facing or had faced a unique set of socio-cultural conditions in seeking high office. The following excerpt from *The Chicago Sun-Times* (U.S.) in 1996 is a prime example of the comparative frames used in the Western news media. It notes the use of the term “daughter of destiny,” a phrase that reappeared in Australian reporting in 1999.\(^\text{19}\)

\(^\text{18}\) Derichs and Thompson, “Dynasties and Female Leadership.”
...Megawati is seen as the only Indonesian capable of challenging the authoritarian president. He wouldn’t be the first Asian titan to fall to a daughter of destiny, as many of Asia’s new female leaders are known. As young women, both Bhutto and Sheikh Hasina Wazed, Bangladesh’s new prime minister, took on military governments after their fathers’ brutal deaths. Sri Lanka’s Kumaratunga, the daughter of two prime ministers, entered politics only when her husband was assassinated. In Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina rose to head the Awami League because she was one of only two survivors of a family massacre that included her father, the country’s first prime minister [my emphasis].

Similar comparisons are noted in other accounts. For example, as reported in The Globe and Mail (Canada) and The Dallas Morning News (U.S.) “Many Indonesians compare [Megawati’s] 2-year-old campaign for democratic reforms with the struggle of other Asian women who have followed in the footsteps of famous fathers or husbands: Suu Kyi in Myanmar; Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan; Aquino in the Philippines; Indira Gandhi in India and Bangladesh’s prime minister-designate, Sheikh Hasina.” Comparisons are also noted in this excerpt from The Observer (Britain):

...Megawati, a mild-mannered housewife who in just a few years has climbed from obscurity and is bidding to join the ranks of Asian women who triumphed over a male-dominated political tradition to reshape the destiny of their countries - from Pakistan’s Benazir Bhutto, whom she counts as a friend, to Cory Aquino of the Philippines...Indonesians are most struck by parallels between Megawati and Aquino, a political neophyte who rode a tidal wave of popular anger against abuse and corruption to shatter the seemingly invincible rule of Ferdinand Marcos. What unites Megawati, Gandhi, Suu Kyi, Sri Lanka’s president, Chandrika Kumaratunge and Bangladesh’s serving premier, Sheikh Hasina Wajed, is that they were all daughters of heroes of their countries’ struggles for independence.

One account suggests the comparisons were manifest, as indicative of the following report: “[Megawati’s] background as a softly-spoken housewife and growing up as Sukarno’s eldest daughter in the presidential palace make comparisons between her and figures such as former Philippine President

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Corazon Aquino and Burmese dissident leader Aung San Suu Kyi unavoidable.” Other accounts framed lineage as symptomatic of the integrity of Third World female leaders who were challenging authoritarian regimes, as noted in *Newsweek*: “Many Indonesians are now comparing Megawati to Corazon Aquino of the Philippines, who led the “people power” movement to oust Ferdinand Marcos. The two former housewives share a reputation for integrity.”

While *The Chicago Sun-Times* suggested it was lineage rather than gender, the account (as with others) is suggestive of how Western framing denies agency to post-colonial female leaders: “Megawati Sukarnoputri joins a pantheon of Asian women who have challenged some of the continent’s toughest strongmen, and in many cases won…Like many women who have risen to prominence in Asian politics, Megawati owes her popularity more to her heritage than her sex.” Not all accounts however viewed post-colonial leadership through these prisms. In one atypical account, veteran *New York Times* journalist Barbara Crossette attempted to shape a more critical view of post-colonial leadership:

Most of these women have been widows and daughters thrust into power by dynastic imperatives when there was no male heir…They govern with the rules they learned growing up at a father’s knee, a husband’s side. Their issues are old issues. In some of the world’s poorest countries, these women have had almost no impact on crucial economic and social problems like education, women’s rights and the protection of children. They cannot be viewed, as they often are through Western feminist perspectives, as pioneers. More often than not they are throwbacks to the past in a region that has been short on enlightened leadership from whatever sex, rather than harbingers of a more egalitarian future.

The frames noted in these accounts however were not exclusive to the Western news media. The following is one account of how comparisons and lineage captured the imagination of the *South China Morning Post*. Similar accounts were noted in *The Straits Times* (Malaysia).

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24 R. Moreau and T. Emerson, “Can Sukarno’s daughter lead her country to democracy?” *Newsweek*, 128, 9, 26 August 1996, p. 41.
Like Burma’s Aung San Suu Kyi, Ms Megawati is the daughter of a one-time national hero - her father, President Sukarno, was independent Indonesia’s first ruler. Like the former president of the Philippines, Corazon Aquino, she benefits from popular anger over corruption. Comparisons can also be drawn with Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, who Ms Megawati counts as a friend, and with assassinated Indian premier Indira Gandhi. Both were daughters of prominent statesmen…in most cases, their husband or father was murdered by opponents, so creating a groundswell of public sympathy and allowing the wife or daughter to be portrayed as continuing his legacy.27

As Andrew MacIntyre argues, in the case of Megawati her political leadership was often framed “in order to redeem her father’s legacy” and/or “to avenge his ill treatment at the hands of others.”28 This type of framing not only negated Megawati’s agency but more problematically, this type of framing drew on and perpetuated stereotypical views of Third World women as victims. Narrated in this way, Megawati’s political agency was contextualised within the patriarchal confines of either Sukarno or Suharto. As Ross argues, it is the Western media’s propensity to frame post-colonial female leadership that homogenises representations of gendered leadership, generated and sustained with over-simplified narratives of women as victims and men as oppressors. By focusing on emotive aspects such as victimhood, other aspects such as political skills or policy prescriptions may be underreported. In this way, emotive or affective framing can mask deficits in ability or character.29

Fleschenberg claims that reporting of female leaders in Asia often relies on emotive frames that “publically attribute” a degree of symbolic significance, suggesting both competency and legitimacy.30 In terms of providing an insight into Western media practices, Parmar argues that gendered framing is often underpinned by cultural values that are often assumed and rarely questioned. In the case of women leaders in Asia, it denies independence and autonomy and

27 “Fathers and Daughters,” South China Morning Post, 8 August 1996. Similar themes were noted in “Megawati not for burning,” The Straits Times, 7 July 1996.
reinforces racialised gender roles.\textsuperscript{31} Repeated over time, these frames have the ability to influence public knowledge about both the actor and the nation.\textsuperscript{32}

Representations of post-colonial leadership, apart from containing agency within patriarchal lineages and reflecting racialised assumptions, also appear to rely on the gendered reproduction of narratives such as “mothering.”\textsuperscript{33} Particularised narratives of motherhood when inverted with assumptions about women in Asia arguably shape female leaders as not in service of their husbands but in service of the nation. In the case of Megawati this narrative provided a powerful framework to shape a moral context for her leadership: it was for her maternal desire to ‘save’ the nation, offsetting claims her leadership was driven by revenge for her father’s treatment or retribution for her own treatment (in both cases at the hands of the New Order). Moreover, a reliance on gendered representations provides a framework within which the “soft politics” of female leaders are binarised against the “hard politics” of oppressive patriarchies, generally attributed as responsible for social, economic and political instability and crises. This type of framing arguably positions female leadership, as it did with Megawati, as the remedy and solution to the state of crises.

Megawati was a perplexing and enigmatic figure, yet this study is more interested in examining the ways in which the Western news media relied on gendered, ideological, religious, racial and cultural assumptions to project to its audiences who they thought Megawati was and what she stood for. At the core of these frames was an over-simplified, gendered, racialised narrative that perpetuated common sense assumptions of Asian female political leadership as lacking agency, and reliant on lineage to slain or imprisoned husband/fathers for legitimacy. It is these frameworks that Megawati proves an interesting case study to examine the concepts and practices of news framing in the Western media.

Conceptualising framing of Megawati in the Western media

This study explores the concepts and practices of framing to examine how it shaped a social reality about Indonesian politics in ways that captured privileged meanings about Megawati. The following discussion conceptualises the intellectual and empirical issues that justify and clarify focusing on the Western news media.

Theoretical justification

Two distinct yet persuasive framing studies shaped the decision to focus this study on the Western media. Each in their own way presented insights that influenced how this project approached foreign news frames in terms of agency and power, and in relation to both frame producers and the frame subject. The first was Sharhira Fahmy’s analysis of news wire photographs of Afghan women during and after the fall of the Taliban regime. It drew on Said’s epistemological distinctions between the “Orient” and the “Occident” to argue that Western media frames of the “other” are generally stereotypical, oversimplify complex national issues, and for the most part decontextualise foreign news by denying it a broader thematic context.34

Fahmy argues that Western cultural, political and intellectual superiority pervades Western reporting of foreign news in ways that ultimately portray Islamic and authoritarian states as uncivilised “others.” “Native symbolism” is rejected in favour of Western concepts, themes and “linguistic symbols.” The “known” is used to shape meanings and knowledge about the “unknown.” In doing so, stereotypes grounded in Western cultural assumptions permeate Western framing of foreign nations. The Western news media, in Fahmy’s assessment, frame foreign nations, their political leaders and their citizens in narrow pre-existing paradigms. These reinforce stereotypes about the reported nation and fortify the values held up as exemplars of Western superiority.35

35 Fahmy, “Picturing Afghan Women,” p. 93.
The second study is Shawn Power’s examination of the publication of political cartoons about the Islamic Prophet Muhammad, which appeared in the conservative Danish newsweekly, *Jyllands-Posten* in September 2005. In this study, the author explored concepts of “mediatised rituals” to posit the influential and pervasive nature of Western media framing in shaping public meaning and knowledge. Drawing on the work of Cottle, Powers argues that “mediatised rituals,” the practices that serve to sustain or mobilise sentiments with “symbolisation” and a “subjective orientation of what should be or ought to be,” pervade Western media reporting. Specifically, Powers argues that “mediatised public crises” are manifestations of media rituals that through the process of framing suggest a particular meaning and response which shape how society should be or act.\(^{36}\)

In both these accounts is a view that framing shapes particularised meanings that are grounded in and reflective of Western cultural, social and political values. By focusing on Western news framing, this project seeks to evaluate how media frames construct and maintain particularised meanings that are shaped by Western values. Specifically, claims of stereotyping, oversimplification, decontextualisation and the “symbolisation of crisis” to shape and sustain meanings are assessed. To contextualise this further, this project focuses on the Western media in order to explore how Western representations of Third World political leadership, gender, race, religion, and crises functioned. The aim is to determine what role these representations have in generating and sustaining the social reality constructed in Western news discourses regarding Indonesian generally and Megawati specifically.

**Empirical justification**

The decision to focus on the Western media is also reflective of empirical issues. Studies that have sought to investigate framing practices in nations with fundamentally different political, economic, cultural, social and language systems

have been confronted with the empirical complexity of conducting comparative framing analyses. Further, linguistic barriers, as well as the inherent difficulty involved with assessing data that is incomparable, proves methodologically problematic in terms of ensuring the data is vigorous and reliable. This has been noted in previous cross-cultural studies.\(^{37}\)

In the case of Indonesia, to examine Bahasa-Indonesian accounts of how the domestic media framed Megawati would require an intimate knowledge of the political, cultural and language systems of Indonesia in order to provide a compelling analysis. Moreover, a concise evaluation of Indonesian media frames would require detailed knowledge of the localised newsroom practices, practices that developed in response to extended periods of political intervention and regulation.\(^{38}\) Newsroom practices are considered an interceding factor in frame development and maintenance.\(^{39}\) Given a lack of linguistic skills and intimate knowledge of Indonesian political, cultural and media practices, this study remains confined to an analysis of frames produced within familiar linguistic, political and social systems.

This is not to say that framing studies of non-Western news should not be undertaken. Rather, it is a reflection that a specific methodology is required to address empirical issues such as language, culture, politics and localised newsroom values. The nature of the Indonesian media, an intellectual interest in how Western practices of stereotyping, oversimplification, decontextualisation


and the symbolisation of crises shape and sustain meanings, as well as empirical issues associated with comparative analysis of diverse political, economic, cultural, social and linguistic systems collectively contributed to the decision to confine assessments of framing to the Western media. This study should therefore be viewed as an explanatory study in the broader field of communication-framing studies concerning the pervasion of Western values in foreign news reporting.  

**Thesis structure**

Chapter One outlines theoretical understandings of framing, including the nature and function of frame devices, frame reasoning and the interactions between frame producers and frame receivers. It demonstrates not only how framing functions but posits how framing structures social realities and speculates what consequences this has for the broader public sphere. Completing the theoretical critique of framing is a review of recent framings studies, with a particular emphasis on how foreign news is framed in the Western news media. Given the enormity of the application of framing analysis, news framing of the 1990 and 2003 Gulf Wars is examined. This issue is selected as an indicative example of the theoretical and methodological approaches used by scholars in the field of framing analysis.

The commonality of these studies is that in varying ways each examined political issues to hypothesis how framing functions to shape social realities and to privilege meanings about some nations, actors and issues over other nations, actors and issues. Complementing this literature review is a summary of published framing studies of contemporary Indonesian politics. It reveals only a small school of scholarship, notably from Australian and Dutch academics, mainly examining Western framing of Suharto. It notes that no Western studies have been published which examine Western news framing of Megawati. As such, this project fills a notable scholarly void.

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Completing Chapter One is the methodology used to select the 478 newspaper articles that comprise the basis of the primary case study. It outlines the three-stage methodology used for newspaper selection, data collection and coding. The methodology used for the five-stage content analysis of frequency, context, journalist, source and keyword data is also included complete with tables showing the initial results. The methodology used to select the 626 newspaper articles that comprise the secondary case study on the aftermath of the East Timor Independence ballot is also included. Tables showing the initial results are included. Lastly, this chapter reviews the strengths and limits of media-framing analyses and addresses how this project overcomes concerns about the subjective nature of framing studies.

Chapter Two provides a review of the central political, economic and electoral developments in contemporary Indonesia. It provides an explanatory background for some of the key events examined in this project, in particular the economic crisis of early 1998, the events surrounding the fall of Suharto in May 1998, the reform agenda of the Habibie government particularly in relation to East Timor, the June 1999 general election, and the October 1999 presidential election. More broadly, it outlines the nature of the Indonesian political system and reviews the rise of Megawati, specifically in relation to the PDI considered the historical holders of Sukarno’s memory. It conjectures what impact Megawati had on the New Order government as the daughter of Sukarno.

Chapter Three examines how “episodic framing” contributed to the shaping of a “social reality” about events and issues occurring in Indonesian politics between 1998 and 1999. Drawing primarily on the works of Shanto Iyengar it argues that there was a propensity to frame Indonesian politics generally and Megawati specifically in “episodic frames.” As a result of this propensity, limited meanings were contained within Western news frames. It considers how “episodic framing” contributed to the development of a set of privileged meanings about Megawati. It argues that the need to frame events and actors in ways that would be coherent to Western audiences meant linguistic treatment and binaries polarised key actors, such as Megawati and Suharto. The impact of this was it shaped how their values, character and motives were evaluated and judged. Specifically, it argues
that Megawati was framed as a political victim of the New Order and betrayed by the machinations of Islamic politicians opposed to her nationalism and gender. Overall, this chapter concludes that lineage, gender, religion, victimhood and betrayal narratives shaped meanings about Megawati that were episodic, affective and discursive. Underpinning this chapter is quantitatively derived frequency, context and keyword data.

Chapter Four evaluates how the social reality constructed about Indonesian politics was strengthened by an overreliance on crisis and emotive frames. It specifically interrogates what role “crises framing” played in strengthening meanings about Megawati. It assesses how “crises framing” functioned in relation to three key issues: reporting of the state of the Indonesian economy in January 1998; the fatal shooting of students at Trisakti University (Jakarta) in May 1998; and reporting of events prior to and immediately following the presidential vote in October 1999. How “crises framing” functioned to posit meaning is evaluated in relation to the propensity to frame Indonesian politics episodically, using salience and with the “rituals of storytelling.” It does not dispute that Indonesia was facing serious economic, political and social issues during 1998 and 1999. Rather, it interrogates how “crises” was used to “name” a “truth” about the state of Indonesian politics. It argues that in needing to make events meaningful to audiences outside of Indonesia, framing produced “social realities.” In doing so, Western journalists shaped issues, events and actors with cultural and ideological values and emotions to posit a version of reality.

Chapter Five `investigates the link between “issue framing” and the “elite orientation of frames” to further demonstrate the power of the news media in the production and maintenance of public knowledge. “Issue framing” is examined as the practices that shape how a public policy is framed in ways that are evaluative of its architects. The “elite orientation of frames” is explored as the interactions between a small number of journalists and elite sources that contribute to how issues are framed to posit preferred meanings and discursive evaluations. The hypothesis is that how an issue is framed, normatively as a conflict between competing positions, shapes audiences evaluations not only about the policy but about the political actors who are juxtaposed as representing each side of the
conflict. It argues that this type of juxtapositioning is detrimental to the public sphere because it dualises complex public policy into a set of contestations. Demonstrating this practice, Chapter Five specifically examines Western news reporting of the immediate aftermath of the U.N. supervised referendum on East Timorese Independence. It evaluates how “issue framing” shapes meanings, knowledge by reporting the issue within three sub-frames: the clash of political interests (“strategy frames”); a clash of moral principles (“value frames”); or as assessments of the economic consequences (“material frames”). These sub-frames, complete with “issue dualism” and the “elite orientation of frames” actively produce meanings and bolster particular interpretations and evaluations about the issue but more so about the two central actors; Habibie and Megawati.

While previous chapters examined how privileged framing was attached to Megawati, this chapter examines how the issue of East Timorese Independence had the potential to disrupt privileged meanings about Megawati, given her opposition to any form of succession for the provinces. It also considers how the issue of East Timor itself shaped Western media framing by considering the “hero and myth maker” narrative of foreign correspondents. Lastly, it evaluates what impact the killing of foreign journalists has on how contemporary reports framed the events of October 1999 (the aftermath of the Independence ballot, the scorched earth policy, and the international response). How to decipher the work product of journalists reporting from East Timor in October 1999 while acknowledging their human subjectivity concludes this chapter. Extensive quantitative data examining who was framing the news, from where, and the choice of sources used to shape news reports is included in this chapter.

Concluding this project is an assessment, drawn from quantitative and qualitative methods and analysis, that a social reality was constructed and maintained about Indonesian politics that privileged meanings about Megawati in ways that were not available to other actors. Episodic, crisis and issue framing functioned to sustain a set of meanings about Megawati that arguably shaped public knowledge about her character, values and motivations that were discursive. Analysis further suggests that frame content more than frame structure embedded preferred and privileged meanings about Megawati. It posits that if the news media could frame
meanings about Megawati and, given that framing is inescapable and universal, then no political actor is immune from framing practices. Arguably, this has significant consequences for how audiences engage with and understand the social and political world and its political leaders. Completing this chapter are future research projects that have developed from this study.
CHAPTER ONE

CONCEPTS AND PRACTICES OF NEWS FRAMING

The primary aim of this thesis is to use the concepts and practices of framing to demonstrate how a social reality was constructed and maintained in the news media regarding the state of Indonesian politics and, as a result of this, how a privileged set of meanings about Megawati emerged in news discourses. It examines how the Western news media, in reporting political developments during 1998 and 1999, framed Suharto and the New Order as the cause of the social, economic and political problems facing Indonesia. Framing deemed them as morally unable to resolve these problems. In doing so, a Megawati presidency was positioned as the remedy and solution. Within this social reality, privileged meanings were attached to Megawati that shaped audience evaluations about her character and motivations in ways not available to other political actors. Demonstrating how framing shapes social realities and engenders privileged meanings is a core aim of this thesis.

The need to make events, issues and the actions of political actors meaningful and relevant to audiences necessitates framing. Framing warrants that raw news is placed in a unifying context which translates and renders events, issues and actors so that audiences can comprehend happenings in ways which are coherent.1 In doing so, a social reality emerges in the news media. Framing thus takes strips of reality and packages them in ways which facilitate audience understandings of the social and political world.2 This has significant consequences for how news audiences develop knowledge about the social and political world and its political leaders. The consequences are magnified when the news frame is embedded with meanings which privilege some events, issues and actors as more meaningful than others. Signifying mechanisms contained within news frames regularly promote one meaning (privileged or preferred) and in some cases actively suppress other meanings (salience).3 It is these concepts of social reality and

privileged meaning that constitute the core theoretical framework of this study.

The intellectual basis for this project rests on the premise that the news media are influential in the production and dissemination of information and, consequently, in the public perception of the events and actors of the social and political world. In Paletz and Entman’s assessment, the news media are powerful agents in shaping how political leaders can be insulated from public accountability to sustain the power of the ruling elite, and to preserve the legitimacy of political, economic and social systems. In Ekstrom’s critique, the news media “is clearly among the most influential knowledge-producing institutions of our time.” The influence of the news media is conceptualised in this project as their ability and power to establish and sustain reference points from which society makes moral, political, emotional and ideological judgments about nations and their political leaders. In terms of foreign news, this project asserts that most people are heavily dependent on the mass media for information, particularly about issues and events occurring internationally. As Edelman reminds us, “to hear or read the news is to live intermittently in a world one does not touch in daily life.” Indeed, studies have shown that framing is more persuasive when reporting to audiences who do not have crystallised attitudes or first hand experiences of foreign nations and their political leadership.

Within this context, the primary objective of this project is to demonstrate that the news media have the ability and power to frame any nation or any actor in ways that will shape public knowledge and opinions. Given the universality of framing, no nation or actor is potentially immune from the practice. Put simply, if the news media could frame Indonesia in ways which posited a social reality (of crisis and the need for democratic reform), and, if the news media could frame Megawati in

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ways which induced privileged meanings (as the leader most likely to resolve the crisis and deliver reform), then the news media have the power to do so with any nation or any actor. How political leaders are framed as worthy or unworthy, legitimate or illegitimate, motivated by the greater good or motivated by self-seeking reasons will influence how audiences will structure their ideas, feelings, fears or beliefs about political leaders.

In the case of media framing of Megawati, especially given the complex nature of the Indonesian political process and the supposition that audiences lacked crystallised attitudes or first hand experiences, the manner in which she was framed was likely to be influential. While it may not have mattered to Indonesian voters how Megawati was framed in the Western news media, the central purpose of this analysis is to demonstrate that the media have the ability to frame any political leader in ways which shape meanings about their character, value and motivations. The core objective of this project is therefore to demonstrate that framing is universal, influential, potentially inescapable and for the most part detrimental to the public sphere.

Framing studies normatively adopt one of three methods to examine the influence of media frames to shape public knowledge and opinion: (1) to gather and analyse open-ended responses to questions about a news article; (2) to measure how framing shapes attitudes and effects behaviour; or (3) to examine indicative examples of frames. Given that the objective of this study is not to measure the impact of framing on voters in Indonesia, nor is it to quantify Western assessments of Megawati’s value to the post-Suharto period, the latter method will be adopted. It examines indicative examples drawn from 478 news reports which appeared in five Western newspapers between 1998 and 1999. It uses quantitative data and qualitative analyses to demonstrate how episodic, crises and affective frames shape social realities and privileged meanings. It also evaluates the elite orientation of frames in order to expose the arbitrary and

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subjective power of the media as an influential actor in the shaping of public knowledge and opinion.

**Theoretical understandings of framing**

Framing studies seek to examine the social, political, ideological and elite processes that shape how events and issues are reported in the news media. These studies can be indicative of the ideological views journalists and editors have about audiences, or commercial views about what will sell newspapers. They can reflect power relations in terms of who has agency and who is marginalised. Alternatively, as this project does, they can examine how framing shapes social realities, often to the exclusion of other realities. In doing so, certain ‘truths’ about the social and political world are produced and maintained. Similarly, some actors, events and issues are rendered more meaningful than others.

Framing is the process of organising a news story, thematically and stylistically, to convey meaning. It this examination framing is evaluated for its function in shaping social realities and privileged meanings. As Lippman argues, the political world is by necessity a pseudo-environment, created for the most part by the mass media that gather, organise, and filter the events of the day. Framing shapes the news in ways that crystallise problems, predicts effects, makes moral judgments, and suggests likely outcomes. It is most effective when it favours simplicity over complexity, persons over institutional process, emotion over facts, and game over substance. Framing is scrutinised in this project in two ways: as “frame reasoning” which defines, evaluates and posits remedies in ways that shape social realities, and as “frame devices.” Frame devices, sometimes referred to as “packaging,” are the keywords, catchphrases, metaphors, similes, and dramatic characterisations used to “linguistically and actively produce” meanings.

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devices are considered a key element in “bolstering particular interpretation.”

Frame reasoning

Frame reasoning relies on reinforcement and salience to ensure that audience interpretations are consistent with the meaning embedded in the frame. Once a frame defines, evaluates and posits a remedy, it requires constant reinforcement. It is constant reinforcement which arguably shapes audience understandings, organises experiences, orientates interpretations and suggests specific ways of comprehending actors, issues and nations. Repetition ensures frames actively and meaningfully structure how audiences see the social and political world. It also functions to stimulate the latent meaning embedded within the broader news discourse. As meta-communication the method “gives the receiver instructions or aids” so as to “understand the message included within the frame.”

Framing is also used to select some aspects of reality and make them more salient in the communicating text. Salience is this process of inclusion and exclusion, of emphasising or de-emphasising. It makes the identification of frames a practical mechanism for establishing meanings. Salience, in the case of emphasis, can ensure the frame is more memorable and hence meaningful to audiences. In Gitlin’s view, framing (as salience) acts as a “mobile spotlight,” distracting public attention from some aspects of reality. This means some aspects of an event or issue are excluded from news reports, some aspects are highlighted, and/or some aspects are included but trivialised. Salience generally

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functions to reinforce the actor who is morally judged as the solution. One example of salience was the manner in which Megawati’s announcement to challenge Suharto for the presidency in January 1998 was highlighted, while a similar claim made by Rais was trivialised. This was because the dominant frame was one privileging Megawati, not Rais, as the solution to the political problems facing Indonesia. Salience is problematic for audiences because it “limits the information available to audiences who are trying to make sense of an event they cannot experience.” In Cobb’s assessment, salience presents one reality within which meaning is “manipulated.”

However as Van Gorp reminds us, an important assumption of framing theory is that whenever a reasoning device is not explicitly stated in a news text, it will nevertheless be “evoked by the frame message during the interpretation process of the reader.” A typical characteristic of framing is the linkage between the journalist’s approach to shaping the news frame with latent meaning and stimulating the public to accept the frame, ensuring viewing reality from the same perspective as the journalist does. Framing analysis seeks to expose this linkage. While the intention of the frame may be, as Bird and Dardenne claim “to create order out of disorder” by suggesting the “answers to baffling questions,” this has significant consequences for the public sphere.

This project demonstrates that the New Order was framed as responsible for the conditions facing Indonesia in 1998 and 1999. Megawati was subsequently framed as the remedy to those conditions. This is an example of frame reasoning. However operating in conjunction with the dominant frame was a set of other frames that functioned to reinforce the dominant meaning. For example, in highlighting the poor treatment Megawati received at the hands of the New Order

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(either the treatment of her father or her removal from the leadership of the PDI in 1996), a victim frame was evident. Its purpose was to reinforce the broader discourse of the need to remove the New Order from power, ostensibly to promote further liberalisation and democratisation. Frame reasoning, when conceptualised with frame devices, functioned in this case to suggest the ‘truth’ of the New Order’s culpability and to posit the need for a Megawati-led government.

**Frame devices**

Frame devices (catchphrases, metaphors, similes, and dramatic characterisations) linguistically and actively produce meanings. Frame devices are not benign, but rather construct perceptions by clustering ideas and images into modes defining a particular topic, social activity or institutional site in society. Language, as represented by choices as to what words and phrases are used to suggest meaning, functions within frames as systems of communication, informed actively or subconsciously by the values and beliefs of the framers. Language choice plays a “significant role in shaping human subjectivities and social reality.” This is because language choices construct and maintain meaning and drive public perception by naming what is true and what is false.

The use of ‘crisis’ in relation to Indonesian politics is a good example of how linguistic choices function to shape realities. Language determines what can be said, who can speak, when, and with what authority, as later discussions of the elite orientation of frames demonstrates. To clarify, meaning does not arise from language alone, but from the manner in which language is used within the conventions of frame devices. As Gan et al suggest “Every word represents a choice, which in turn affects how readers perceive the story.”

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Frames induce meanings by embedding the news with social and cultural narratives which can then resonate with audiences. This is reflective of Entman’s claims that framing is most effective when embedded with narratives grounded in “common cultural values.” Even for an event or actor to be newsworthy, it needs to be anchored in meanings that exist in the public domain of experience. Van Gorp posits that building communication efforts around a concept without a commonly shared cultural root is unlikely to produce an effective frame. This cultural-specific perspective suggests that the shared nature of culturally familiar frames means they “often are unnoticed and implicit” and as such, “the impact is by stealth.”

This occurs when frames are structured so that audiences interpret the narrative in ways that suggest a common sense understanding of the nation, actor or issue being framed. It is the inclusion of “core values” which can ensure the framing is successful. This is because it is assumed that audiences already endorse the values framed within the story. This propensity is noted in how democratic reform was positioned in news discourses as the solution to the dysfunctional Indonesian electoral and political system. More so, it is explanatory of the narratives used to posit Megawati as a democratic reformer. That is, democracy was inherently assumed as a value attribute to Western audiences.

Frames embedded with cultural and social values are considered more likely to resonate with audiences, thus ensuring a greater likelihood that they will be responsive. One of the most effective ways this is achieved is by framing news accounts of nations, actors or issues within timeless, yet valued, themes, or as archetypes. As rituals of communication this is evident in how framing shaped Suharto as authoritarian, while juxtaposed that within frames that shaped Megawati as a democrat, or as framing Suharto as the villain and Megawati as the victim. Devices in this case rely on framing accounts within culturally specific

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values, themselves grounded in the moral values assumed to be held by society.\textsuperscript{42} While different cultures have different values and different motifs to express those values, Cunningham argues that the rituals of storytelling (timeless themes and archetypes) remain a constant.\textsuperscript{43}

The use of myth functions in a similar way to culturally resonating devices. Most noted in framing of crime, terrorism and violence, myth functions to reinforce moral and political norms.\textsuperscript{44} Metaphor also functions as an aspect of frame devices. In the case of metaphor, it allows the audience to imagine the unimaginable, communicating the unknown by transposing it into terms of the known. It provides reassuring familiarity, but also explains situations by rendering the unfamiliar familiar. Framers arguably have the authority and ability to place people, especially political leaders, into pre-existing metaphorical categories such as “father” and “mother,” “hero” and “villain,” “good” and “bad.” As such, the news frame is embedded with the power of “mythological truth.”\textsuperscript{45}

An examination of frame devices in this project posits that privileged meanings were attached to Megawati in the way she (and her personal and political story) was packaged. Language choices, such as the use of the terms “princess” and “mother,” functioned to convey particular meanings about Megawati. This in turn functioned to shape understandings about her character and motivations in ways which negated alternative explanations of her leadership as revenge (for Suharto’s treatment of her father between 1966 and 1970) or as retribution (for her removal from the PDI Chair in 1996). Moreover, packaging (in the form of catchphrases, dramatic characterisations, myth and metaphor) functioned to shape understandings about Megawati by relying on juxtapositioning and binaries. That is, frame devices functioned to shape meanings about Megawati by positioning her in relation to other actors. One example of this was how Megawati as a pro-democracy leader was juxtaposed with the Suharto acolyte Habibie. In this

\textsuperscript{42} Bird and Dardenne, “Myth, Chronicle and Story,” p. 73.
\textsuperscript{45} Bird and Dardenne, “Myth, Chronicle and Story,” p. 80.
instance, meanings about both leaders were shaped by their oppositional binary.

Frame devices such as these arguably shape news reports in ways that are detrimental to the public sphere. Embedded with myth and metaphor, for example, Knight and Dean argue that the news is not “information but deformation.”46 Similarly, Cawelti argues that frame devices “invite and encourage audiences to (re)experience the news rather than be informed by it.”47 For Schudson, frame devices are illustrative of the power of the media “not only in its power to declare things to be true,” but in its “power to provide the forms in which declarations appear.” Its influence is unearthed in the way the news is “incorporated into unquestioned and unnoticed conventions of narration” and then transfigured, “no longer a subject of discussion, but a premise of any conversation at all.”48

For Cunningham, frame devices expose the discursive nature of the news media.49 Moreover, the issues that receive the greatest media attention are often those which are most easily dramatised or narratised with frame devices. This is problematic because dramatised storytelling, especially as episodic accounts, downplays complex policy information and weakens understandings about the workings of, and responsibilities of, governments and major social institutions.50 Framing, given this propensity, can be conceptualised in relation to discourse. In order to understand the relationship between framing and discourse, Stuart Hall asked the deceptively simple question “What is the news?”:

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Journalists speak of the news as if events select themselves. Further they speak as if which is the “most significant” news story, and which “news angels” are most salient, are divinely inspired. Yet of the millions of events which occur every day in the world, only a tiny proportion ever become visible as “potential news stories;” and of this proportion, only a small fraction are actually produced as the day’s news in the news media.\(^{51}\)

Whether a particular aspect of a news story is included or excluded, what filters are applied to a news story, and what language is used to narrate the story are all critical elements in the creation of a particularised order of discourse.\(^{52}\) Frames which are discursively structured function to generate and sustain a “politically legitimated reality” or a “politics of illusion,” meaning ‘truths’ are artfully assembled.\(^{53}\) Given that frames generally reflect the ideological values of the “meaning-makers” and are themselves reflective of the sphere within which they are produced, \(^{54}\) Shoemaker and Reese suggest that “Media support for the status quo is embedded in the processes of news production and often occurs without the conscious awareness of the individuals who produce the messages.”\(^{55}\) In Hall’s assessment of framing, it functions to “render intelligible the way society works.”\(^{56}\)


Frames: receivers, producers and the production of social realities

Consistent in literature regarding framing is a view that the news frames (as both frame reasoning and frame devices) affect public opinion.\textsuperscript{57} There are however three broadly divergent views about the nature of the effects. The first school of thought generally suggests audiences are not passive but active in their interpretation of frames. Perloff, for example, suggests that while the linkage between framing and public opinion are complex, it is mediated by the audiences pre-existing political sentiments, political sophistication, and the nature of the issue or actor under debate. In Perloff’s view, audiences are not passive victims of media framing.\textsuperscript{58} The second school of thought revolves around the cognitive nature of frames. For example, Cobb argues that frames are indeed effective in shaping public opinion because of their ability to reduce confusing issues into manageable packages of understandable information.\textsuperscript{59} The third school of thought suggests that it is the types of frames used which prove significant in how the frame affects public opinion.

One view offered by Hale argues that “affective framing,” that is a frame which induces an emotional reaction, overtly influences audiences’ emotional perceptions of, and connection to, nations, actors and issues. For example, “affective framing” may characterise a political candidate in ways that suggest his or her inspirational qualities, or which may demonise their character.\textsuperscript{60} Whether it is cognition or affect that play the greater role in influencing public opinion, research suggests that both are important. These views however are balanced with reminders of audience agency. Framing as the “process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections” to “promote a particular interpretation,”\textsuperscript{61} according Groshek, affords a certain level of control and agency to the journalist, but also to the


\textsuperscript{59} Cobb, “Framing Effects,” p. 224.


\textsuperscript{61} Entman, “Framing Bias,” p. 164.
audience whom interpret the story.  

Frames emerge because framers feel a need to render events, issues, actors and nations in ways that make them coherent to audiences. Without frames, occurrences may appear abstract and meaningless. In shaping accounts of the news, frame reasoning and frame devices ensure that only a particular version of the occurrence enters the public consciousness. Framing takes raw news and places it in a unifying context, which then translates and renders it in ways to make it coherent. The result is the production of a social reality. Occurrences that threaten to weaken or destabilise the social reality are either trivialised or excluded. The social reality is actively maintained, only shifting when an overwhelming amount of discrepant information forces the frame to change.

The development and maintenance of social reality evidenced in news discourses is not a value free process. Frame producers make value judgments when framing accounts of events, nations or actors. In some cases frames may be mediated by national interests. That is, how a nation is framed may reflect the historical and political relationship between the reporting nation and the reported nation. For example, how the American media frame new accounts regarding Iran or Iraq would vary from how the American media would frame news about Australia or Canada. In other cases, framing is mediated by newsroom practices, factors such as time constraints. Other mediating factors may be the values, ideology or economic considerations of the news outlet. Interceding factors such as the type, location and timing of events may also shape decisions about salience and

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63 Koch, The News as Myth, p. 23.
64 Ryan, “Framing the War Against Terrorism,” pp. 363-364.
67 Ryan, “Framing the War Against Terrorism,” p. 364.
hence shape the frame. In even other cases, frames reflect the assumptions, values and beliefs of the framers.

In summary, this review of frame reasoning and frame devices has provided a broad overview of what framing is, how it structures meaning, what aspects it relies on to shape realities and how it functions to shape “truths” about social realities. From national issues to international affairs, framing has been used extensively by scholars in journalism, communication, sociology, cultural studies, international relations and political science. Given its extensive use in diverse fields, the following review of some recent framing studies will focus on the news media’s coverage of the 1990 and 2003 Gulf Wars. Media coverage of these conflicts provides indicative examples of the theoretical and methodological approaches used by scholars in the field of framing analysis. The commonality of these studies is that, in varying ways, each examined the issues to posit how framing functions to shape social realities and to privilege meanings about some nations, actors and issues over others.

Review of framing studies: foreign news and social realities

Framing analysis of how the American news media framed the Gulf Wars is extensive. Of interest to some scholars has been the link between how events, issues, actors and nations were framed in the news in ways that posited a reality about what America’s foreign policy response should be. Frame analysis has also been used to examine the American entertainment industry’s shaping of public meanings about the conflicts. More specifically, Kanjirathinkal and Hickey used a framing analysis to examine how the American media used frames of “mythical drama” and “hero’s journey” themes to evoke an emotional response in audiences that functioned to generate support for American action in Iraq.

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Fried examined how the American news media juxtaposed the Middle East and, specifically, Iraq with narratives of terrorism. This study sought to test Entman’s claim that frames can “generate support or opposition to political actors or policies.” Framing studies have also explored how embedded journalists during the 2003 Gulf War structured frames of meaning and information. More so, the method has been used to demonstrate that embedded journalists more positively framed the American military complex than non-embedded reports.

Framing studies of the 1990 and 2003 conflicts have not been limited to the American press. Alozie, for example, examined the frames used in African media outlets, finding that the 2003 American “invasion” of Iraq was framed as having a negative impact on Africa. Similarly, Cioppa examined framing used in the Iraqi and Pan-Arab media to examine issues such as Iraqi perceptions, the prevalence of disinformation and the effect of embedded reporters. In order to investigate the influence of Western framing practices on non-American news outlets, Sainath examined how the Indian media struggle to resist the American narratives in reporting the first Gulf War to an essentially anti-war domestic population. Nain examined Malaysia’s press coverage of the same event and found that frames discursively reproduced ‘official’ positions on the war. Indeed, there was an absence of criticism of the Malaysian or American governments.

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Research by Gamson and Wolsfield sought to identify the types of frames used in reporting war. Gamson found four different frames were used in reporting Arab-Israeli conflicts: national/strategic interest frames, feuding neighbour frames, Arab intransigence frames and frames of Israeli expansionism.\(^8^1\) Wolsfield found the news media framed war as “drama” and argued that as a result, salience was evident. This was evident in relation to the amount of airtime accorded to broadcasters who best narrated the drama of the conflict.\(^8^2\) Most framing analyses of Middle East conflicts have tended to focus on how one media market shaped social realities and privileged meanings, or to expose the types of frames employed by the news media.

A smaller group of scholars have examined cross-national framing practices in relation to the conflicts. In their 2008 study, Dimitrova and Strömbäck examined news framing in both Swedish and American newspapers. They found that while similar culturally resonating frame archetypes were evident, frames upholding each nation’s foreign policy objectives were also evident.\(^8^3\) In a novel approach, Ting Lee et al engaged in a comparative framing analysis of ‘conflict’ in Iraq with ‘conflict’ in Asia in eight Asian and sub-continent newspapers. One aspect of the study examined how the selected media outlets framed the War in Iraq in comparison to the civil wars occurring in the Indonesian provinces of the Aceh and Maluku.\(^8^4\)

Peng also sought to investigate cross-national framing practices by examining newspaper framing of anti-war protests in three countries (America, Britain, and China) during 2002 and 2003. What they found were significant differences in frame archetypes. However, the larger issue they noted was the complexity of conducting a transnational media study due to linguistic issues, as well as theoretically attempting to assess data that was incomparable.\(^8^5\)

\(^8^4\) Ting Lee et al, “Asian Conflicts,” p. 502.
\(^8^5\) Peng, “Framing the Anti-War Protests,” p. 361 and p. 375.
that crystallised problems, predicted effects, made moral judgments, and suggested likely outcomes. In essence, each was positing the contribution of frames to the production of social realities, for the most part focused on accountability, blame and remedy frames.

What is evident in accounts of framing that posit social realities in relation to Middle East conflicts, is a secondary discussion of how foreign news is selected for inclusion. Foreign news reporting generally has been a reasonably well established field of investigation. For example, Tunstall, Chomsky and Herman, McChesney and Bagdikian have variously contended that the inclusion of foreign news, particularly in the American media, is premised on it being an adjunct to American foreign policy. Within this tradition Sussman has contended that the “American mass media have long been handmaidens of U.S. foreign policy.”

Other studies have sought to understand the role of gatekeeping in determining what foreign news is selected. The Glasgow University Media Group’s 1985 study of the Falklands War found that inclusion/exclusion decisions were shaped by journalists deciding what information was in the national interest. For other researchers, decisions regarding what foreign news was included rested upon the type of event, i.e. war, terrorism, political assassination; the location of the event, specifically, considerations of the relationship between the event-occurring nation and the reporting nation; and the event context, particularly the timing of the event and its local and international context. Other factors impacting what foreign news was included and how it was framed have been examined in relation to the reality that, in most cases, it is a relatively small number of journalists who determine what is included and precisely how it is framed.

In relation to how foreign elections and candidates are framed, research has tended to focus on journalistic practices, finding that foreign elections/candidates are generally framed using the same politico-cultural narratives used to report domestic elections.\textsuperscript{91} For example, Chekol Reta examined frames used in the \textit{Washington Post} and \textit{New York Times’} coverage of the 1994 South African election and found coverage was “reflective of American journalist values of ethnocentrism and social order,” leading the author to conclude that the American media framed the actors and issues based on “American democratic values.”\textsuperscript{92}

When lacking direct knowledge of foreign affairs, media framing is particularly persuasive when audiences “do not have crystallized attitudes.”\textsuperscript{93} Noakes and Wilkins took this argument as the basis for their examination of U.S. reporting of Palestinian issues. Using a frame analysis, they argued that the American news media played a “central role” in how Americans understood and interpreted Palestinian injustice claims. The authors claimed media framing was most effective because the “vast majority of U.S. citizens have only limited resources for interpreting events,” and few had any “first-hand experience” of the Palestinian situation.\textsuperscript{94}

Studies have found that the way in which a foreign nation is framed in the news media directly influences public opinion.\textsuperscript{95} Specifically, research conducted by the Pew Research Centre for the People and the Press found that the way the American press cover foreign news functions to confirm American-centric views of the world. In their analysis of 7,000 foreign news stories, the Pew Centre concluded that the “U.S. media carry few international articles that would

\textsuperscript{91} Barber, “Democracy at Risk,” pp. 29-41.
\textsuperscript{93} Auerbach and Bloch-Elkon, “Media Framing and Foreign Policy,” p. 83.
\textsuperscript{94} Noakes and Wilkins, “Shifting frames of the Palestinian movement,” pp. 649-671.
broaden and educate Americans about the world.”

Nations, according to Anderson, are “imagined communities.” The news media arguably plays a key role in enabling such imaging to take place. Indeed, Mercer has suggested that newspapers are the “diaries of a nation.” They perform the task of registering, forming and tabulating the texture of daily life in ephemeral ways that have enormous significance in cultural and political histories of nationhood. Schlesinger argues that nations, and their collective identities, are themselves the narrations of the news media. As Said claims, the news media have the ability to influence how these narrations are presented to audiences. How the news media frame their own nationhood and the associated notions of citizenship and identity, as well as how the international media frame other nations has the potential for impact well beyond the domestic sphere.

**Framing Indonesian politics: literature review**

No studies have been published which examine media framing (in either the Indonesian or international media) of Megawati. Research has been conducted however on how Suharto was framed in the news media. Jakubowicz and Palmer examined how the Australian print media used “narratives of crises” to explore the impact of Suharto’s resignation on Australian national interests. Focusing on the weeks from March 1998 to May 1998, this framing study concluded that the Australian media placed considerable emphasis on the need for regime change. Its examination revealed that Australian news reporting was dominated

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101 Some researchers have however investigated how Megawati herself used the media. See for example W. Atkins, _The Politics of Southeast Asia’s New Media_, (London: Routledge, 2002) and E. Aspinall, _Opposing Suharto: Compromise, Resistance, and Regime Change in Indonesia_, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

by the interpretations of a small number of Australian journalists who relied heavily on briefings from Australian foreign affairs officials, Australian academics and sources inside the Indonesian government.  

D’Haenens and Verelst examined media representations of both Suharto and the New Order in the Dutch media between May 1998 and April 2000. Using a frame analysis in tandem with in-depth interviews with “media makers,” they demonstrated that Suharto and his regime was recurrently framed as being in conflict, hounded by economic crises, lacking morality and unwilling to accept any political responsibility. The study concluded that the Dutch media overly relied on common sense assumptions (drawn from their position as a former colonial ruler) and emotional rhetoric to conceptualise the decline of Suharto.

Not specifically focused on any political leader, Voionmaa used a framing analysis to unearth the political discourses evident in The Jakarta Post’s coverage of the 1997 general election and the 1999 presidential elections. While not a framing analysis, Gazali examined radio and newspaper reports in four Indonesian cities in early 1998 and conducted interviews with editors, finding that the Indonesian press was under “omnipresent political control” from local and national officials that affected content and limited journalistic freedom. In complementary research, Mazella explored the techniques used by Indonesian

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103 Specifically these journalists were Louise Williams (The Age); Patrick Walters, Greg Sheridan, and Paul Kelly (The Australian); David Jenkins and Hamish McDonald (The Sydney Morning Herald) and Michael Maher and Peter Mares (Australian Broadcasting Corporation).
journalists to navigate Indonesian press regulations, while reporting the political crises occurring in Jakarta between 1998 and 1999. Mazella argues that reporters and editors used “strategies that were uniquely Indonesian to maintain a journalistic frame that was essentially Western.” Mazella found “that the contradictions and resultant conflicts between the government and newspeople in Jakarta represented a contest between Western and Indonesian notions of the purposes and duties of the press.”

Moving away from critiques of the mainstream media, Hidayat examined how technology contributed to undermine the legitimacy of the New Order; specifically, the use of communication technologies by activists and journalists. Similar explorations of technology (particularly the internet) were examined by Winters. O’Neil examined links between mass communication and democratisation efforts, while Menayangm, Nugroho and Listiorini examined the role of Indonesia’s underground press in the downfall of Suharto.

In relation to Megawati, most Western research is confined to assessments of her political career, both before and after Suharto. On the Megawati presidency, Soesastro, Smith and Mui Ling have compiled the substantive collection of work in the 2003 text, Governance in Indonesia: Challenges Facing the Megawati Presidency. Biographically, the most in-depth critiques about Megawati have

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come from Australian academic Angus MacIntyre, particularly his influential article “Megawati Sukarnoputri: From President’s Daughter to Vice-President,” published in 2000, and his 1997 working paper “In Search of Megawati Sukarnoputri.”113 Stefan Eklof’s text Power and Political Culture in Suharto’s Indonesia: The Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) and Decline of the New Order (1986-1998) provided some unique insights into the involvement of the Sukarno children in the PDI.114 Hughes-Freeland published a perceptive account of Megawati’s status as a “political celebrity.”115 As already stated, no research has been conducted on how the Western media framed Megawati. This research therefore fills this void.

**Case study methodology**

In order to explore how framing shapes social realities and privileges meanings, the primary case study examined 478 inductively selected news reports about Megawati that appeared in The Age and The Australian (Australia), The New York Times (America), and The Independent and The Times (Britain) between 1 January 1998 and 31 December 1999. As discussed, this period was one of significant transformation in Indonesian politics, covering the period leading up to the resignation of President Suharto after three decades in power, the transition to the Habibie administration and his announcement of political reforms, and the holding of the June 1999 general election and the October 1999 presidential elections. A secondary study examined 626 news reports (taken from the same publications) of the aftermath of the East Timor Independence ballot in September 1999.

A three-stage process was adopted in relation to the primary case study. Firstly, inductive methods were used to select the 478 news articles examined for this study. Secondly, the articles were sorted and coded into five categories: frequency, context, journalist, source and key words. This produced sets of

114 S. Eklof, Power and Political Culture in Suharto’s Indonesia: The Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) and Decline of the New Order (1986-1998), (Copenhagen, NIAS, 2003).
quantitative data that indicated initial trends into media behaviour. Thirdly, these five sets of data were used to develop frame schemas considered insightful in fulfilling the aim of examining the links between framing, social realities, meaning and public knowledge.

This resulted in the development of the frame schema that formed the basis of the analytical chapters: episodic and thematic frames (Chapter Three), crisis and affective frames (Chapter Four), and the elite orientation of frames, including issue, strategy, value and material frames (Chapter Five). The combined methods of quantitative and qualitative analysis sought to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings.  

**Method: newspaper selection**

The newspapers were selected for content, structure and production values. Each paper was judged as having consistent levels of foreign news coverage, complemented by a foreign news desk and supplemented by news wire services; each has editorial and ‘op-ed’ (‘opposite-the-editorial page’) content, denoting multiple contributors; each newspaper represented a press organisation which has adopted professional press standards; and each was assessed as being influential in setting the daily news agenda. As large metropolitan dailies, each was determined as more likely to maintain consistent levels of reporting in content and reflective of industry practices, hence was useful in interrogating both aspects of news production.

The Age (Melbourne, Victoria) was first published in 1854. Owned by John Fairfax Holdings Limited, other holdings include the Sydney Morning Herald and the Australian Financial Review, as well as numerous regional and community newspapers. According to the newspapers website, The Age is “Victoria’s

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116 A good example of the combined use of quantitative and qualitative analysis as a method to confer or differ news framing is Papacharissi and de Fatima Oliveira, “New Frames Terrorism,” pp. 52-74.


premier broadsheet newspaper.” The paper claims it “remains committed to attracting an influential and discerning audience.”119 In 1998, Fairfax Holdings held a market share of 22 per cent of all national capital city daily newspapers and 21.5 per cent in 1999.120

The Australian is Australia’s only national broadsheet newspaper and is a News Limited publication. News Limited is Rupert Murdoch’s Australian arm of News Corporation. News Limited has other significant Australian holdings, including control of six of Australia’s ten daily capital city newspapers.121 Its market share of all national capital city dailies in 1998 was 66 per cent, and in 1999 was 67.6 per cent.122 The New York Times is owned and operated by The New York Times Company, who also own The International Herald Tribune, The Boston Globe, sixteen other U.S. regional newspapers, and eight U.S. network-affiliated television stations. The self-proclaimed goal of the publication is to provide readers with “all the news that’s fit to print.” According to Friel and Falk, The New York Times

...occupies such an exalted place in the political and moral imagination of influential Americans and others as the most authoritative source of information and guidance on issues of public policy...it has acquired its special status as the newspaper of record in the United States, a trusted media source that supposedly is dedicated to truthfulness and objectivity, regardless of political consequences...many citizens depend on this newspaper, and few others, to shape their understanding of important events, because they believe the [New York] Times publishes reliable information and presents relevant considerations that help shape an informed and enlightened approach to complex foreign-policy decisions.123

The Independent is owned by the Independent News and Media Group (INMG). INMG has significant international media holdings, including The New Zealand Herald, The Irish Independent, and The Cape Times (South Africa), and owns several Australian regional newspapers including The Gold Coast Mail and The

121 These are The Daily Telegraph (Sydney), The Herald-Sun (Melbourne), The Courier-Mail (Brisbane), The Advertiser (Adelaide), The Mercury (Hobart), and The NT Times (Darwin). News Limited also own Foxtel (pay television) and Fox Sports Australia.
122 Lewis, “Pluralism,” p. 103.
123 Friel and Falk, The Record of the Paper, pp. 2-3.
Toowoomba Chronicle. The Independent is published daily and supplemented with The Independent on Sunday. The Times is a daily broadsheet that extensively reports on domestic and international political and business news. The Times was bought by Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation in 1981. For much of its history it has been considered as the “newspaper of record” for England.  

**Method: data collection**

News articles were gathered from the Factiva database using key word searches for “Megawati” in headlines and in the main body of the article. The search was conducted in August 2003. The use of online databases is common for retrieving newspaper items. However, there are risks because not all editions of the publication are included in the database, and some articles are even excluded because of copyright issues. The initial search produced 554 news articles. Some framing studies rely on representative samples. For this case study, inclusion rested on the article being inductively deemed as a “hard news” item, having newsworthiness values, and being an interpretative news account.

“Hard news” articles were those evaluated as feature articles, opinion pieces, or editorials with substantive content regarding economic, political, cultural events and issues, and/or foreign affairs. Newsworthiness was measured as being reflective of news values such as timeliness, proximity, conflict, impact, prominence and novelty. Interpretative news accounts were included in contrast to “straight news accounts.” A “straight news account,” according to The Project for Excellence in Journalism 1997 Princeton Survey, is when a news article outlines the basic who, what, when, where, why and how, and as such contain no dominant narrative frame. Articles that did not wholly meet at least one of these criteria were rejected. “Letters to the Editor”, advertising, stock

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125 Searches for ‘Megawati Soekarnoputri’ dramatically reduced the search pool so the method was rejected as too limiting.


market reports, travel reports, entertainment and leisure stories, and sports coverage were excluded from the study.\textsuperscript{131}

News content, rather than layout, position, journalist by-lines or sources, informed how each article was evaluated. Headlines, sub-headings and photo captions were not treated differently from other elements of the text. Images, however, were excluded from the study, in part reflecting the method of access, but also reflecting an interest in how the power of language and phraseology functioned to influence meaning and knowledge. While images can also signify meaning, to examine images and language as an interacting meaning-making practice would have ground this study more in the field of semiotics. A general principle of semiotics is to study the signification first and what it is communicating second.\textsuperscript{132} As a study grounded in understanding political and emotional meaning-making, this method would prove unproductive. As a result of this inductive approach, 478 news articles were selected for inclusion in this study, as represented in the following table:

\textbf{Table 1.1: Factiva search results ‘Megawati’, all newspapers 1998 and 1999 and total number of articles included in case study}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Australian</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Age</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New York Times</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Times</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Independent</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>478</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{131} Hansen et al, \textit{Mass Communication}, p. 104. Hansen et al argue that these exclusion are reasonable when the study is attempting to measure news values and factors governing the news production, rather than just measuring output.

\textsuperscript{132} For a broader discussion, see M. Danesi, \textit{Messages and Meanings: A Basic Textbook in Semiotics and Communication Theory}, (Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press, 1994).
Having inductively selected 478 news articles as the basis of this framing study, each article was coded by five categories: frequency, context, journalist, source and key words. The methods in collection, categorisation, and coding made every effort to be consistent in its decision-making in order to maximise the probability that the process could be replicated. Classifications attempted to retain a technical objectivity and maintain qualitative indicators throughout the process.\textsuperscript{133}

\textbf{Method: frequency}

Frequency was measured on a month-by-month basis for the two-year period. Frequency was attained by counting the number of articles that appeared in each month for each newspaper. The method sought to develop a timeline, capturing periods of frequent and infrequent coverage. Frequency data sought to examine periods of high and low frequency and to assess what events and issues were being reported in each period. It sought to conceptualise links between frequency and salience and to explore if there was a relationship between high periods of frequency and episodic framing.

\textbf{Graph 1.1: Results - News article frequency, all newspapers, 1998 and 1999}

\textsuperscript{133} Hansen et al, \textit{Mass Communication}, pp. 104-105 and p. 47.
Method: context

This method sought to examine how the context of the news report functioned to shape meanings about Indonesian political developments, and how the context of the report shaped meanings about Megawati’s character, policies, or motivations. Context data proved insightful, for example, in understanding what issues were used to posit Indonesia as in crisis, as well as what issues were used to shape meanings about Megawati as a solution. Categorisation was determined by viewing the article as a whole and allocating it to one of six categories. These were stories where the overall framework was mostly or wholly about:

(1) Institutional National Politics: reports about and official statements from, the New Order, Suharto, Habibie, Golkar, the military and national elections;
(2) Party (PDI or PDI-P) Politics: official statements from Megawati and PDI/PDI-P officials and reports mostly about Megawati in relation to her leadership;
(3) Civic Politics: reports about, and official statements from other socio-political actors, political parties, political organisations, Islamic organisations, student organisations, labour organisations, etc (not including Golkar or PDI/PDI-P), including Rais and Wahid;
(4) Domestic Economy: stories mostly or wholly about the state of the Indonesian economy and its impact on Indonesians, e.g., the cost of living and unemployment;
(5) International Economy: stories mostly or wholly reporting concerns about the state of the Indonesia economy from other governments or international financial organisations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank;
(6) Human rights: including stories regarding political and civilian unrest, demonstrations, riots, treatment of dissidents and protestors, civil war, and independence claims in the provinces.
**Method: journalists**

Journalist contributions for each of the 478 articles were examined in order to establish which journalists were reporting in the examined period. It sought to establish if newspapers relied on a variety of journalists/contributors to establish how many stories were written by staff writers in Indonesia or elsewhere, if there was a reliance on freelance journalists, and if there was a prevalence to use wire stories. In conjunction with data on what sources were relied upon, this method aimed to establish if there was an “elite orientation of frames”. This is conceptualised as the relationship between, and impact of, a small number of journalists reliant on a limited number of sources that are official spokespersons of governments, international institutions, academics, etc. The following table notes the frequency of key journalist contributions (two or more articles) during 1998 and 1999. It also notes wire service contributions and contributions with no by-line. The category “other” denotes single contributions by individual journalists/commentators.
Table 1.2: Results - Frequency of contribution by journalist/s (two or more articles), all newspapers, 1998 and 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper 1998</th>
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<td>Richard Lloyd Parry</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methods: sources

In conjunction with journalist data, this case study evaluated each of the 478 articles by the use of sources. Each article counted the use of direct, attributable quotes to one of five groups. The aim was to establish if there was a propensity to rely on elite sources and to determine how this may shape or strengthen the meaning embedded in news frames. Data was derived by counting direct, attributable quotes to one of the following groups:

1. *The New Order Elite:* Suharto and Habibie, New Order ministers, official spokespersons (both government and military) and *Golkar* officials;
2. *Non-New Order Elite:* political and civilian elites who were not members of *Golkar*/the New Order but were members of other political parties or official political organisations, including Wahid, Rais, spokespersons for Megawati and the PDI/PDIP, and Indonesian political and social commentators;
3. *Vox populi:* quotes directly attributed to Indonesians, generally named as “ordinary” Indonesians;
4. *Foreign elite:* including foreign political leaders, foreign government ministers and their spokespersons, diplomats, spokespersons from the international institutions such as Amnesty, the IMF, the World Bank, foreign “experts,” and foreign academics;
5. *Megawati:* instances were Megawati herself was the source of the story denoted by a quote attributed to her.
Method: keywords

In the last of this five-stage coding process, keywords were measured by counting the frequency of keywords contained within each of the 478 articles. A list of keywords was developed that aimed to prove insightful in exposing the frame packaging used to shape meanings about Megawati, particularly those that shaped privileged meanings. Keyword data also sought to determine the use of “crises” to shape the social realities regarding the state of Indonesian politics. The keywords selected were:

1. **Sukarno/Sukarnoism**: as attached to Megawati as lineage or philosophy;
2. **Gender**: gendered terms such as “housewife,” “mother,” “queen” and “princess”;
3. **Religion**: references to Islam and female leadership and Hinduism;
4. **Democracy**: the use of the term “democracy leader” or “pro democracy” to describe Megawati;
5. **Crisis**: use of the terms crisis, panic, riots, chaos, violence, turmoil, looting, unrest, conflict, clashes, killings, coup and revolution.
Graph 1.4: Results – Keyword coding, by newspaper, 1998 and 1999

Methodology: East Timor

From the initial data, it became evident that the five newspapers appeared to rely on a small number of journalists, and that the majority of sources were Indonesian and foreign elites. In order to examine what impact this trend had on shaping the social realities about Indonesia and Megawati’s role in the post-Suharto period, a second case study was undertaken. The elite orientation of frames was examined in relation to the reporting of East Timor, the former Portuguese colony that had been under Indonesian control since 1975. This issue was one of the most reported in the selected Western media during the 1998 and 1999 period. A Factiva search revealed over 3,000 references to East Timor from 1 January 1998 to 30 December 1999. The Australian produced 1,761 articles, The Age 948 articles, The New York Times 383 articles, The Times 252 articles and The Independent 301 articles.

The issue was most reported in all five publications during September 1999, the period following the 30 August U.N. supervised referendum, and the sending of peacekeeping troops into East Timor. Given the size of the search results, a secondary search was undertaken for September 1999. This search revealed that in this month The Australian published 500 stories on East Timor, The Age 245 articles, The New York Times 139 articles, The Times 137 stories and The
Independent produced 151 stories. In order to derive a manageable database of articles to evaluate the elite orientation of sources, all articles published in September 1999 were evaluated and coded using the same inductive methods as for the primary case study. Each article was inductively assessed and included if it was a story wholly or mostly about East Timor and a “hard news” item, if it had newsworthiness value, and if it was an interpretative news accounts. This resulted in 626 articles comprising of 217 in The Australian, 127 in The Age, 85 in The New York Times, 91 in The Times and 106 in The Independent. This data, along with the initial journalist and source data, is discussed at length in Chapter Five. The following table, which contains data collected in November 2009, outlines the initial Factiva search results:

Table 1.3: Factiva search results for ‘East Timor’: all newspapers 1998 and 1999, all articles September 1999 and selected articles September 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Results: 1998-1999</th>
<th>Results: All articles September 1999</th>
<th>Results: Selected articles September 1999</th>
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<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Age</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New York Times</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Times</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Independent</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,215</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,172</strong></td>
<td><strong>626</strong></td>
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</table>

In both the primary and secondary study, quantitative data provided insight into media behaviour and trends and proved informative in establishing the frame schema used to fulfil the aims and objectives of this study. An analysis of the results and its value in understanding how framing shaped social realities and privileged meanings is discussed at length in the following analytical chapters.
Strengths and limits of media/framing analysis

There are several considerations that need to be acknowledged when engaging in any form of media-framing analysis. Firstly, this project is aware that the media is not a homogenous whole that acts in consistent uniformity. Dahlgren and Sparks caution that while we “cannot ignore the dominance of the mainstream media, we should be careful not to exaggerate unnecessarily their homogeneity or monolithic character.” Secondly, it acknowledges that audiences shaped by sociological, economic, political and geographic differences determine their “reading” of any text, including the news, will produce different meaning. As Newman et al argue, audiences “pay attention to whatever catches their interest and actively ignore, reorganise, and interpret the news.” Furthermore, it remains that audiences themselves are often constructions, as Ang suggests:

The ‘audience’ no longer simply represents an ‘object of study,’ a reality ‘out there’ constitutive and reserved for the discipline which claims ownership of it, but has to be defined first as and foremost as a discursive trope signifying the constantly shifting and radically heterogeneous ways in which meaning is constructed and contested in multiple everyday contexts of media use and consumption.

Thirdly, language, words, and even concepts have multiple meanings. That is, “signs” (words, phrases) are polysemic. The study of signs is more often associated with linguistics, yet it proves a valuable reminder that when examining news frames, as with other forms of communication, there will always be more than one possible meaning or interpretation.

While acknowledging that the media is not monolithic, that audiences can actively interpret the news, and that language/texts have multiple meaning, extensive analysis of the selected news frames used in this study does suggest that the news media did actively package meaning about Megawati. Arguably, such practices influenced how meaning/knowledge was developed and sustained. While the primary objective is to demonstrate that if the news media can

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135 Neuman et al, *Common Knowledge*, p. 3.
discursively frame Megawati, then it is possible for any political actor to be framed accordingly, it should further be acknowledged that foreign audiences may have been more susceptible to media frames, given their lack of political knowledge about Megawati. Yet, it remains reasonable to suggest that the news media’s use of framing to influence meaning/knowledge remains a constant and, as such, the public remains exposed to what must be seen as contestable versions of reality.

In terms of methodological issues, it further recognises that framing analysis is not without problems. As Goffman, one of the earliest proponents of framing analysis attested, framing analysis can be problematic because, as a textual analysis, it fails to capture the socio-political processes inherent in framing practices. However, Entman argues that the socio-political processes inherent in media framing can be captured if systematic rigor is applied to the data being examined. At the core of Entman’s defence of framing analysis is a theoretical argument that media power can be exposed when systematic analysis demonstrates that news outlets consistently favour “certain policy outcomes and political actors,” in its content and across periods of time. The socio-political process is captured when evidence demonstrates that there are patterns of “slant” that “regularly prime audiences consciously or unconsciously.” “Slant,” for Entman, characterises individual news reports and editorials in which the “framing favours one side over the other in a current or potential dispute.”

Tankard offers a methodological response to the problem of capturing the socio-political nature of framing. Tankard argues that methodological accuracy is required to ensure that the framing study is not merely descriptive or is simply a critique of media presentations. By being descriptive, Tankard suggests, studies may lack theoretical rigour and contribute little to the methodological development of framing analysis. For a framing analysis to be effective, Tankard argues that it remains critical that: the reliability of measurement can be determined; the researcher achieves an acceptable level of reliability by removing

137 Goffman, Frame Analysis, p. 236.
138 Entman, “Framing Bias,” pp. 165-166.
their subjectivity; the results of the study can be replicated and the research frames tests the theory being adopted.¹⁴⁰

This study remains mindful of these observations and makes every effort to ensure that the analysis is systematic, rigorous, reliable, objective, replicable, and tests the theory.¹⁴¹ Even within these demands, framing analysis as the primary method of investigation is considered a reliable multi-dimensional approach to explore the influence of the news media. More so, as Reese notes, the value of framing analysis is that it provides a great deal of contextual information which would be lost in other reductionist approaches that focus on sorting media texts by size and frequency alone.¹⁴²

For these reasons, framing analysis has been selected over critical discourse analysis (CDA), even though it is clear that framing is inherently linked to ideology and discourse. Given the longitudinal nature of this study, framing rather than CDA is adopted because CDA is considered a more effective method for examining small data samples. There are exceptions of course, such as the CDA studies conducted by Krishnamurthy and Page.¹⁴³ Yet, as Hakam argues, it has been difficult to perform qualitative CDA on a scale large enough to draw statistically significant conclusions.¹⁴⁴ Rather, according to Stubbs, “patterns of language use that are not directly observable, but may be intuitively discernible, need to be described systematically, which requires searching large amounts of text.”¹⁴⁵ Given the cross-national nature of this study and the length of the period

examined, framing analysis is considered the most appropriate method to illuminate the aims and objectives of this thesis. As Dahlgren and Sparks attest, it is important that we be “attentive to the sense making processes in daily life, especially in relation to media culture.”

One final note of caution is needed. The data sources examined in this study represent a snapshot of the phenomenon under examination at a particular point in time, hence care needs to be exercised when extrapolating findings from this study to other media genres, other issues, actors and nations, and other time-periods. The material presented in this study should be viewed as indicative examples of news media framing practices linked to particular markets, evidenced in one period of time, and in relation to one political candidate. As acknowledged by Tiffen, any qualitative analysis is open to challenge on the basis that it is not representative of the wider universe of all stories on a particular subject. This limitation is acknowledged. However, it is noted that the current study could be used as the basis for further quantitative studies in this field.

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CHAPTER TWO

NEW ORDER INDONESIA: AN OVERVIEW

Indonesia has had a rich but tumultuous history. Its two longest serving leaders, President Sukarno and President Suharto, significantly shaped the political, economic and social development of modern Indonesia. Both men sought to mould the Indonesian state into an image of a Javanese-derived kingdom, for the most part to supplicate their own power. While this overview is of the state of Indonesian politics under Suharto’s New Order, this chapter points to the role of Sukarnoism in the modern era. This approach is insightful given this project’s focus on Sukarno’s daughter, Megawati. While this thesis is an evaluation of how meanings about Megawati’s character, values and motivations for seeking the Presidency of Indonesia in 1999 were framed in the Western news media during 1998 and 1999, it recognises that politics does not occur in a vacuum. Other actors, such as Suharto, Habibie, Wahid and Rais, as well as issues such as the Asian financial crisis, violent mass protests and national elections provided frameworks to shape public knowledge and opinion about Indonesian politics. This chapter provides a background within which the media reports examined in this thesis can be contextualised.

This chapter begins with an overview of the Indonesian political system under Suharto and his exploitation of the state ideology, Pancasila to order and regulate all aspects of Indonesian political and social life. It particularly examines the development of, and reasons for, the introduction of Pancasila Demokrasi. In this analysis, the role of the New Order’s electoral machine, Golkar and the nexus between the New Order and the Indonesian military is examined. Specifically, it outlines the ‘dual function’ of the military and its role in Indonesian electoral politics. Following this is a summary of the role of the PDI during the New Order period and its position as the historical holders of the memory of Sukarno. It is in this context that Megawati’s involvement with the PDI is outlined. Two key periods are examined, her role in the PDI from 1987 until her elevation to the Chair of the PDI in 1993, and her role in the period following the Medan Congress, which saw her removed from the leadership of the Party and banned
from participating in the 1997 general election. Particular emphasis is given to the New Order’s reaction to Megawati, ostensibly because she was Sukarno’s daughter, rather than as a reflection of her power to overthrow the regime.

While there were several reasons for Suharto’s resignation in May 1998, this chapter examines the economic and political crises caused by the impact of the Asian financial crisis (1997-1998). It argues that this event weakened Suharto’s authority within the Executive and confirmed Suharto’s corruption and cronyism to broad sections of Indonesian society. The impact of the shootings of students at Trisakti University in May 1998 is evaluated as an indicative example of the violence experienced during this period and, in particular, to highlight the political machinations that were occurring within the regime.

The period of the Habibie Government (1998-1999) is also assessed, with particular reference to his electoral reforms, his refusal to acknowledge Megawati as the rightful Chair of the PDI, and his policy shift on East Timorese independence. The events surrounding the June 1999 general election and the October 1999 presidential and vice presidential elections complete this overview. While an overview of the key actors and events surrounding the elections, it does argue that Megawati having been well positioned to assume the presidency, failed to consolidate political alliances, meaning she was routed by a combination of Islamic forces reluctant to nominate a women president. Moreover, it asserts that Megawati’s election to the Vice Presidency was driven by a need to contain socio-political violence occurring on the streets, rather than a reflection of her political acumen. Following this chapter is the first of three analytical chapters examining media framing of Megawati during 1998 and 1999.

The Indonesian political system and Pancasila under the New Order

The Republic of Indonesia is governed by the 1945 Constitution. However, prior to the constitutional amendments of the Habibie Government (1998-1999) it provided limited separation of executive, legislative and judicial power.¹ At the

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¹ The 1945 constitution was replaced in 1949 when sovereignty was formally ceded from the Dutch. In 1959, the original constitution was reinstated as part of President Sukarno’s ‘Guided Democracy’.
At the federal level, there are two legislative chambers, the People’s Representative Council (DPR) and the People’s Consultative Assembly (MPR). Under the New Order (1966-1998), the MPR was required to meet every five years, during the year following the DPR elections. In 1985, the MPR consisted of 1,000 seats, 500 of which were held by members of the DPR. A further 100 seats were reserved for direct presidential appointments, including members of the Indonesian military. After 1992, provincial-level legislative assemblies elected 147 members. The remaining 353 seats were assigned on a proportional basis to political parties, depending on their membership in the DPR. During the Suharto period, full executive authority was vested in the President. While the existence of two chambers may suggest devolution of power, the structure of the 1945 Constitution and presidential appointments led to the national parliament being “easily manipulated by an authoritarian leader.” Suharto’s control of the DPR meant that, in effect, the MPR was “beholden to the President.”

Law 5/1974, enacted three decades after the proclamation of independence by Nationalist leaders Sukarno and Hatta, established the legal basis for a system of regional/local government and emphasised the mobilisation of the regions in an effort of national development. The law embodied three principles for the distribution of governmental functions: decentralisation of responsibilities to ‘autonomous’ provincial and local governments; de-concentration of activities to regional offices of central ministries at the provincial and local level; and co-administration, whereby provincial and local governments carry out activities on behalf of the central government. The essence of the law was designed to rein in local autonomy by emphasising obligations to the central government over regional rights. The law governed both the administrative structure of the central government and the gradual spread of regional autonomy without intending to provide every province with autonomous governments. Regional autonomy was an almost incidental detail. Law 5/1974 was ostensibly intended to promote national stability through the promotion of an authoritarian structure extending from Jakarta to the village level. Shaping the centralised state was Pancasila.

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First articulated by Sukarno in 1945, Pancasila laid the spiritual and ideological foundation for the emerging Republic. It intended to define the values for an ‘Indonesian’ political culture and national character. The five tenets of Pancasila are: belief in the one and only God; just and civilized humanity; the unity of Indonesia; democracy guided by consensus arising out of deliberations amongst representatives; and social justice for the whole of the people of Indonesia. Normatively expressed as having the qualities of “natural law” drawn from the “soil of the motherland,” it was incorporated into the preamble of the 1945 Constitution. Sukarno argued the universality of the principles served as an “idea that is greater than the nation.” It provided a collectivising ideology at a time when the nation was facing an uncertain future.

While Sukarno envisaged Pancasila as a doctrine of mass participation and national unification, Suharto adopted a narrower interpretation. Suharto claimed Sukarno’s version of Pancasila had corrupted Indonesian social and political life and needed to return to its “original spirit” as a doctrine of national consensus and conformity. Under Suharto, Pancasila became a tool for cultural appropriation and political and economic regulation, requiring a strong interventionist government to defend both ideology and the state from social and political threats. In order to defend Pancasila the New Order set about shaping the politico-electoral function of the state by re-framing the core themes of Pancasila. The successful reinterpretation meant Pancasila became the key tool to involve the regime in all aspects of Indonesian social and political life. The re-ordering of Pancasila affected Indonesian political culture for decades.

7 Weatherbee, Ideology in Indonesia, p. 25.
On assuming power, Suharto proclaimed Indonesia as a religious state although he asserted no one particular religion. Economic development became the hallmark of a just and civilised society. National unity meant regional and ethnic disputes and demands for independence were denied. Democracy would only function within the Javanese-derived values of consultation and consensus, reshaped by the New Order as *Pancasila Demokrasi*. Social justice would be achieved via economic and social redistribution. In order to integrate the New Order’s version of *Pancasila* into civil society, the regime employed three strategies: it insisted on strict ideological conformity; it placed society under tight socio-political control by limiting political participation; and it sought to bring about successful economic development. Under the New Order *Pancasila* became a tool of cultural-social discipline, electoral regulation and economic patronage. The socio-political obligations of *Pancasila* were enforced through a combination of consensus and coercion, though more so the latter.

**Pancasila Demokrasi**

The New Order declared *Pancasila* the sole ideology of all citizens. It argued that once indoctrinated with *Pancasila*, Indonesians would be able to resist other dogmas, such as Islam and Communism. Explicitly authoritarian, the measures reflected its strategy of political “containment.” The state ideology formed the basis of the regimes direct intervention in electoral politics until 1998, under the

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decrees of *Pancasila Demokrasi*. This doctrine drew on the New Order’s Javanese-derived interpretation of democracy. Bearing no resemblance to liberal democracy, *Pancasila Demokrasi* was envisaged as Indonesian-style democracy: “responsible,” “based on morality,” integrating “freedom and responsibility,” and “supporting and stimulating development.” At the core of *Pancasila Demokrasi* were the criminalisation of political dissent and the regularisation of elections.

The criminalising of political dissent relied on three primary legal tools: (1) *Anti-Subversion Law* (No. 5/1963), which made it a crime to “distort, undermine or deviate from the ideology of *Pancasila*” or “disseminate feelings of hostility or arouse hostility, disturbance or anxiety among the population”; (2) *Spreading Hatred Laws* (*Criminal Code Articles 154-156*), which criminalised “public expressions of hate or insult to the government”; and (3) *Lese Majesty Laws* (*Criminal Articles, 134, 137(1), 207, 208*), which criminalised “deliberate disrespect” against the president and government officials, making it an offence to disseminate material deemed offensive to those officials.

Between 1973 and 1998, elections were heavily regulated under *Pancasila Demokrasi*. Suharto argued that politics should not distract the people from development. For successful development, the state needed to be led by “wisdom in representative consultation.” Elections should only function as a tool to strengthen *Pancasila* via political stability, to aid economic development, and to maintain the dual function of the military in “accord with the needs of the national struggle.” Within this rationale, beginning in 1971, Suharto set about domesticating political parties under the ‘floating mass’ policy. By January 1973, the nine political parties that contested the 1971 election were reduced to two: The Muslim-based United Development Party (PPP) and the secular-nationalist Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI).

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Both parties were required to adopt *Pancasila* as their sole ideology. Any other ideology was not necessary, claimed Suharto, because the people of Indonesia were “classless.”²¹ The forced amalgamation of such diverse groups limited their effectiveness, which was the regime’s aim. *Pancasila Demokrasi* enabled the New Order to vet their leadership and limited their ability to campaign outside of elections. Their function was only to “absorb and contain” dissent in the five yearly ‘festivals of democracy’ (*Pesta Demokrasi*),²² acting as symbolic functionaries in a controlled electoral terrain.²³ Liddle argues this was necessary to maintain the “fiction of democratic legitimacy,” ensuring the PPP and PDI became little more than stage props in maintaining a democratic fiction.²⁴ The regime claimed the regularisation of political parties was an important step in the development of a “healthy democracy.”²⁵ Left uncontrolled, politics was considered destructive, having the ability to provoke unrest.²⁶ With *Pancasila Demokrasi* cemented by the 1980s, the PPP and the PDI, along with the New Order’s electoral vehicle, *Golkar*, functioned as the ‘three pillars’ of Indonesian politics.

**Sekber Golkar**

Without a political party of its own, the New Order developed the military-controlled organisation, *Sekber Golkar*, into a political party.²⁷ *Golkar* claimed they were the defenders of *Pancasila* and upholders of development, stability, order and unity. *Golkar*, while a political party for electoral purposes, remained a Secretariat of Functional Groups, meaning it was not subjected to the electoral rules that applied to the PPP or PDI.²⁸ While the PPP and PDI were banned from

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²⁵ McDonald, *Suharto’s Indonesia*, p. 108.
questioning state policy, *Golkar* was unrestricted in its electoral content. Never a vehicle for policy development, *Golkar’s* function was to secure votes for the regime. The value of *Golkar* was in its representation of pragmatic New Order discourses of modernisation and development, election slogans commonly asserted by the regime particularly throughout the 1980s. Elson argues that *Golkar* was an electoral machine designed to underpin Suharto’s legitimacy, while simultaneously distracting civil society and ensuring political docility.

*Golkar’s* success, winning all six elections held during the New Order period, is attributed to its development as a patronage-dispersing apparatus grounded in the policy of ‘monoloyalty.’ Monoloyalty banned Indonesian civil servants from joining the PPP or the PDI. Later expanded, the New Order decreed that all government officials had to be members of *Golkar* via the Civil Service Corps (KORPRI). The demands of monoloyalty meant *Golkar* could act as a patronage apparatus while mobilising massive electoral resources. Monoloyalty was framed as necessary to ensure that *Pancasila* was protected.

During the Suharto era, *Golkar* and the Indonesian military remained intertwined, and in many cases no distinction could be made between the two. Election slogans substantiated this relationship: “*Golkar* is ABRI, so don’t criticise *Golkar* or ABRI will take action.” For Indonesian political activist, George Aditjondro, elections after 1973 became little more than “elections of generals.” The *Golkar*-military nexus was a key feature of the New Order era. It was a mutually beneficial alliance, even when relations between the two were strained, as they were in 1988 and 1993. While the function of *Golkar* was to create the

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31 Some of the electoral slogans used, for example were: “A *Golkar* victory means a continuation of development” and “*Golkar* brings prosperity.” See Cribb, “Elections in Jakarta,” p. 660.
37 For example, the division between Suharto and ABRI over the selection of Suharto’s Vice President and his reshuffling of military positions in 1988 and the rift between Suharto and General Murdani in 1993. See A. MacIntyre, “Indonesia in 1993: Increasing Political Movement?” *Asian Survey*, 34, 2, (1994), p. 112 and
impression of democracy, the role of the military was to enforce electoral compliance, as demanded by *Pancasila Demokrasi*.

**The Dual Function of ABRI**

The Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia (ABRI), including the Indonesian police until 1999, operated with a ‘dual function’ (*dwi fungsi*) as socio-political and military-security defenders of the state. Legitimacy for the military’s omnipresent role in Indonesian socio-political life was born during the Independence struggle as the vanguards of national defence, and with various legal articles contained in the 1945 Constitution. As a result, ABRI were able to legitimately, and morally, claim a central role in Indonesian politics.  

ABRI considered its dual function to be its “reason and spirit.” It’s ‘Seven Pledges’ demanded all soldiers be “patriots” who supported and defended *Pancasila*. Drawing on a historical, legal and moral mandate, ABRI believed it was the only force capable of ensuring political order and stability. Suharto relied on ABRI’s ‘defence of *Pancasila*’ doctrine to enforce *Pancasila Demokrasi*, in turn galvanising the regime’s coercive inclinations. ABRI’s conviction that any ideological divergence from *Pancasila* was dangerous to the state was the lynchpin of the Suharto-ABRI relationship. Suharto relied upon them to “protect” the state ideology “by force if necessary.” As such, ABRI frequently employed state-sanctioned terror tactics on those who it perceived as a threat to state stability. In return, ABRI relied on Suharto to maintain their dual function role. As the peoples’ guardians, ABRI believed they were entitled to

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**42** Jenkins, *Suharto and His Generals*, p. 157 and p. 173.
hold key roles in the civil service and the parliament.\footnote{Lee, “Nature and future of civil-military relations,” p. 693.}

Because Golkar had developed from a military-inspired organisation, ABRI also believed that the leader of Golkar should be a military officer, ensuring the consolidation of their dual-function role. However, in 1993 Suharto appointed Harmoko (a civilian) to the post. In doing so, it created tensions between ABRI and the New Order.\footnote{M. Vatikiotis, Political Change in Southeast Asia: Trimming the Banyan Tree, (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 85-86.} This shift signalled the erosion of Suharto’s dominance in Indonesian politics and thereafter changed the character of the New Order. By the 1990s, Suharto reliance on Pancasila and ABRI’s defence of Pancasila Demokrasi became increasingly problematic.\footnote{Gunn, “Ideology and the Concept of Government,” pp. 751-769.} Suharto has to begin to rely on his own skills as a political tactician and his own personal networks to maintain power.\footnote{Bourchier and Hadiz, Indonesian Politics, p. 15.} The regime’s power ultimately came to rest on the ‘will’ of Suharto, rather than on the legitimacy of Pancasila to maintain power.\footnote{E. Darmaputera, Pancasila and the Search for Identity and Modernity in Indonesian Society, (Leiden: Brill, 1988), p. 173.} This was particularly noticeable in relation to the PDI, the historical holders of the memory of Indonesia’s first president, Sukarno.

The PDI and Pancasila Demokrasi

The PDI came into existence in 1973 as part of Pancasila Demokrasi. From its inception it was a dysfunctional political party. As a merger of the remnants of Sukarno’s pre-Independence Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI) with the remaining Socialist and Christian parties, it lacked a common set of ideals, a natural constituency, or a clear identity. Suspicion and factionalism rapidly enveloped the PDI.\footnote{The other religious parties were suspicious of the PNI members, in particular their commitment to the Sukanoist dogma of Marhaen. The socialist factions were uneasy with the Christian parties past alliances with the Dutch and their ongoing commitment to capitalism. Within the PNI faction there existed the hard-liners and the moderates who during the 1970s and 1980s were the central players in the factional wars that resulted in continued New Order intervention. See G. Kahin, Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1952), p. 90 and C. Brown, A Short History of Indonesia: The Unlikely Nation? (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2003), p. 128.} As a compromise the PDI adopted three basic principles: democracy, nationalism and social justice.\footnote{S. Eklof, Power and Political Culture in Suharto’s Indonesia: The Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) and the Decline of the New Order (1986-1998), (Copenhagen: NIAS, 2003), p. 64.} This formed the basis of the
following PDI’s official policies, which were approved by the New Order: support for the New Order based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution; support for the dual function of the military; support for the national leadership of President Suharto; and the PDI’s “active participation” in national development with a “correct and constructive attitude.”

The concern for the regime was that the PDI stay afloat just enough to ‘participate’ in elections. It remained important for the New Order that the PDI be propped up in order to ensure that Golkar was not pitched against the PPP. Increasing Islamic activism in the 1970s had heightened New Order fears of a head-on electoral battle with Muslims should the PDI implode. For this reason, the New Order regularly intervened in PDI affairs (as they also did with the PPP). Interventions, including the installation of puppet leaders, meant the PDI had no public credibility. The regime was not concerned with the PDI’s poor electoral showing (attracting only 8.6 per cent and 7.9 per cent of the vote in the 1977 and 1982 general elections), as the role of the PDI (and the PPP) was not to win elections but to ‘participate’ in the symbolic electoral process.

From 1973 to 1986, the PDI were little more than a “docile partner of the New Order.” Factionalism and New Order intervention cultivated a constant state of disorder in the PDI that benefitted Golkar. By 1986 the PDI were on the verge of collapse, leading the New Order to engineer the rise of its puppet, Suryadi, to the PDI leadership. His role was to revitalise the Party to ensure it remained functional enough to contest (but not win) the general elections. Initially, Suryadi lived up to regime expectations. His programme of internal reforms quelled factionalism and briefly united the Party. He ensured the PDI retained its compliant place within Pancasila Demokrasi. Suryadi confirmed the status of the PDI in his 1987 speech to Party members:

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50. Eklof, Power and Political Culture, p. 69.
54. McDonald, Suharto’s Indonesia, p. 249.
56. Eklof, Power and Political Culture, p. 73.
The Indonesian Democratic Party…fully supports, and declares itself firmly united behind, the National Leadership of President Suharto. The support for the Leadership of President Suharto is not just political, but comes from the innermost hearts of the members of the PDI with all their sincerity, chastity, purity and honesty. Even though President Suharto himself acknowledges that there are shortcomings here and there in the national development, the PDI already sees as well as feels the results, which are so great, of the national development under President Suharto.57

By the late 1980s, the PDI seemed resigned to the fact that it would only exist on the margins of the political system.58 The marginalisation of the PDI was irrelevant to the New Order. Indeed, the fact that the Party had not imploded after more than a decade made it likely that a two-way electoral race with Islam would be avoided.59 However, there were voices of dissent within the PDI. Members such as Kwik Kian Gie rallied against Suryadi, regularly spoke out against regime interference in the PDI, and publically criticised *Pancasila Demokrasi*.60

Alarm bells sounded for the New Order when Suryadi recruited three of Sukarno’s children (Guruh, Guntur and Megawati) to join the PDI.61 Addressing 1987 election rallies on behalf of the PDI, Sukarno’s children were greeted by voters waving portraits of Sukarno and signs reading, “Suharto is corrupt.”62 Suryadi, buoyed by a 3 per cent increase in the PDI vote (7.9 per cent to 10.9 percent), began recruiting middle-class professionals and intellectuals to the PDI. Suryadi also renewed the policy-making arm of the PDI, the Research and Development Body.63 Together, these elements generated a “reform current” in the PDI, signalling that Suryadi was not as compliant as the regime hoped.64

Even though *Golkar* won the 1987 election with 73.2 per cent of the vote (an increase from 64.3 per cent in 1982), *Golkar* objected to what they saw as a Sukarnoist revival. Regime elites only a year earlier had seen Philippinos rally

60 Robison and Hadiz, *Reorganising Power*, p. 81.
63 Suryadi also recruited popular entertainers such as Sophan Sophiaan and Mangara Siahaan and former Citibank Vice President Laksamana Sukardi. See Aspinall, “Political Opposition,” p. 227.
64 Aspinall, “Political Opposition,” p. 198.
around the wife of deceased Nationalist, Benigno Aquino, culminating in a ‘people power’ revolution. Opposing the authoritarian Marcos regime, the movement brought down a government similar in style and tone to the New Order. The reliance on the imagery and symbolism of Aquino paralleled the use of Sukarno’s image. The leadership role of Aquino’s wife drew stark similarities with the emergence of Sukarno’s daughter, Megawati. Left unchecked, such developments would have appeared to the New Order as a threat to its power.65

**Sukarnoism in New Order Indonesia**

The portrayal of Sukarno in New Order history was always problematic, particularly for Suharto who had usurped power from Sukarno in 1966. Sukarno’s importance in the Independence struggle couldn’t be denied and the Sukarno-authored *Pancasila* doctrine was the mainstay of New Order power.66 Furthermore, the two regimes were psychologically juxtaposed, with Suharto naming his administration the ‘New Order’ to symbolically demarcate it from Sukarno’s ‘Old Order’.67 Official New Order histories about Sukarno were always carefully constructed and heavily censored, designed to ensure that no emotional outpourings emerged for the nation’s first president.68

Since his death while under house arrest in 1970, the New Order went to extraordinary lengths to control the public’s memory of Sukarno.69 His role in the Independence struggle was downplayed and his authorship of *Pancasila* was removed from government records.70 “Guided Democracy” was portrayed as an “aberrant political experiment best forgotten.” Conversely, Suharto’s *Pancasila Demokrasi* was portrayed as the form of government most suited to Indonesian culture.71 The regime also imposed embargos on the publication and distribution of Sukarno’s writing.72

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66 Eklof, *Indonesian Politics in Crisis*, p. 27.
70 Eklof, *Power and Political Culture*, p. 86.
In 1978, the regime made a concerted effort to shape public memories of Sukarno as a figure from the past, not as an icon of the present. Suharto’s decision to renovate Sukarno’s Blitar grave signalled that Sukarno was now meant to be objectified as a silent historical figure. The function of the renovated Blitar site was to contain Sukarno as an “officially sanctioned object of worship.” The regime’s agenda was far from encouraging a state-sanctioned revival of Sukarno, even though tens of thousands made regular pilgrimages to the site. According to Labrousse, this was a delicate process of “salvaging pieces of the historical figure without bringing back to life the old demons from Indonesian history.” Suharto well understood Sukarnoism as a dangerous discourse for the New Order, saying of Sukarno: “I shall carry him high and bury him deep.”

Three reasons explain the decision to renovate the Blitar site. Firstly, Javanese tradition dictates that eight years after death is an appropriate time period to seek forgiveness, suggesting Suharto’s guilt in the ousting of Sukarno. Secondly, Suharto needed to offset fallout from his announcement to build a lavish burial site for himself and his family. Thirdly, the PDI, as the historical holders of Sukarno’s memory, may be bolstered, resulting in a more compliant Party.

Regardless of regime efforts from 1978 onwards, romantic nostalgia for Sukarno steadily grew within Indonesia. Within a year of the Blitar site renovation, thirteen books were published about Sukarno, while commemorative items bearing Sukarno’s image appeared in Indonesian markets, ignoring government efforts to censor the mass production of Sukarno material. The public’s response caught the regime off-guard and they denounced it as “commercialisation.” Yet, young Indonesians in particular continued to trade Sukarno contraband and adorned their clothing with his image. A 1988 poll taken at Diponegoro
University found 72 per cent of students indicated Sukarno as their national hero, while 77 per cent agreed Sukarno was “needed now days.”

Sixty-one per cent of Indonesians were born after 1965, meaning most had no first-hand memory of Sukarno. For many young Indonesians, Sukarno existed as an “idealised figure,” an object of nostalgia in the “image of the unknown father.”

For a generation of Indonesians, a mystique surrounded Sukarno, further perpetuated by New Order efforts to airbrush Sukarno from their national history. While some Indonesians remembered Sukarno as responsible for the chaos of the 1960s, his treatment by the regime, dying silently and condemned, weighed heavily on the Indonesian psyche.

His death in 1970 left Sukarno a man “accused but not condemned.” A tragic irony became evident to many: Sukarno had been a “freedom fighter, dying as a prisoner in a free Indonesia.”

During the 1980s and 1990s, the image of Sukarno as the benefactor of the “little people” and as one who had not used his office to benefit his family, proved a potent example to hold up against the “remoteness and corruption” of the New Order. Within this perception, Sukarno’s virtues were held up against the vices of Suharto. The image of Sukarno evolved for many young Indonesians from a figure of mystery, to one idolised as a political and cultural icon, and ultimately to a symbol to vent political frustration. These powerful feelings were given form and substance when the personification of Sukarno became part of the modern political landscape in the form of his children.
The politicisation of Sukarno’s children

While the Sukarno children had made a family pact to remain “above all political parties,” Sukarno’s son, Guntur, campaigned for the PDI during the 1977 general election, advocating welfare services and poverty reduction schemes. As Suryadi’s request two other Sukarno children, Megawati and Guruh, joined Guntur, standing as PDI candidates at the 1987 elections. During the election, Guruh and Guntur mysteriously withdrew their nominations. However, both continued to campaign for the PDI. Guntur’s decision, in particular, dismayed many. He shared a striking resemblance to his father, and of all the Sukarno children, Guntur appeared the most likely candidate to achieve high office. During the election, a number of PDI supporters wore t-shirts asking: “Guntur, where are you?” It was not until the 1992 general election that Guntur stood again for the PDI, contesting a seat in East Java. An outspoken critic of the New Order, Guntur vowed to “treat the country’s sick democracy.”

Sukarno’s two other daughters, Sukmawati and Rachmawati, both refused Suryadi’s request to join the PDI. Rachmawati initially indicated her willingness to join, but only on the condition that the PDI pursue Sukarno’s teaching in a “pure and consistent way.” As a regime appointee, Suryadi refused. Pragmatism entailed that it was Sukarno’s children, not Sukarnoism, whom Suryadi wanted to exploit. Sukmawati, Sukarno’s most militant progeny, refused outright to join the PDI. As an admirer of Che Guevara, she claimed that the PDI was insufficiently radical, the Party functioning as little more than a complicit arm of the corporatist system, lacking the courage to “discuss Sukarno’s teachings.” Resisting all further efforts, Sukmawati involved herself in the radical Marhaen People’s Movement. Both sisters saw Suryadi’s efforts to recruit Sukarnoism as a symbol of resistance, without adopting Sukarnoist ideology. Neither, in effect, was prepared to be PDI puppets. In relation to Megawati, both sisters claimed she had

95 MacIntyre, “In Search of Megawati,” p. 9
96 Elkof, Power and Political Culture, pp. 150-151.
97 Elkof, Power and Political Culture, p. 89.
98 The Marhaen People’s Movement was a small political organisation established by former leaders of the old Indonesian National Party in 1981. See MacIntyre, “In Search of Megawati,” p. 9.
a “more flexible [my emphasis] understanding” of Sukarnoism.  

Megawati and the PDI: 1987-1993

Born to Sukarno’s first wife, Megawati grew up in the presidential residence, Merdeka Palace. The second of Sukarno’s five children, she remained there until 19 when Sukarno was ousted from power. Her early life was unremarkable and she displayed no interest in politics. Her teenage years were spent caring for Sukarno, during which she apparently agreed to realise his wish to see malnourishment eradicated from Indonesia. To carry this out she attended the same university as her father, enrolled in an agriculture degree program, but withdrew before completion. She married an Air Force pilot, had two children, and was pregnant with their third when her husband was killed in a plane crash. Later marrying an Egyptian diplomat, the marriage was annulled. She remained out of public life until her third marriage to high profile businessman Taufiq Kiemas.

As members of the PDI, Taufiq won a seat in Sumatra, and Megawati was elected in her father’s stronghold, Central Java, in 1987, declaring, “I have no thoughts of becoming leader.” Rachmawati and Sukmawati fears of symbolism were validated during the 1987 general election. Megawati was paraded by the PDI at rallies across Indonesia. Despite lacking political expertise, Megawati was given “prominence” during the campaign. PDI rallies addressed by Megawati regularly doubled those of the PPP and Golkar. By the final day of the campaign, more than one million people were estimated to have attended the PDI’s Jakarta rally to hear Megawati speak. The Far Eastern Economic Review reported this account of the event:

103 MacIntyre, “In Search of Megawati,” pp. 9-10.
At the PDI’s final rally in Jakarta on 17 April...as many as one million people jammed the capital...wearing red PDI t-shirts...the display doubled as a mass act of worship for the late president, with many PDI supporters wearing Sukarno t-shirts and brandishing his portrait. ‘Oh Bung Karno...kamilah penerusmu’ [we are your followers] read one slogan. ‘Hidup Sukarno [Long Live Sukarno]...Megawati shrieked to an ecstatic crowd.104

Perhaps because of the ‘Sukarno factor,’ the PDI’s 1987 vote increased from under 6 million to over 9 million.105 Uplifted by the 1987 result the PDI ran an innovative and somewhat critical campaign in 1992 (or at least as critical as Pancasila Demokrasi permitted), including broaching the subject of presidential term limits.106 However, the PDI was careful to articulate their concerns with “respect” for the “spirit of democracy as laid out in the 1945 Constitution.”107 Regardless, during the 1992 general election the regime banned the use of Sukarno’s image. In spite of this, the PDI was still able to play the ‘Sukarno card’ in the form of Megawati with her attendance at rallies highlighting his name, if not his image.108 Even though Megawati’s political career between 1987 and 1992 was described as “weak, meek and plain,” the PDI made substantial gains, receiving 14.9 per cent of the 1992 vote, while Golkar dropped from 72 to 67 per cent.109

Historically, the corporate arms of Pancasila Demokrasi (ABRI, Golkar, the PPP and the PDI) convened after each general election to ‘choose’ a candidate for President to be ‘approved’ by a vote of the MPR the following March. Following the 1992 election, indicating a growing confidence within the PDI and buoyed by the election result, the PDI failed to immediately rubber stamp Suharto’s nomination. An untenable situation for Suharto, pressure was immediately exerted on the PDI and the Party quickly caved in, announcing their unanimous support for Suharto. Megawati, however, did not participate in the PDI threats to withdraw support for Suharto.

105 The PDI vote went from 5,919,702 in 1982 to 9,324,708 in 1987.
106 Schwarz, A Nation in Waiting, p. 265.
107 Schwarz, A Nation in Waiting, p. 265.
109 Eklof, Politics in Crisis, p. 25.
Suryadi had been appointed PDI leader to ensure the Party remained a compliant participant in Suharto’s three-ringed election process. Their growing electoral popularity in 1987 and 1992 suggested the Party were superseding the regime’s original design. As such, Suryadi failed the regime and efforts began to replace him with a more regime compliant leader, Budi Hardjono.  

Suryadi attempted to save his leadership by reassuring the New Order that the PDI would return to a more compliant position, stating: “The PDI will not be a Sukarnoist force and will not be a ‘people power’ confronting the government. It will continue to be a *Pancasila* force, a partner in government.” Unconvinced, the regime manoeuvred to have Suryadi replaced.

Citing procedural irregularities, a caretaker administration declared the PDI Chair vacant and called for new elections. Before the elections were held (scheduled for Surabaya in December 1993), the Jakarta Branch of the PDI met and nominated Megawati as Chair and Party leader. The decision was supported by 100 Party officials from 70 of the Party’s 304 branches. While her candidacy was not supported by a majority of Party branches, it was supported by the most influential ones. Arguably, their support may have been an affirmation of her leadership skills, but was more likely a device to thwart the imposition of Hardjono. Be it a bargain or a blunder, Hardjono’s nomination was defeated, and the regime were forced to accept Megawati as the new leader of the PDI.

**Megawati and the PDI: 1993-1996**

Upon Megawati’s elevation, the Party produced a booklet outlining Megawati’s position on various social and political issues. Titled “I Have Already Put Out The Flag,” it asserted a commitment to a Sukarno-style *Pancasila*, focusing on those excluded by New Order development policies. Its title attempted to create an association with Sukarno’s most well known collection of political writings, “Under the Flag of the Revolution.” The Megawati text began with a quote in German, reminiscent of Sukarno’s multilingual narratives and phraseologies. The

112 Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting*, p. 266.
114 O’Rourke, *Reformasi*, p. 10.
intended message was “Sukarno’s spirit was still alive.” It used evocative and emotive language designed to appeal to the urban poor, but contained few concrete policy details. Political concepts contained in Megawati’s manifesto were generally uncontroversial and remained well within the limits of permissible political discussion under *Pancasila*.

At its launch in November 1993, Megawati responded to criticisms that she had been politically silent on key issues. Megawati responded by saying: “Silence does not mean not thinking.” For some, Megawati’s inactivity in parliamentary and party matters suggested she was lazy while, for others, Megawati was a candidate unsullied by political and factional warfare. As such, she was a leader best suited to heal the Party and the nation. In either case, support for Megawati was largely an act of defiance. Megawati’s nomination for the Chair of the PDI was more a symbolic challenge to the regime than a “ringing endorsement of her personal capabilities.” As one observer noted of Megawati’s leadership of the PDI:

…it will bring music to the ears of protest voters. PDI is frequently chosen as a rebuke to the government, to *Golkar*, and to the status quo by people who are tired of governmental restrictions, of the monopoly problem, of the separate rate of development, of the lack of social justice. Megawati in her status as Bung Karno’s daughter…and in that the government doesn’t approve of her, is a symbol of all this.

With the regime already worried about the rising tide of opposition emerging across Indonesia in 1993, Megawati became an immediate target of the New Order. She was denied permits to speak outside of Jakarta, and meetings of Megawati supporters were regularly broken up by regime “thugs.” Her husband, Taufik Kiemas, was accused by the New Order of having communist

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122 ‘Thugs’ is a term used to denote *preman*, mafia-style gangs used by ABRI for ‘special jobs.’ In return, they were free to engage in illegal activities such as smuggling, running casinos, dealing drugs and managing brothels. See Aspinall, “Political Opposition,” p. 215 and O’Rourke, *Reformasi*, p. 12.
ties, and Sukarno family members were prevented from organising pilgrimages to Sukarno’s Blitar grave.\textsuperscript{123}

The New Order’s overzealous reaction to Megawati, and her silence in the face of attacks, seemed only to increase popular support for Megawati. Her silence was arguably perceived as a sign of dignity and strength and it provoked a powerful image in comparison with Suharto’s bellowing protestations.\textsuperscript{124} Megawati’s ability to harness “silence and stillness” also provided a variation of her father’s volubility, but proved “no less eloquent.”\textsuperscript{125} In addition, Megawati’s silence proved a powerful challenge to Suharto because Javanese culture scorns excessive activity, exertion, and rejects histrionic reactions. A view emerged that:

The truly powerful [wo]man is the one that sits motionless while enemies energetically posture and exercise their power, giving the evidence that they are so weak that they are forced to make the first move, dissipating their power rather than concentrating it.\textsuperscript{126}

The New Order’s contempt for Megawati reached a climax in 1996. At the Medan Special Congress (22 June), Megawati was ousted as PDI Chair, never again to lead the PDI.\textsuperscript{127} Suryadi, having redeemed himself to the New Order, was re-appointed Chair despite previous regime views of him as “unacceptably independent.”\textsuperscript{128} PDI Treasurer and Megawati supporter, Laksamana Sukardi, labelled the Medan Congress a coup and predicted mass anger would follow the decision to overthrow Megawati.\textsuperscript{129}

Until 1996 Megawati demonstrated little to suggest she was a savvy political operator. Described as having only a “slightly gifted personality,” most scholars agree Megawati was no more than an “echo-chamber” for her father’s name. In effect, it was only Megawati’s status as Sukarno’s daughter that made her a

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{123} Eklof, \textit{Power and Political Culture}, p. 236.
  \item \textsuperscript{124} Eklof, \textit{Power and Political Culture}, p. 237.
  \item \textsuperscript{125} MacIntyre, “In Search of Megawati,” p. 15.
  \item \textsuperscript{127} The Medan Special Congress was held over two days from 20 June to 22 June 1996.
  \item \textsuperscript{128} Schwarz, \textit{A Nation in Waiting}, p. 322.
  \item \textsuperscript{129} Reported in \textit{The Australian}, 6 June 1996, cited in MacIntyre, “In Search of Megawati,” p. 16.
\end{itemize}
“potential political nuisance.”130 Megawati’s growing popularity may have been seen by Suharto as a loss of spiritual power and potency (wahyu).131 His Javanese preoccupation meant any challenge, real or symbolic, would have been a “serious blow to his ruling mandate.”132 Suharto was also fearful that history would remember him as an “illegitimate usurper,” especially if his reign was bracketed between ‘Sukarno the father’ and ‘Sukarno the daughter.’ 133 As such Megawati posed a threat to Suharto, even though until 1996 she had not overly emphasised her relationship with her father, and was careful not to transgress the limits of permitted political discussion.134

The ramification of Megawati’s ousting from the PDI leadership was that the Party would not survive in any meaningful way. Following the Medan Congress, factionalism and recriminations saw the PDI implode. Suryadi was unable to consolidate a Party shattered by mass resignations and whose leadership was seen by the public as illegitimate. As a result of these factors, the PDI received only 3 per cent of the vote in the 1997 general election. Golkar, and the New Order’s success, was owed in large part to the pre-emptive marginalisation of Megawati.

By 1999, the PDI existed in name only. Again silent in the face of adversity, it was not until one month after the Medan Congress that Megawati announced her decision to sue the New Order for their role in her ousting. With the judiciary just as compromised as the electoral system, the claims had little chance of success. The decision to adopt a legal strategy suggests Megawati was prepared to continue to operate within the corporatist state and was not prepared to take her struggle to the streets. The drawn out legal wrangling though did provide a valuable arena for Megawati and her supporters to highlight the lack of justice in Suharto’s Indonesia, a cause particularly popular in the press and close to the hearts of both Indonesian and Western journalists.135

130 Elson, Suharto, p. 284 and Eklof, Power and Political Culture, pp. 238-239.
131 Eklof, Politics in Crisis, p. 32.
132 Schwarz, A Nation in Waiting, p. 46.
133 Eklof, Power and Political Culture, p. 252 and Eklof, Politics in Crisis, p. 34.
134 Aspinall, “Political Opposition,” p. 216.
In the aftermath of her dismissal and the lodgement of legal claims, Megawati appeared at numerous press conferences to assert her claim that she could “bring millions of people into the streets.” Regularly accompanied by *Nahdattual Ulama* (NU) leader Abdurrahman Wahid, his presence signalled the potential of a NU-PDI alliance. This would have unnerved Suharto, as was its likely intent. A possible Megawati-Wahid alliance raised the implication that, if so directed, they could command a ‘people power’ movement similar to that recently witnessed in the Philippines. While Megawati pledged to refrain from such direct action, in order to prevent bloodshed and preserve public order, her denials of a NU-PDI alliance were in themselves a threat to Suharto. By relying on symbolic gestures such as lawsuits and press conferences, respected Indonesian political commentator Wimar Witoelar cautiously assessed Megawati as:

…a symbol. The government elevated her to that stature when they said, “Don’t be like the Philippines” so they are implicitly saying that she is Corazon Aquino, and Corazon Aquino was nobody until she got elevated into that position, because there was nobody else around. So Megawati will not ever be a president, but she can be a great rallying point. At this point, she’s the only rallying point because nobody else is there for people to hang on.

On 27 July 1996, the regime reacted and stormed the PDI’s Jakarta headquarters, the centre of a month-long protest against Megawati’s sacking. Over the course of the day, battles ensued, resulted in significant numbers of fatalities. If Megawati ever felt the desire to lead a ‘people power’ movement, this was probably the time. Needing a scapegoat to deflect New Order involvement in the violence, the regime blamed the illegal left-wing Democratic People’s Party (PRD) for the riots. An opinion poll of 500 Jakarta residents found that only 13

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139 There is a view Suharto allowed the occupation of PDI headquarters to go on for almost a month as international media attentions was focused on Jakarta due to a set of high-profile ASEAN meetings.
141 The PRD had only about 200 members. It had formed alliances with various labour movements across Indonesia and helped to organise a number of strikes in Java in the previous two years. Historians note the similarities between the PRD and the People’s Democratic Front, a leftist organisation of the 1940s. The People’s Democratic Front was wiped out during a bloody uprising in 1948. See Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting*, p. 322.
per cent believed the PRD responsible, with the majority of respondents levelling blame on the New Order’s security forces. 142

New Order initiatives against Megawati and the PDI, in particular the decision to raid the PDI headquarters, destroyed the last vestiges of Pancasila Demokrasi. For more than two decades Suharto intelligently manipulated the PDI as a faux-opposition party. The PDI (along with the PPP) historically absorbed anti-government votes without ever posing a real threat to regime power. As long as both parties remained credible, Suharto could “obfuscate the dictatorial nature” of his rule. 143 The events of 1996 changed this forever, finally demonstrating the regime’s unaccommodating attitude towards party politics. 144

Unperturbed, the regime banned Megawati and Megawati-aligned PDI members from standing as candidates in the 1997 general election. In defiance, Megawati continued to assert her rightful claim as PDI leader. 145 Polling in May 1997 suggested the imminent electoral collapse of the Suryadi-led PDI. In order to maintain party status, the PDI needed to win a minimum of 11 seats. Yet polling revealed that PDI representation was destined to plummet from 56 seats to only 10 seats, winning no seats in Jakarta districts. Suggesting regime involvement, an unusually high number of votes were cast for the PDI in North Sumatra, resulting in the PDI gaining the necessary 11th seat. 146 Without this intervention, the Suryadi-led PDI would have lost its legal status, and a two-party system would have emerged. As already noted, this was not a scenario the regime wanted.

With the PDI effectively sidelined, the PPP took up a more radical agenda. The Party focused on the lack of democracy, media censorship, and human rights violations. They attacked the regime’s poor response to deteriorating economic conditions and advocated a nationwide anti-corruption initiative to investigate the wealth of senior government officials. 147 With Megawati banned from addressing public rallies, pro-Megawati supporters enthusiastically attended PPP rallies,
rather than attending Suryadi-led PDI rallies.148 During the 1997 election, the PPP adopted the slogan, Mega-Bintang (Mega-Star). The slogan was accompanied by the PPP “star” (the Party’s popularly known symbol) coloured PDI-red. Again, the New Order reacted by banning both slogan and symbol, interpreting them as evidence of a Muslim-secular alliance.149 Arguably, as a result of the Mega-Bintang phenomenon, the PPP secured an extra 5 per cent of the vote.150 With over 300 people killed, the 1997 election was considered one of the most violent in Indonesian history.151 Elections in Suharto’s Indonesia no longer appeared to be the “festival of democracy” that his rhetoric once implied.

The Indonesian economy under the New Order

The considerable economic achievements of the New Order cannot be overstated, particularly when compared to similar developing nations.152 Suharto took an “impoverished, agrarian nation unable to feed itself” and turned it into a middle-income country with a per capita income of over US$ 1,000. He dramatically reduced poverty, while steadily increasing education and health standards.153 For Suharto, Indonesia’s record of political stability and economic growth justified his authoritarian rule. From 1966 until 1990, Suharto built his power on the back of unfettered economic development. It was only in the early 1990s that the Suharto regime came under pressure from foreign corporations and international institutions. They demanded improved and equitable access to domestic markets. Some concessions, including foreign borrowings from domestic banks were permitted, but it exposed the depths of the New Order’s patronage networks.154 To grant concessions to foreign interests, at the risk of local interests, began to acquire an increasing political dimension, particularly for Suharto.155

149 Eklof, Power and Political Culture, pp. 280-281.
150 The PPP vote grew from 17 per cent in 1992 to 22.76 per cent in 1997. See MacIntyre, The Indonesian Presidency, p. 174.
151 Aspinall, “What price victory?”
153 Schwarz, A Nation in Waiting, p. x.
were polarised around two powerful New Order factions: the economic-nationalists and the Western-trained technocrats.

The economic-nationalists (mostly ABRI and the civilian bureaucracy) vehemently defended the Pancasila-derived policies of state controlled development. For this group, any loosening of control over state resources seriously threatened their subsidised salaries. This contrasted with the technocrats who wanted Indonesian markets opened to the realities of modern capitalism.\textsuperscript{156} What was clear was that few private and even less state-owned enterprises were likely to survive in an open marketplace without subsidies and protection. Powerful political interests and Suharto allies, such as Liem Sioe Liong and Bob Hasan, had been able to prosper under the New Order. Any opening of the markets or shift towards transparency would therefore spell political disaster for them and the regime.

By 1996 though, growing debt forced the regime to relent to demands for more open markets.\textsuperscript{157} In doing so, it exposed the depth of privilege and monopoly that underpinned Suharto’s hegemony.\textsuperscript{158} Suharto remained committed to sustaining an economic environment that would protect elite interests, ensure patronage, and maintain his power.\textsuperscript{159} Until 1997, for the most part, the international community tended to focus on Indonesia’s economic successes and ignore its failures. Only after the Asian financial crisis hit Indonesia and Suharto became hostile towards the International Monetary Fund (IMF) did a more heavy-handed approach to the regime materialise.

At the beginning of 1997, Thai analysts estimated non-performing loans would cost Thai banks US$ 30.82 billion. On 27 June, sixteen Thai banks closed and a financial contagion swept out of Thailand and into Southeast Asia.\textsuperscript{160} The Indonesian private sector’s massive US$ 55 billion in foreign debt, representing
25 per cent of Indonesia’s Gross National Product (GNP), exposed the Indonesian economy to the currency crisis.\textsuperscript{161} By September the region’s major currencies had dropped to record lows against the U.S. dollar.\textsuperscript{162} By October 1997, Indonesian corporate debt was $US 80 billion with US$ 30 billion of that debt representing high-risk short-term loans that could not be re-financed. As a result, the Rupiah plunged further in value.\textsuperscript{163}

Moreover, and a precursor of the coming socio-political tragedy, annual per capita income which was US $1,200 per annum before the crisis had shrunk to US$ 450 per annum.\textsuperscript{164} During 1997 US$ 12 billion of capital departed Indonesia. When the wave of capital flight continued into early 1998, Indonesia’s status as an economical miracle ended.\textsuperscript{165} By the end of January 1998, the Indonesian currency had devalued 80 per cent against the U.S. dollar. Annual per capita income declined further to US$ 300 per annum. Stock market capitalisation dropped from US$ 118 billion to US$ 17 billion. Only twenty-two of Indonesia’s 286 publicly listed companies remained solvent. Of the forty-nine companies with a market capitalisation of US$ 500 million or more before the crisis, only four survived the devaluation.\textsuperscript{166} Indonesia proved hard hit by the Asian financial crisis with massive falls in the currency, exchange rate and stock prices.\textsuperscript{167}

With the currency crisis unfolding, many continued to believe Suharto’s ‘Father of Development’ rhetoric. Just as he had responded to economic crisis in the past (the drop in oil prices in the 1980s, for example) many believed he would resolve the current situation. However, the currency crisis proved too severe and, for a man dedicated to protecting his own interests, when responses did come they

\textsuperscript{162} In particular, the Malaysian Ringgit, the Philippine Peso, the Thai Baht, and the Indonesian Rupiah.
were ineffective. By January 1998, protests were occurring regularly across Indonesia. It was becoming clear that the fiscal crisis was becoming a political crisis threatening Suharto’s leadership. While most Asian leaders survived the currency devaluations, in Indonesia this was not the case.

The economic crisis: Suharto and the IMF

The IMF argued that Indonesia’s structural weaknesses made it especially vulnerable to the currency crisis. In response, the IMF announced on 5 November 1997 a credit of $US 10.14 billion for Indonesia. In addition to the IMF credits, the World Bank pledged $US 4.5 billion and the Asian Development Bank $US 3.5 billion to Indonesia. Australia, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and the United States indicated they were all prepared to consider supplementary finance to support the reform conditions in the event the IMF credit arrangements proved insufficient. Australia’s commitment was $US 1 billion. In return, the IMF demanded fiscal policy reforms (specifically banking reform) and increases in public sector transparency. This was interpreted as the need for liberalisation and democratisation. Critics argued the IMF reforms did not do enough to attack the roots of Suharto’s patronage network or his family’s business interests, considered by some as the core problem facing the Indonesian economy. While aimed at reining in inflation and easing pressure on the national currency, many of the measures were criticised for their impact on curtailing economic activity and contributing to increasing unemployment.

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168 The IMF cited the weaknesses as domestic trade regulations, import monopolies, lack of transparency, data deficiencies in the business environment, a weak banking system ill-prepared to withstand the financial turmoil, and high levels of corporate overseas debt proved unsustainable. See International Monetary Fund, “IMF approves stand-by credit for Indonesia,” IMF Press Release No. 97/50, 5 November 1997.
171 IMF demands included tighter monetary policy, the closing of unviable banks, liberalisation of foreign trade and investment, the dismantling of domestic monopolies, increased private sector participation in infrastructure, and expansion of a privatisation. See IMF, “IMF approves stand-by credit.”
172 There were much broader criticisms of the paradoxical role played by the IMF and the World Bank in shaping the organisation and regulation of the Indonesian bureaucracy since 1980. Drafted to provide effective systems of regulation of economic institutions, sometimes they became part of the problem, providing finance, while Suharto and his cronies siphoned off these funds to private ventures, or they provided legitimacy and international credibility to ambivalent business practices. See Schwarz, A Nation in Waiting, p. 339 and R. Ampalavanar Brown, “Indonesian Corporations, Cronyism and Corruption,” Modern Asian Studies, 40, 4, (2006), pp. 955-956.
To comply with an initial bailout package, sixteen commercial banks were closed on 1 November 1997. However, the closures had little effect because the remaining seven state-run banks and ten private banks (which controlled 70 per cent of the state’s assets) remained untouched. The bank closures also failed to impact on Suharto’s personal and family interests. Persistent rumours about Suharto’s deteriorating health contributed to the free-fall of the Rupiah. Capital flight accelerated and, during late 1997, US$ 1 billion was sent offshore. Singapore banks reported a 25 per cent growth in Sino-Indonesian U.S. dollar deposits during November alone. By the end of February 1998, international portfolio investment managers quit Indonesia, direct foreign investment ceased, and foreign credit was no longer available. With interest rates rising and debt spiralling, the banking sector lost its ability to function effectively.

With so much of Suharto’s rule predicated on a strong economy, the fiscal crisis became a trigger for the collapse of Suharto’s legitimacy. The fiscal crisis rapidly developed into a crisis of confidence, and in response Reformasi dan Demokrasi became the slogan of the day. Economically, Reformasi meant an end to government monopolies and cartels. Politically, it meant a new president, free elections and a release from the political constraints of Pancasila Demokrasi.

The political crisis: Suharto’s disintegrating legitimacy

Soaring unemployment and food prices in the first weeks of January 1998 resulted in looting, riots and protests. Sino-Indonesian merchants bore much of the violence. With 80 per cent of corporate Indonesia bankrupt the U.S. dollar passed the 10,000 Rupiah mark and triggered rumours of a potential coup.

180 Van Dijk, A Country in Despair, p. 114.
Wealthy Indonesians exchanged Rupiah for American dollars, while poorer Indonesians used what currency they had to hoard food staples and fuel. On 20 January 1998, Golkar Chairman Harmoko shocked both the international community and the markets by announcing that Suharto had accepted Golkar’s nomination for a seventh five-year term as President.

Within days of agreeing to the IMF bailout package, rumours strengthened that Suharto’s protégé, Research and Technology Minister and Chairman of the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI) Jusuf Habibie, would be Suharto’s next Vice-President and therefore Suharto’s successor. Markets reacted negatively to Habibie’s close association with the Suharto family and the likelihood that, in the event he succeeded Suharto, there would be a continuation of New Order corruption and cronyism. Rumours of Habibie’s elevation caused the Rupiah to plunge to a new record low of 11,000 to the US dollar.

Against a backdrop of violent protests and growing doubt as to whether Suharto would implement the IMF program in its entirety, the MPR on 10 March 1998 elected Suharto President for a seventh term. Confirming Habibie as his Vice-President on 14 March, Suharto formed a new cabinet comprised largely of close friends and family. By the end of his reign (three months later) Suharto would stand almost alone, surrounded only by a few “palace loyalists and a handful of relatives.” By the time the international economic community realised the biggest impediment to reform in Indonesia was Suharto’s endemic corruption, cronyism, and nepotism, Suharto was turning to his trusted loyalists to shore up his parliamentary power.

With opposition to Habibie’s nomination growing, Muhammadiyah Chairman Amien Rais recognised this popular sentiment as an opportunity to exploit divisions within the regime. On 16 March 1998, he called on Indonesians to

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181 MacIntyre, “Political Institutions,” p. 159 and Haggard, Political Economy of the Asian Financial Crisis, p. 68.
182 Haggard, Political Economy of the Asian Financial Crisis, p. 69.
183 Delhaise, Asia in Crisis, p. 135.
185 Schwarz, A Nation in Waiting, p. ix.
186 Delhaise, Asia in Crisis, p. 136.
187 Opposition was registered from the Multi-Purpose Cooperation Organisation (KOSGORO) and the
join him in a non-violent “people power” revolution, similar to that responsible for overthrowing Marcos in the Philippines. Rais argued that the economic and political crisis which had enveloped Indonesia could only be resolved if Suharto was to “disappear.” The New Order influenced newspaper, the Indonesian Observer criticised Rais, editorialising “Rais is making a big mistake if he thought that a ‘power to the people movement’ would get underway in Indonesia…this will never happen in Indonesia, where the government is the embodiment of the will of the political parties.”

Unfazed, Rais called on Megawati and Wahid to form a political alliance to bring about Suharto’s demise. Both remained suspicious of Rais’s motives and failed to support him. No one group or individual could muster enough popular support to topple Suharto. ABRI and Golkar were split over the vice presidential nomination, as were the PPP. The PDI was as docile and benign as ever and, as such, was the only party to confirm the Suharto-Habibie nominations, indicating a lack of willingness to overthrow Suharto. Wahid, perhaps the only leader with any broad base support (in the form of 30 million Santri Muslims), was sidelined with a stroke and in no position to overthrow the three decade-long New Order. From the perspective of economic and political elites, any move against Suharto was seen as merely adding to the uncertain economic and political terrain, and would only unleash more instability, chaos and violence.

The only initial force openly agitating for Suharto’s resignation was the disjointed student movement, in spite of their vulnerability to repression. Joined by other sections of Indonesian society, including workers and some

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Indonesian Central Organisation for Independent Employees (SOKSI) considered founding elements of Golkar, from Golkar’s Vice Chairman of the People’s Congress, Agung Laksono, and from Golkar’s Chairman for Culture and Politics, Pinantun Hutasoit. The PPP were split over the Habibie nomination. See van Dijk, A Country in Despair, pp. 122-123.


Schwarz, A Nation in Waiting, p. 348 and Haggard, Political Economy of the Asian Financial Crisis, p. 70.


Schwarz, A Nation in Waiting, p. 353.


Van Dijk, A Country in Despair, pp. 116-117.

Initially leading the calls for Suharto’s dismissal were students from elite Indonesian universities including Trisakti University, University of Indonesia, Gadjah Mada University, Institute Pertanian Bogor, Universitas Indonesia and Institute Teknologi Bandung. See Schwarz, A Nation in Waiting, p. 349.
sections of the middle-class, some shared unity emerged under the Reformasi dan Demokrasi banner. This coalition, however, may have only formed since on 5 May 1998, the New Order announced a 70 per cent increase in petrol prices and a 60 per cent increase in electricity (even though the IMF permitted Indonesia to continue subsidising energy). The result was mass national demonstrations. By May 1998, with ABRI seemingly unable or unwilling to enforce order and stability, the New Order entered its final phase.

New Order economic stability and steadily improving living standards had led many Indonesians to “forgive the regime its worst excesses.” Suharto had assumed power on a promise to “focus the nation’s energy on economic development.” When the financial crisis arrived, one of Suharto’s key pillars of legitimacy was “knocked out from under him.” The crisis that struck Indonesia in 1997-1998 unravelled not only Suharto’s economic legitimacy, but his political legitimacy as well. An onslaught of regional and global market forces and predatory global capital speculation contributed to Indonesia’s financial crisis. It was, however, the domestic realities of minimal financial transparency, cronyism, and nepotism, all contradicting the egalitarian tenets of a Pancasila economy, which were largely responsible for Suharto’s vulnerability.

Megawati was reasonably well positioned to take early advantage of Suharto’s disintegrating legitimacy. Indonesians, according to Wimar Witoelar, were “aching” for an “alternative” to Suharto. Megawati’s story of struggle clearly resonated with Indonesians seeking a new leader. But it was only when Suharto was politically and economically vulnerable in early 1998 that Megawati reacted and joined the chorus calling for Suharto’s resignation. She did so by evoking the name of her father:

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195 Later groups of significance to join the students were the Indonesian Communion of Churches, the Indonesian Forum on Indonesian Development (uniting 120 Indonesian and foreign NGO’s) and Komite Nasional Indonesia (KNI) that bought together ‘Generation 45,’ retired New Order Cabinet Ministers and ABRI officers, former leaders of the PNI and PDI, and the ‘Voices of Concerned Mothers.’ See van Dijk, A Country in Despair, p. 125, p. 185, and p. 204.
197 Chambers, Indonesia: Contemporary Traditions, p. 207.
198 Schwarz, A Nation in Waiting, p. ix.
200 Witoelar, “Indonesia’s Changing Politics.”
I appeal to the whole Indonesian people: do not re-nominate retired General Suharto …because a term of more than 30 years...indicates an effort on behalf of President Suharto to turn himself into president for life. The Indonesian nation must not make that mistake for the second time…Bung Karno, with all his greatness, willingly and earnestly, let go of all his positions and sacrificed everything he possessed.201

In a series of speeches Megawati blamed Suharto for the economic crisis. She also claimed his government lacked transparency and that he was responsible for the “murder of democracy.”202 Her criticisms, while direct, generally remained couched within the familiar and safe terminology of Pancasila. Beyond her readiness to nominate for the presidency, Megawati did little to consolidate her political position. Citing Javanese virtues, Megawati adopted deference to the Indonesian people. She declared her willingness to stand for the presidency, but would do nothing more. She considered that it was up to the people to determine her political future.203

**Mass violence and protest: Trisakti shootings and ABRI’s response**

During the last stages of the Suharto Government, Indonesia experienced ongoing protests, acts of civil disobedience and mass violence across the archipelago. ABRI had factionalised into two groups, personified by ABRI Commander General Wiranto (nominally representing the Nationalist red and white faction) and Strategic Reserve Commander Major General Prabowo (representing the Islamic green faction). Prabowo is Suharto’s son-in-law. However, the relationship between the two was strained. Because of factionalist restraints, the military lacked a coherent strategy to respond to protests, especially those involving students, in ways that would preserve the New Order. Wiranto was said to favour a gradualist, non-violent approach, engaging the students in a dialogue, a position rejected by Prabowo.204

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203 Aspinall, “Political Opposition,” p. 278.
The student movement has played an important, if uneven role, in Indonesian politics. The Indonesian University Students Action Front (KAMI) had played a significant role in Suharto’s transition to the Presidency in 1965-1966 as a disruptive force. After assuming the Presidency, as a sign of gratitude Suharto appointed KAMI leaders to parliament. Its student membership were given the heroic title of “Generation of 1966” a reference with lineage to the “Generation of 1945” and their role in “saving” the nation. The alliance between KAMI and the regime began to wane when students demonstrated against rising fuel prices (January 1970) and government manipulation of elections (June 1971). From 1970 until 1978, regular student protests sought to expose New Order corruption.

The University of Indonesia “Petition of October 24 1973” accused the regime of abusing power and denying political rights. The student-led Malari Demonstrations in 1974 (resulting in fatalities) exposed cronyism between Japanese entrepreneurs and regime elites. The White Book of the 1978 Student Struggle sought to expose regime repression. In response, the New Order introduced initiatives to de-politicise university campuses under the “Normalisation of Campus Life” policy banning student councils and prohibiting all campus political activity. This signalled the regime’s determination to silence student dissent. Student activism in the 1990s moved from legally and officially recognised student councils to informal action committees no longer

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208 In 1974 student-led demonstrations protested over corruption allegations between the New Order and Japanese entrepreneurs, culminating in arrests and fatalities during a visit by the Japanese Prime Minister. Referred to as the Malari Affair, 13 died, 800 were arrested, significant damage was unleashed against Chinese and Japanese owned enterprises, several news outlets were banned and journalists arrested. See J. van der Kroef, “Patterns of Political Opposition,” Pacific Affairs, 51, 4, (1978), p. 625 and R. Liddle, “Indonesia 1976: Challenges to Suharto’s Authority,” Asian Survey, 17, 2, (1976), pp. 95-96.
209 “The White Book of the 1978 Student Struggle,” Indonesia, 25 (1978), pp. 151-182. “The White Book of the 1978 Student Struggle” was published by The Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) Student Council. The book was immediately banned and members of the Bandung Student Council were arrested. ITB had a long political history in Indonesian politics. ITB was the first Dutch-founded University opened to Indonesians. Sukarno studied civil engineering at the Institute from 1920 to 1925. Megawati began a degree at the Institute but failed to finish. It was at the Bandung Institute of Technology that Sukarno and other nationalist founded the Bandung Study Club whose members later formed the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI).
210 The student councils initially targeted were the Islamic Student Association (HMI), the Indonesian Catholic Student Association (PMKRI), and the Indonesian Muslim Student Movement (PMII). The ban was extended to all student councils. See B. S. Hadiwinata, The Politics of NGOs in Indonesia: Developing Democracy and Managing a Movement, (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), p. 63.
wholly contained on campuses. Students emerged as more politically perceptive than previous generations and, for the most part, effectively tapped into concerns felt by elements of Indonesian society, coinciding with factional unease occurring within the regime.

On the morning of 12 May 1998, students and faculty at the elite Trisakti University in Jakarta called on Suharto to resign. At 12:30 p.m., 6,000 students moved their demonstration off the campus, planning a “long march” to the national parliament by way of a four-lane highway. Three Trisakti representatives (the Dean of Law, the Head of Campus Security and a student representative) attempted to negotiate with local police to allow the students to walk the five kilometres to the national parliament. During the negotiations, student sat on the streets outside the university and refused to retreat.

At 3 p.m., still refusing to disperse, the police allegedly threatened the use of force against the remaining 200 students. By 4:15 p.m., an agreement had been reached: students and police were to retreat line by line. In response, most students headed back to campus. Around 4:30 p.m., an intelligence officer was identified among the protesters and was allegedly beaten by the students. The police and military later denied having an intelligence officer in place. At 4:45 p.m. students were ordered to completely disperse by no later than 5 p.m. At 5:20 p.m. gunfire was reported. The students ran for cover into nearby buildings and, from inside the campus, threw rocks and bottles at police. At 8 p.m. the riot ended. Reports claimed 35 people were injured and four students Hendriawan Sie, Hafidhin Royan, Elang Mulia Lesmana and Hery Hartanto were killed. Shortly after the Trisakti shootings, the north Jakarta district of Sunter, a Chinese district, went on alert.

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211 The prototype for action committees was the Yogyakarta Student Communication Forum (FKMY) claiming 1500 members across twenty different university campuses in 1990. Others to follow included the Bandung Student Coordinating Body (BAKOR), the Surabaya Student Communication Forum (FKMS), the Indonesian Student Action Front (FAMI), the Indonesian Student Solidarity for Democracy (SMID) and the Indonesian Islamic Student Action Group (KAMMI). See Hadiwinata, Politics of NGOs, p. 64.

The following day memorial services were held on the campus of Trisakti University, attended by both Megawati and Rais. Galvanised, the students marched to nearby Citraland Mall, which was set alight. The violence, which included looting and arson, spread throughout west Jakarta and beyond. The following day, 14 May 1998, violence spread to east Jakarta. Tear gas was fired into the Jatinegara Plaza resulting in 70 fatalities. Further east in Klender, Yogya Plaza was also attacked, resulting in further fatalities estimated at 100. Glodok Plaza, located at the centre of Jakarta’s commercial district, was also looted and burnt. In attacks on individual business, reports claimed Chinese establishments were targeted, while most Muslim-owned businesses escaped attack.

There were widespread claims of rapes, against mainly Chinese-Indonesian women. In one report, in a 15-floor apartment building in the middle-class area of Pluit in north Jakarta, several groups of men moved systematically from floor to floor attacking Chinese women. Over four hours it was claimed more the 40 girls and women were raped. At 7:30 p.m. General Wiranto appeared on Indonesian television and declared that the military could control the situation. The absence of security forces on the streets prompted many embassies to issue evacuation orders. Thousands of foreigners, as well as many ethnic Chinese, began fleeing Jakarta. The violence continued until Suharto returned from Egypt on 19 May.

Terence Lee suggests that given the animosity between Wiranto and Prabowo, Prabowo may have been behind the fatal shootings at Trisakti University to create the impression that Wiranto was incapable of upholding order. This would lead to Prabowo’s elevation to Commander of ABRI to ostensibly restore order.

Marcus Mietzner claims that Prabowo understood that the riots could accelerate Habibie’s rise to the presidency and therefore lead to his elevation to the commander of the Armed Forces.

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Suharto’s Resignation: May 1998

By the time Suharto returned to Indonesia it was becoming clear that Suharto’s leadership of Indonesia was coming to an end. Depending on the conditions under which Suharto left office would determine the likely contenders to fill the inevitable power vacuum. There was widespread speculation that in an uncertain and rapidly moving political environment, the military would assume power and, depending on which faction prevailed, a new regime would be led by either Muslim General Prabowo or by Nationalist General Wiranto. Speculation ended when Suharto announced his resignation on 21 May 1998.

Suharto, who had been out of the country on a state visit to Egypt, returned to Indonesia on 15 May, only to face mounting pressure to resign. In an attempt at appeasement, Suharto announced a series of ad-hoc reforms, including a Reformation Committee. Suharto’s efforts pacified no one and the ABRI leadership, Golkar Chairman Harmoko, the four Golkar heads of Parliament, and fourteen members of Suharto’s own Cabinet demanded his immediate resignation. General Wiranto refused to assure Suharto his safety if he refused to step down. With Indonesia’s National Awakening Day fast approaching (20 May), a day noted in Indonesian history as one of political action and protest, Suharto was pressured to resign quickly to avoid a total political meltdown.

With America having supported Suharto’s dictatorship for over three decades, on 20 May 1998 U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright suggested Suharto resign immediately and that a democratic transition begin. Failing this, the U.S. would withdraw all aid and assistance to Indonesia. That evening, Suharto’s successor Habibie, reportedly offended by Suharto’s comment the day before that

216 Schwarz, A Nation in Waiting, p. 293.
218 Kingsbury, Power Politics, p. 163.
219 Other concessions Suharto announced in the days after his return from Egypt included rollbacks on fuel increases, a reshuffle of his cabinet, fresh elections based on a New General Elections Act, a revision on the Act of the Composition of Parliament, the drafting of new acts on combating corruption and monopolies and his decision not to re-nominate for the Presidency.
220 O’Rourke, Reformasi, p. 119.
221 Van Dijk, A Country in Despair, p. 207.
222 Van Dijk, A Country in Despair, p. 199.
things would only get worse under a Habibie Government, advised Suharto to stand down.\textsuperscript{223} Suharto resigned on the morning of 21 May 1998, enabling his constitutional successor, Vice-President Habibie to be sworn in as Indonesia’s third President. Suharto announced his decision on national television adding: “I seek forgiveness if [my emphasis] there were any mistakes and shortcomings.”\textsuperscript{224}

To the end, Suharto remained unrepentant. His political demise echoed that of Sukarno’s: a hostile military, political chaos and a broken economy.\textsuperscript{225}

A set of conditions culminated to bring about Suharto’s demise, including mass violence, a deteriorating economy, political division and a hostile military. Short-term alliances forged by disparate groups coalesced briefly to withdraw their support for Suharto’s leadership.\textsuperscript{226} Suharto may have been able to endure any of these conditions separately. However, with all of these factors converging simultaneously, Suharto was unable to survive. The larger failure of this period was the low level of “concrete political activity” exhibited by leaders Wahid and Megawati in the face of growing economic, political, and social crises.

What input, if any, they contributed was self-serving rhetoric, rather than the effective direction of a popular mass protest, which was clearly crying out for leadership. \textit{Pancasila Demokrasi} had for the most part proved effective. Decades of de-politicisation had left the nation’s political leaders unable to satisfactorily represent mass aspirations.\textsuperscript{227} It was left mainly to the students to take the initiative and exercise their historical prerogative by steering anti-regime protests off the campuses and unifying and coordinating the ambiguous aspirations articulated as \textit{Reformasi dan Demokrasi}.\textsuperscript{228}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[224] Suharto, 21 May 1998, full speech cited in Forrester and May \textit{The Fall of Suharto}, pp. 246-247.
\item[225] Schwarz, \textit{A Nation in Waiting}, p. 309.
\item[227] K. Young, “Post-Suharto: A change of regime?” in \textit{Reformasi: Crisis and Change in Indonesia}, edited by A. Budiman, B. Hatley and D. Kingsbury, (Clayton: Monash Asia Institute, 1999), pp. 70-73.
\end{footnotes}
It was a pyrrhic victory however. Suharto had resigned but the New Order and ABRI remained, even if tarnished and lacking legitimacy. Habibie may have been Suharto’s protégé, but he lacked credibility, authority and legitimacy. During his 512 days in power he endured more than 3,000 public demonstrations. Once Habibie relented and announced free and open elections for June of 1999, he was in effect conceding that his administration was nothing more than an interim government.


When Suharto resigned only 72 days after “winning” his seventh presidential term, Habibie was sworn in as President, in accordance with the 1945 Constitution, to serve out the remainder of Suharto’s five-year term. Habibie, in conjunction with the MPR, and in a period marred by protests, violence and fatalities, agreed in November 1998 (not without compromise) to the following electoral reforms:

(1) Amended the MPR internal rules to permit elected representatives of new parties to sit in that body, as well as in the DPR, as well as separate the leadership of the two bodies.
(2) Limited the president and vice-president to a maximum of two five-year terms.
(3) Decreed that parliamentary elections should be held in 1999.
(4) Announced that all parties meeting the legal requirements would be able to compete in the general election, and that appointed military representation in legislative bodies should gradually be reduced, in accordance with a law to be enacted later.
(5) Provided for the establishment of an independent General Election Commission (KPU) to oversee fresh elections.

229 Schwarz, A Nation in Waiting, p. 371.
230 Aspinall, Opposing Suharto, p. 271.
Habibie subsequently announced the 2002 general election and 2003 presidential election be advanced to June and October 1999 respectively. Of the 150 parties that registered to contest the 7 June general election, 48 parties met the approval criteria of the newly formed KPU (suggesting there was still an attempt to regulate democracy). Of the 48 approved parties, 10,500 candidates were nominated to contest 462 available seats in the 500 seat parliament. The remaining 38 seats were allocated to ABRI, a reduced number, but still suggesting that ABRI retained a considerable degree of their political potency.

Other reforms were announced at this time, including reforms to the Indonesian media and the freeing of political prisoners. Other reforms were announced at this time, including reforms to the Indonesian media and the freeing of political prisoners. The Habibie reforms did not include returning Megawati to the Chair of the PDI. Rather, Suryadi was re-confirmed as the Party’s leader. It was reported that Suryadi withstood significant political pressure to stand down and pave the way for Megawati’s return. In response to this impasse, Habibie’s Minister for Home Affairs suggested the PDI be known as “PDI 1” and “PDI 2” in a symbolic effort to accommodate and pacify Megawati and her supporters. Rejecting this compromise, Megawati stood firm and refused to meet with Habibie until she was reinstated as the “official head of the PDI.” She continued to maintain that she was the “legitimate” and “true” leader of the PDI.

In order to contest the 1999 general election, the Megawati-led faction of the PDI instigated its own mechanisms to change its name to PDI-Perjuangan (PDI-P). The PDI-P’s ideological position emphasised three core values: defence of the unity and integrity of Indonesia; secularism; and fighting for the interests of the common people. Indeed, Sukarno was evoked as the inspiration of the Party’s advocacy of national unity.


**East Timor**

One of the significant reforms announced by President Habibie impacted East Timor. Timor-Leste, or East Timor, is the former Portuguese colony, located northwest of Australia in the Lesser Sunda Islands, at the eastern end of the Indonesian archipelago. East Timor declared itself independent from Portugal on 28 November 1975 and was invaded and occupied by Indonesian forces nine days later. It was incorporated into the Republic of Indonesia in July 1976 as the province of Timor Timur.

A two-decade struggle between Indonesia and a variety of pro-independence factions and guerrilla forces, including the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (FRETLIN) followed, during which an estimated 100,000 to 250,000 East Timorese lost their lives. On 30 August 1999, in an UN-supervised popular referendum, 78.5 per cent of the people of Timor-Leste voted for Independence from Indonesia. Clashes between East Timorese forces and pro-Indonesian militia forces, however, marred the process. Between the referendum and late September 1999, anti-independence Timorese militias, organised and supported by the Indonesian military, commenced a large-scale, scorched-earth campaign of retribution. The militias killed approximately 1,400 Timorese and forcibly pushed 300,000 people into West Timor as refugees.  

As a result, a peacekeeping force (INTERFET) led by Australia intervened to restore order. The Australian forces were replaced by UNTAET, a U.N. force of International Police. UNTAET was headed by Sérgio Vieira de Mello as

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238 The International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) was a multinational peacekeeping taskforce, mandated by the United Nations to address the humanitarian and security crisis which took place in East Timor from 1999–2000 until the arrival of United Nations peacekeepers. It was commanded by Major General Peter Cosgrove of the Australian Defence Force.

239 The United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) provided an interim civil administration and a peacekeeping mission in East Timor, from its establishment on October 25, 1999 until Independence on 20 May 2002. It was enacted under Security Council Resolution 1272 (1999) to establish the transitional administration in 1999. Its responsibilities included providing a peacekeeping force to maintain security and order; facilitating and coordinating relief assistance to East Timorese; facilitating emergency rehabilitation of physical infrastructure; administering East Timor and creating structures for sustainable governance and the rule of law; and assisting in the drafting of a new constitution and conducting elections. See United Nations Security Council Resolution, No. 1272 (1999), available from:
U.N. Transitional Administrator from December 1999 to May 2002. In consultation with Timorese leaders José Ramos-Horta and Mari Alkatiri, a blueprint for a joint administration with executive powers was initiated. This in turn led to the National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT), led by future president Xanana Gusmão. On 27 September 2002, East Timor joined the United Nations.

In June 1998, three weeks after being elevated to President, Habibie announced a series of political reforms, including the announcement that he was prepared to give East Timor the “special status” of autonomy from Indonesia. The offer represented the biggest shift in Indonesian foreign policy since it invaded East Timor. It was considered a decisive break with the Suharto-era attitude to East Timor. According to Greenlees and Garran, the shift reflected that concessions needed to be made on East Timor in order to achieve an “internationally acceptable settlement.” They argue that Habibie believed there was a “good chance of winning and thus conclusively settling the issue of sovereignty in Indonesia’s favour.” It further offered Habibie a context to pronounce his “commitment to democracy,” although the “stronger motivation was to confirm Indonesia’s borders,” thus “obtaining international respectability.”

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240 Sérgio Vieira de Mello, a Brazilian U.N. diplomat, was later appointed the Secretary General’s Special Representative in Iraq. On 19 August 2003, he was killed in a bomb blast in Iraq. He was posthumously awarded the United Nations Prize in the Field of Human Rights in 2003.

241 José Ramos-Horta became the second President of East Timor in 2007. He is the co-recipient of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize. He is the founder of FRETILIN. Mari Alkatiri was the first internationally recognised Prime Minister of East Timor (May 2002-June 2006). He is the General Secretary of FRETILIN. Xanana Gusmão, a former member of FRETILIN, was the first President of East Timor, serving from May 2002 to May 2007. He later became the fourth and current Prime Minister of East Timor on 8 August 2007


245 Greenlees and Garran, Deliverance, pp. 335-336.
1999 General Election

The Habibie Government lasted only until the 1999 general election. In October of that year a special session of the MPR rejected his accountability speech (355 votes to 322 votes), wiping out his chance to remain President. Nevertheless, in its short period, the Habibie administration had provided a step forward in the democratic transition by granting freedom of press, revising electorate laws which allowed a multi-party election, and reducing the number of free seats in the parliament allocated for the military.\textsuperscript{246}

The 1999 general election was considered the first open, democratic, multi-party election to be held in Indonesia since 1955.\textsuperscript{247} Forty-eight parties participated in the election, including the three “old” parties: Golkar, the PPP and the PDI, as well as the newly formed PDI-P. Megawati’s PDI-P gained 35.7 million votes, or about 34 per cent of 105.7 million votes cast, and won 153 of the 500 DPR seats. With 12 million more votes than the next closest rival and a solid plurality, the press and others in Indonesia designated the PDI-P as the “winner” of the general election. Golkar finished in second place with 120 seats, representing 24 per cent of the vote. The Suryadi-led PDI gained only one seat and less than one per cent of the popular vote. The remaining 462 contested seats were shared among nine parties, with 38 “free” seats retained by the military and the police.\textsuperscript{248} In addition to the 500 parliament members, there were 195 uncontested seats allocated for regional and group representatives, forming a 695-member MPR.\textsuperscript{249}

Although the 1999 election brought significant changes in terms of political representation, the procedures to elect the president were unchanged. The president would still be elected by the parliament. Even though the PDI-P held the most seats in the national parliament, it did not automatically guarantee Megawati the presidency. Two things were blocking her way: the PDI-P did not

\textsuperscript{247} Liddle, “Indonesia in 1999,” p. 32.
\textsuperscript{249} Liddle, “Indonesia in 1999,” p. 35.
secure an effective electoral majority in the parliament, and Islamic politicians were reluctant to elect Megawati as both a woman and a secular-nationalist. Megawati’s chances of winning a majority of votes lessened even more when she refusal to form an alliance with influential leaders Wahid, leader of the newly formed National Awakening Party (PKB), and Rais, leader of the also newly formed National Mandate Party (PAN).

Abdurrahman Wahid and Amien Rais: Islam and Democracy

The political emergence of the PKB revolved around the charismatic power of Abdurrahman Wahid. He already possessed strong credentials as the grandson of NU founder, K. H. Hasyim Ashari. Since the 1980s, Wahid had headed NU, Indonesia’s largest Islamic organisation, with a membership of over 30 million. NU was the leading voice of traditionalist Islam in Indonesia, so it tended to champion traditions of indigenous Islamism, somewhat apart from trends in the Islamic world. Wahid himself placed a strong emphasis on pluralism and inter-religious tolerance, and was committed to the core values of democracy. In his many years as a public figure, Wahid managed to cultivate a persona “at once highly controversial, highly respected, and widely revered.” He had been criticised for his sometimes accommodative relationship with the Suharto regime, although he was a leading figure in Forum Demokrasi.

Forum Demokrasi, a group of 45 prominent Indonesian intellectuals, was formed in March 1991 and led by Wahid. Initially it was designed to counter ICMI (established with Suharto’s consent by Habibie). Forum Demokrasi was designed to provide intellectual leadership in the struggle for a more open, tolerant and inclusive society, as interpreted by Sukarno’s original meaning of Pancasila. Representing the public face of secularism, Forum Demokrasi

252 Thompson, “Indonesia in Transition,” p. 4.
254 Elson, Suharto, p. 271.
called for the return to a more inclusive interpretation of Pancasila to unify the nation.\(^{255}\) As with NU, Forum Demokrazi expressed its agenda within the permitted vocabulary of the New Order.\(^{256}\) For some it represented a prototype political party to which Wahid recruited secular-Nationalists, Christians and Muslims. It shared close relations with ABRI Nationalists, who also shared concerns over ICMI’s Islamic agenda and the threat this posed to Pancasila.\(^{257}\) Under Wahid, Forum Demokrazi strove to “establish justice and realise democracy.”\(^{258}\) Because of his association with Forum Demokrazi, Wahid became persona non grata within the New Order regime.\(^{259}\)

Amien Rais was former head of Muhamadiyah, Indonesia’s second largest modernist Islamic organisation. Rais rose to be one of the most “visible and vocal opponents” of Suharto and the New Order in the 1990s when he became a spokesperson for anti-Suharto student activists.\(^{260}\) As the leader of PAN, Rais adopted an explicitly non-religious, nationalist and populist agenda.\(^{261}\) As one of the most prominent figures in the 1999 general election campaign and a pre-election presidential candidate, many considered PAN’s five per cent showing at the 1999 general election as a “crushing defeat” for Rais and “dashed any presidential aspirations” he might have held. Even though he was leader of the smallest of the five major parties, Rais became the “most active” in building coalitions in the post-election period. With the two largest vote-getters in the election at odds (PDI-P and Golkar), and neither commanding more than one third of the representatives in parliament, Rais engineered a third force dubbed The Central Axis. This was a “somewhat loose coalition of Islamic and reform oriented parties.”\(^{262}\) PAN and the smaller Justice Party (PK), holding seven seats in the DPR, formed the anchor of the Central Axis. The PPP and Crescent Star Party (PBB), both vehement opponents of Megawati’s PDI-P, also aligned themselves with the Central Axis. In the lead-up to the presidential vote, clearly

\(^{255}\) Ramage, *Politics in Indonesia*, pp. 159-160.
\(^{256}\) Ramage, *Politics in Indonesia*, p. 159, p. 76 and p. 93.
\(^{258}\) Uhlin, *Third Wave of Democratization*, p. 79.
\(^{259}\) Van Dijk, *A Country in Despair*, p. 23 and Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting*, p. 188.
\(^{260}\) Thompson, “Indonesia in Transition,” p. 5.
\(^{261}\) Liddle, “Indonesia in 1999,” p. 35.
\(^{262}\) Thompson, “Indonesia in Transition,” p. 5.
unable to win that post, Rais manoeuvred himself, with the aid of the Central Axis, into the Speakers position.

The Presidential and Vice-Presidential vote: October 1999

Any slim chance Habibie had of retaining the presidency was lost in the final moments leading up to the presidential vote when influential sections of ABRI and *Golkar* withdrew their support for his nomination. In the end, Habibie was seen as too accommodating to reformist demands. Once Habibie withdrew, it left Megawati and Wahid as the lone candidates. A significant number of Islamic politicians and *Golkar* MPs voted with the Central Axis and, despite the PDI-P’s electoral gains at the June general election, elected the PKB’s Wahid as president (373 votes to 313 votes). The PKB had gained 13.3 million votes, but mainly concentrated in East and Central Java. Meanwhile, it held only 51 seats in the DPR.263 Megawati, controlling one third of all the votes, had been well positioned to become president. However, consistent with her silent and cautious approach, she refused to negotiate with other parties for support. Wahid, controlling less votes but more proactive and well supported by the Central Axis, was able to win the presidential vote.264

*Golkar* had contemplated nominating either Chairman Akbar Tanjung or General Wiranto for the vice-presidency. However, any vice-president other than Megawati was seen as dangerous, bound to result in bloody protests. In addition, any indication of widespread violence would have threatened the newly promised aid money from the West, the World Bank and the IMF. The PDI-P’s threat to support Wiranto (not afraid to continue their support of nationalist elements within ABRI) and Wahid’s refusal to cooperate with Wiranto, meant that a compromise needed to be reached.265 The vice-presidential position was seen as a critical one, especially given Wahid’s poor health, propelling the view that he may not serve out a full term. However, the PDI-P was reluctant to nominate Megawati, having staked their political claim on her becoming president. Some

factions within the Party argued the PDI-P should position itself as a strong opposition party in the legislature and opt out of Wahid’s administration. The prospect of another humiliating defeat in the vice-presidential race also fuelled fears of anarchy among PDI-P supporters. However, there was also a view that anarchy may prevail if the vice-presidency went to either Tanjung or Wiranto.  

Wahid’s PKB broke the impasse and nominated Megawati for vice-president, while *Golkar* nominated a reluctant Akbar Tanjung. The PPP nominated its own leader, Hamzah Haz, and a smaller faction of Islamic-oriented parties, nominated General Wiranto. After making official the nominations, due to the large number and last minute appearance of several candidates, MPR Speaker Rais called a recess for discussion among factions. When the Assembly came back into session, Akbar Tanjung and General Wiranto (in a letter to the Speaker, since he was not in attendance) both withdrew from the race in the name of national unity, and in the greater interest of the nation. This was considered to be an implicit backing of Megawati’s candidacy. Another recess was called, apparently to put pressure on PPP leader Hamzah Haz to withdraw and allow Megawati to assume the vice-presidency unopposed.

Perhaps with some hope that the previously effective alliance of *Golkar* and the Central Axis would support his candidacy, and to provide hard-line Muslims a face-saving vote, Hamzah Haz refused to withdraw his nomination and forced a vote on the vice-presidency. Probably aware he would not win, Haz argued that a vote would further strengthen the democratic tradition being forged in the general session of the Assembly. Ultimately, Megawati prevailed in the voting by a margin of 396 to 284. It appeared that the majority of *Golkar* members voted for Megawati, yet it was also *Golkar* votes that helped Wahid defeat Megawati in the presidential elections. *Golkar* campaigners may have been routed in the general election, but they still knew how to exert their parliamentary power.

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266 Thompson, “Indonesia in Transition,” p. 11.
267 Thompson, “Indonesia in Transition,” p. 11.
Later that evening, at the end of her swearing-in ceremony, Megawati gave a conciliatory speech, thanking her opponents for their role in the democratic process. Addressing her supporters, in a comment which would make headlines in the major national and international newspapers the next day, Megawati proclaimed: “To my children across the nation, I ask you to sincerely return to your work and not to engage in emotional acts, because as you can see for yourself your mother now stands on this podium.”

The 1999 elections were formalised on 26 October with the announcement of a 35-person Wahid-led National Unity Cabinet made up of representatives from all of the major parties, including the PDI-P, Golkar and ABRI.

In summary, the Suharto-led New Order functioned as an authoritarian regime, regulating and ordering politics to ensure their own political survival. Drawing on the state ideology Pancasila, dissent and political opposition were negated with legal and military intervention in both the political and civilian spheres. It was in this context that President Suharto was able to rule Indonesia for some three decades with an iron fist. He did not tolerate challenges to his power and acted forcefully when threats, real or imagined, emerged.

In particular, the rise of Sukarno’s daughter Megawati saw Suharto’s regime overreact and, in doing so, exposed the fragility of his leadership. Coupled with the economic and political impact of the Asian financial crisis, Suharto’s resignation was surprising when it came. A loss of support within the Executive, combined with external pressure exerted by the student movement under the ambiguous banner of Reformasi, led to Suharto’s resignation. However, Suharto was replaced by his constitutional heir, Jusuf Habibie, meaning in effect that although Suharto lost power, the authoritarian New Order remained in place. A series of political machinations, briefly outlined in this overview, ensured the elevation of the popular cleric, Wahid (known as Gus Dur), to the Presidency, and the relegation of Sukarno’s daughter, Megawati, to the vice-presidency.

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269 For example see “Megawati elected as VP,” The Jakarta Post, 22 October 1999, p. 1.
While the enormity of political change that emerged in Indonesia in the late 1990s cannot be captured in such a brief overview, the purpose of this chapter has been to provide a contextual background to the Western media’s reporting of the key actors and events, as they occurred during 1998 and 1999. It is to these key issues that this thesis now turns.
CHAPTER THREE
FRAMING SOCIAL REALITY:
EPISODIC FRAMING AND PRIVILEGED MEANINGS ABOUT MEGAWATI

This chapter examines how episodic framing functioned to shape a social reality about events and issues occurring in Indonesia between 1998 and 1999. It considers how, as a result of this framing, a privileged set of meanings about PDI leader Megawati Sukarnoputri emerged. It argues that embedded in news discourses was the construction and maintenance of a social reality within which Suharto and the New Order were framed as responsible for the state of economic and political crises, and were judged as morally and politically unable to solve the problems which occurred in Indonesia during this period.

Captured within this social reality was a set of privileged meanings which imagined a Megawati presidency as the remedy and solution. As events shifted from the fall of Suharto in May 1998 to the holding of the June general elections in 1999, alleviating frames began to emerge in news discourses, which posited a set of conditions that would ultimately deny Megawati the presidency. For the most part, alleviating frames were those which blamed others for Megawati’s defeat in October 1999. Fully developed by the time of the presidential election, alleviating frames functioned to assuage Megawati of her responsibilities in failing to secure the presidential vote.

Megawati was positioned in privileged ways not available to other actors. This is not to suggest that there was not negative framing of Megawati during 1998 and 1999. In fact, there were several accounts which questioned her political acumen. Rather, it is argued that one of the dominant discourses evidenced in Western reporting in 1998 and 1999 was the end of the New Order, firstly Suharto and then Habibie. Framed as responsible for the drama and tragedy occurring in Indonesia, continually named as “crises”, a social reality emerged within which a Megawati presidency was imagined as a resolution. Within this scenario, reporting framed both the New Order and Megawati within a set of juxtaposing positions, highlighting blame and remedy. As such, reporting considering what political benefit Megawati would be to a post-New Order Indonesia was mute.
Accounts of news, in particular foreign news, need to be reported in ways, which make them coherent and meaningful to audiences. In the case of foreign news, given that audiences may have lacked direct knowledge or first hand experiences, framing practices such as the choice of culturally and politically resonating concepts (frame devices) are regularly employed. They often function with the use of juxtapositioning, binaries and salience. The result is that actors are often placed in positions of blame/remedy, legitimate/illegitimate or worthy/unworthy (frame reasoning). In this chapter, it is posited that by framing accounts episodically, it further contained the likely interpretations of events within a limited dimension. The result was a framework within which privileged meanings, in this case about Megawati, emerged, and others were trivialised or excluded. The impact this had on audience evaluations of actors such as Suharto, Habibie, Rais, Wahid and Megawati is subjective and arguably influential.

Theoretically, this chapter evaluates the assertions made by Robert Entman that to frame the news is to interpret it in ways which crystallise problems, predicts effects, suggests likely outcomes and make moral judgments about political leadership.¹ It seeks to illustrate how framing constructed a social reality about Indonesia and privileged meanings about Megawati via frame reasoning, a set of practices which interpreted the news in ways which defined problems, assigned responsibility, passed moral judgement and offered solutions via frame devices. These devices include keywords, themes, stock phrases, stereotypes, catchphrases, metaphors and dramatic characterisations.² Moreover, it aims to demonstrate how frame salience, binaries and juxtapositioning all structured news accounts in ways which allowed audiences to make sense of events, issues and actors by means of familiar political and cultural narratives. Lastly, it seeks to establish that, in this case, episodic framing not only contained meanings about events and actors occurring in Indonesia during 1998 and 1999, but also that alleviating frames were evident in the pages of the Western news media.


These frames were particularly effective, reliant on not only framing Megawati as a political victim but also positing a set of conditions that would alleviate her of responsibility for losing the presidential vote in October 1999. Having crystallised the problems, predicted their effects, suggested likely outcomes, and made moral judgements about Indonesia, the New Order, and Megawati, the likelihood of a Megawati defeat as a result of her own political deficits was problematic. As such, alleviating frames functioned to blame others, initially the New Order and, later, Rais and Wahid. Frame development shifted, in this case, from Megawati being a political victim of the New Order, to her betrayal at the hands of Rais and Wahid.

Given that this chapter asserts that Western news reports constructed a social reality which juxtaposed Megawati as the remedy/solution to the crisis/drama caused by Suharto and the New Order (1998), and which alleviated Megawati of blame for her failures to secure the presidency (1999), this chapter firstly outlines how framing shapes social realities, before moving to a discussion of episodic framing. The latter draws primarily on the work of Shanto Iyengar. However, unlike Iyengar’s studies, which drew heavily on survey and interview data, this analysis of episodic framing relies on quantitative data (frequency, context and keyword statistics) drawn from the 478 news articles examined for this study.

**Framing a social reality**

Framing is considered an inescapable process. Similarly, the construction and maintenance of social realities is inescapable. Framing ensures that the ‘reality’ of happenings in the social and political world will always be interpreted, thus a version of ‘reality’ will ultimately emerge in news accounts. This is because events, issues and actors need to be reported in ways which make them culturally and politically familiar to audiences. As Koch claims, framing warrants that raw news be placed in a unifying context which translates and renders events, issues and actors so that audiences can comprehend happenings in ways which are coherent.3 Coherence is attained by embedding frames with cultural and political narratives and imagery considered meaningful to audiences. Framing thus takes

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strips of reality and packages them in ways which facilitate audience understandings of the social and political world.¹

The development and maintenance of social reality evidenced in news discourses is not a value or ideologically free process. While individual experiences, values, education, political views, and even prejudices shape how audiences understand the social and political world, when media practitioners (journalists, sub-editors, editors) frame the news, the resultant social reality is often reflective of the values and beliefs held by the news practitioners and/or shaped by the news industry (be it newsroom values or the ideology of the news outlet). In some cases, the shaping of social realities may be mediated by national interests.²

Social realities are actively maintained, only shifting when an overwhelming amount of discrepant information forces them to change.³ Until then, daily decisions are made in newsrooms about what news is to be selected, included and highlighted (salience). Interceding factors such as the type, location and timing of events may shape decisions about salience.⁴ However, in viewing news discourses as constructions of social reality, it is hypothesised that salience functions to ensure that only news that can be framed to sustain the social reality which is being constructed is included. In line with Entman, it is argued that news that has the potential to disrupt the social reality is trivialised or excluded.⁵

Moreover, it is argued that the construction of social realities thrives in news environments that rely on immediate, up-to-date coverage of events as they unfold. Episodic accounts, it is argued, limits the development of counter-

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² Ryan, “Framing the War Against Terrorism,” p. 364.
realities. Episodic framing reasons that when news reporting is structured and shaped as an immediately occurring, event-oriented account, it lacks historical, political or social context. As such, it lacks the details required by audiences to assess the relationships between social and political issues, and between government actions or inactions. Because of this, governments and officialdom are often alleviated of their responsibility and accountability. The result is a social reality within which individuals are considered responsible for their own social or political situations, especially in the case of issues such as poverty, homelessness, or crime, or where events are depicted as unforeseeable random acts, as in the case of terrorist attacks.

Episodic and thematic framing

Episodic and thematic framing is best associated with the work of Shanto Iyengar, who examined how the nature of the news frame, as episodic or thematic, is a significant factor in determining how audiences evaluate political leaders, particularly in relation to their accountability and responsibility. Iyengar’s claims rest on an examination of American broadcast news (ABC, CBS and NBC) conducted between 1981 and 1986, which found broadcast news tended to frame stories episodically. Episodic framing, according to Iyengar, is evidenced when a news report is structured and shaped as an unfolding occurrence or incident in a way that is event/issue orientated and, as such, lacks a historical, political, or cultural context. Episodic framing generally lacks the cognitive framework required by audiences to critically assess the links between social and political issues and government responses. Conversely, thematic framing is evidenced in news reports that are more interpretative in nature, and which develop and contextualise broader social, historical, political or cultural themes, considered insightful in informing a more knowledgeable understanding of events/issues and their significance.

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12 *Is Anyone Responsible?* p. 2.
13 *Is Anyone Responsible?* p. 14 and p. 27. See also S. Tiegren and E. Newman, “How News is ‘Framed,’” Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma, (1 April 2008), available from:
The consequences of episodic framing are arguably detrimental to news audiences. Episodic framing lacks aspects of social, political, cultural or historical context required for audiences to cognitively understand the broader social and political relationships between the issue, its cause and its remedy. Episodic framing has a direct impact on how media outlets select which news is to be reported (salience). Episodic framing also obscures the connections between political problems and the actions or inactions of political leaders, and diminishes the accountability of elected officials. Consequentially, this trivialises political discourse.

In seeking to understand why episodic framing dominates broadcast news, it has been argued that the method is not necessarily a reflection of ideological or partisan practices, but rather a reflection of the realities of the news room as to how they gather and format the news. In addition, it has also been hypothesised that it is a consequence of journalistic norms such as objectivity, which place a premium on the reporting of “hard” news as specific events. As such, interpretative (thematic), or what is referred to as “subsurface” reporting, is considered much more vulnerable to charges of bias. In this analysis, however, it is posited that accounts of bias are similarly evidenced in both episodic and thematic framing, with the deviations found in the subtlety of the frame itself.

As an intellectual and empirical method, episodic/thematic frame analysis has been used to critically evaluate both broadcast and print news. Apart from Iyengar’s study of broadcast news, Atwater examined television news coverage of the 1985 Trans World Airlines hostage crisis, finding that NBC Nightly News (United States) overly relied on episodic framing. As a result, reporting lacked historical or cultural interpretation, meaning the event was portrayed as unpredictable and random, rather than foreseeable. In relation to the print media, the method has been used in Australian studies to evaluate domestic


newspaper reporting of mental illness. Examining print stories in a 12-month period, Blood, Putnis and Pirkis found an overreliance on episodic framing, which they concluded indicated that many stories on mental illness lacked significant contextual information.\(^{19}\) American studies have examined 1998 coverage of domestic violence fatalities, finding that episodic framing techniques misrepresented the facts and social issues connected to domestic violence.\(^{20}\) Similarly, The Casey Journalism Centre on Children and Families commissioned a study of 12 major American newspapers for coverage of children’s issues for a period of three months in 2001. The study found that 89 per cent of stories used episodic frames and only 11 per cent presented stories in a broader social and political context (thematic).\(^{21}\) A frame analysis of The New York Times online homepage coverage of the 2003 Iraq War found that episodic frames, stories that focused on isolated incidents without broad political or historical context, were most common.\(^{22}\)

**Episodic and thematic framing of Megawati**

In establishing the nature of the news reports as episodic or thematic, each of the 478 news stories selected for this study were coded as episodic or thematic. While acknowledging that few news reports are exclusively episodic or thematic, it is generally accepted that one frame or the other generally dominates a news report.\(^{23}\) Using the definitions developed by Iyengar, each article was determined to be wholly or mostly an event-orientated account of an unfolding incident or occurrence, reporting the event/incident without a historical, political, or cultural context (episodic). In other instances, the report was an interpretative account, contextualising broader social, historical, political or cultural themes (thematic).\(^{24}\)

---


Coding found that the majority of news reports about Megawati were episodic. Of the 478 articles examined for this case study, 344 articles were coded as episodic and 134 articles were coded as thematic. Episodic framing was particularly evidenced in four key periods: January 1998, May 1998, June 1999 and October 1999, periods it was noted which also coincided with periods of high volume reporting.

Table 3.1: Results for episodic and thematic coding of news articles, by newspaper, by year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total News Articles</th>
<th>Episodic Frames</th>
<th>Episodic Frames Percentage</th>
<th>Thematic Frames</th>
<th>Thematic Frames Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Age</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Independent</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New York Times</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Times</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Australian</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Independent</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Age</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New York Times</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Times</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Australian</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>478</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>134</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis indicates a propensity to frame the news more episodically than thematically. However, accounts of episodic framing varied across each of the newspapers examined and varied significantly from 1998 to 1999. In 1998, with the exception of The Australian, over 70 per cent of all news reports about Megawati were framed episodically. As the above discussion has indicated, episodic framing generally lacks the historical and political background required by news audiences to critically evaluate the events, issues and actors being reported. While the accounts of episodic framing are considered high, thematic accounts ranging from 19 per cent in The New York Times to 38 per cent in The Australian suggest that on average about one-quarter of all of the 1998 news
accounts analysed did attempt to provide a broader interpretative framework.

Again, with the exception of *The Australian*, what is noticeable in the 1999 reporting is that accounts of episodic framing increased, ranging from 79 per cent in *The Times* to 88 per cent in *The Independent*. Whereas the 1999 accounts of thematic framing increased in *The Australian*, albeit marginally, accounts of thematic framing decreased in all other newspapers. Episodic and thematic framing as statistical analysis, however, fails to capture how the frames functioned to shape social realities or induce privileged meanings about Megawati. In order to more critically interrogate these aspects, episodic/thematic frames were examined in relation to salience. This was achieved by examining accounts of episodic and thematic framing in periods of high frequency of reporting.

**Empirical data: frequency**

Accounts of episodic and thematic framing in the periods of high volume surmise the relationship between salience, frequency and meaning. In periods of high yield production in 1998, *The Age, The New York Times* and *The Australian* all produced more thematically framed stories than in other months of production. For readers of these newspapers, arguably the inclusion of more thematically framed news reports provided a broader context for the development of cognitive understandings and evaluations to be made. For British audiences, with the exception of *The Independent’s* January coverage, framing was more episodic than thematic, suggesting audiences lacked the broader historical and political context provided in the Australian and American publications. In periods of high yield production in 1999, however, a significant shift is noted. For readers of *The Independent* and *The Times*, accounts of episodic framing in the high production month of October were less than other months of production. This was a reversal of the trend noted in 1998. Overall, an increase in the use of episodic framing from 1998 to 1999 was noted.
Table 3.2: Comparison of accounts of episodic and thematic framing by newspaper, by year, and by highest month of production, 1998 and 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Number Of News Articles</th>
<th>Episodic Framing</th>
<th>Episodic Framing Yearly Percentage</th>
<th>Thematic Framing</th>
<th>Thematic Framing Yearly Percentage</th>
<th>Most Frequent Month Of Coverage</th>
<th>Most Frequent Month</th>
<th>Number Of News Articles - Most Frequent Month</th>
<th>Episodic Frames As A Percentage</th>
<th>Thematic Frames As A Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Age</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Independent</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New York Times</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Times</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Australian</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Independent</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Age</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New York Times</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Times</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Australian</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evident in these rates of episodic and thematic framing in high volume periods are aspects of salience. Salience, as noted by Ansah, is a contributing factor in establishing meaning and for positing the potential impact of meaning on news audiences.\textsuperscript{25} Salience hypothesises that news consumers will elevate the importance of events/issues when news coverage is high. Taking Entman’s claim that in selecting some aspects of perceived reality, salience promotes particular problems, definitions, evaluations and treatment recommendations, frequency data proves informative in understanding how meaning-making can be shaped by

\textsuperscript{25} K. Ansah, “Framing Armed Conflicts: An Analysis of Australian Press Reporting on the Bougainville Civil War,” (PhD thesis), Charles Sturt University, 2000, pp. 31-32.
the volume of news coverage. Salience is affected by presence and absence, but also by emphasis. When salience is examined in relation to individual frame schemas such as episodic and thematic framing, as Shen argues, the frame tends to have a stronger impact on audiences. Frame salience, in terms of the presence and absence of news, reflects the subtlety of the practice. Hence it is suggested that claims of bias in relation to thematic framing need to be contextualised in relation to factors such as frequency and, more so, both need to be contextualised in relation to context.

Trends in the use of episodic and thematic framing suggest a propensity for episodic framing, noting its increased use in 1999. Analysis has demonstrated that while in high volume periods of 1998 there were increased accounts of thematic framing, by 1999 episodic framing dominated high volume periods of production. As salience, this analysis suggests audiences in 1999 in particular were exposed to a narrow framework within which evaluations could be made about the political and social events occurring in Indonesia. Specifically, it is argued that contained within these frame schemas was a particular set of meanings which positioned binaries of blame/accountability against remedy/solution, and that this positioning within the news discourse functioned to posit privileged meanings about Megawati. In order to evaluate this hypothesis an analysis of the context of episodic news accounts was undertaken. This analysis demonstrates further how a social reality was embedded within news discourses and how this functioned to shape meanings about Megawati.

Empirical data: context

In examining the context of news reports about Megawati, it became evident that in a majority of accounts Megawati was reported in relation to other events and actors and in only a small number of accounts was she reported autonomously. By coding news accounts into one of six new categories, data demonstrated that in 215 of the 478 news reports (45 per cent) Megawati was contextualised in relation to Suharto, Habibie, the New Order (including its adjuncts Golkar and

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the military) and elections. In 92 news reports (19 per cent) she was reported in relation to human rights issues, including occurrences of political demonstrations, the treatment of protesters, including claims of torture and provincial claims for independence. Her relationships and alliances with other political actors, notably Wahid and Rais, and socio-political organisations, such as student and labour movements, were noted in 62 news reports (13 per cent). In only 19 reports (4 per cent) was Megawati reported in relation to the state of the Indonesian economy, and in only 25 reports (5 per cent) was she reported in relation to regional and international concerns about the economy. Megawati was reported autonomously in 65 news reports accounting for 14 per cent of all of the news articles examined for this case study.
Table 3.3: Context of news stories, all newspaper, 1998 and 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>State/New Order Elections</th>
<th>As a percentage</th>
<th>Megawati/PDI/PDI-P</th>
<th>As a percentage</th>
<th>Other Political Parties/Elites</th>
<th>As a percentage</th>
<th>Domestic Economy</th>
<th>As a percentage</th>
<th>International Economy</th>
<th>As a percentage</th>
<th>Human Rights</th>
<th>As a percentage</th>
<th>Total Number of Articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1998</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Australian</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New York Times</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Times</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Independent</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1999</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Australian</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>61</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New York Times</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Times</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Independent</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>215</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Frequency and context analysis**

In examining the most reported context for news reports (the New Order and elections), examples of episodic-thematic framing from the key periods of reporting (January and May 1998 and June and October 1999) demonstrate how framing shaped a social reality about the events occurring in Indonesia. More so, it demonstrates the privileged framing which positioned Megawati as the remedy/solution to the crisis/drama caused by Suharto and the New Order (1998), and which alleviated Megawati of blame for her failures (1999).
Reporting in January 1998 from *The New York Times* is indicative of the link between context and episodic framing and its function in shaping privileged meanings about Megawati. Under the headline “Indonesian Opposition Chief Calls on President to Resign,” Seth Mydans wrote:

Indonesia’s leading opposition figure, Megawati Sukarnoputri, called on President Suharto today to step down when his term ends in March and told a chanting crowd she was ready to succeed him. Her declaration came during a period of growing public demands for an end to Mr. Suharto’s 32-year rule as the country’s economy swirls in crisis. A crash in the currency Thursday touched off a wave of panic buying that continued today. “I hereby take the opportunity to declare my determination to become leader of our nation and people – if this is indeed the will and consensus of the people,” she told about 500 supporters in the garden of her suburban Jakarta home. They raised their fists and shouted, “Long live Mega.”

Not only is there a lack of political and historical context for Megawati’s calls or to inform broader understandings about why the economy is in crisis, but it privileges understandings about Megawati by positioning her in opposition to Suharto. As an example of episodic framing, the context potentially shapes understandings about Suharto’s accountability for the “crisis” and posits Megawati as a remedy. Moreover, it posits for audiences a social reality. Similar frame reasoning was noted in *The Age’s* coverage of the same event.

The pro-democracy leader, Ms Megawati Sukarnoputri, has set herself on a collision course with President Suharto, declaring her willingness to challenge him for the leadership of Indonesia. In a speech to supporters, Ms Megawati yesterday rebuked the ruling elite for lacking the courage to challenge Mr Suharto…She said the 76-year old Mr Suharto must not be re-nominated for a seventh five-year term when the 1000-member People’s Consultative Assembly meets to elect the a new President in March.

In this case the context is coupled with the keywords of “collision course,” which further highlights the binary between Megawati and Suharto. Episodic framing dictates that there is no broad framework to conceptualise the conditions, events or issues which led Megawati to challenge Suharto, or to conceptualise who the

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“ruling elite” is and why they “lacked the courage.”

While *The Australian* similarly tended to contextualise Megawati in relation to the New Order regime, its propensity to rely less on episodic frames and more on thematic frames provides a somewhat more extensive background within which audiences may have been able to more critically assess Megawati’s claims. Patrick Walters, for example, under the headline “Megawati Sukarnoputri re-establishes her credentials as the informal opposition leader” reported:

Almost 32 years after President Suharto eased her father from power, the wheel has come full circle for Bung Karno’s eldest daughter, Megawati Sukarnoputri. In an ironic twist, Sukarno’s daughter has now thrown down the gauntlet to the man who ended Sukarno’s reign as Indonesia’s first president. In the most important speech of her political career, Megawati re-established her credentials as the informal opposition leader. It was a brave, defiant speech and a bitter denunciation of the performance of Suharto’s New Order Government. But, as Megawati’s chief aides acknowledge, Sukarno’s favourite daughter has an *uphill battle* to become president...Her main problem is that she lacks the necessary backing from Indonesia’s power elite most notably the armed forces. She is barred from formal politics and her supporters have no parliamentary representation.30

In this thematic account, clearly a broader historical framework allows readers to better evaluate Megawati’s call for Suharto’s resignation. While negative connotations are evident in the narrative, particularly her “uphill battle” and her lack of public profile, there is also an alleviating claim which suggests her future successes may be reliant on others, in this case the “power elite” (as with *The Age* they are unnamed) and the military. What is being inferred in both episodic and thematic accounts of Megawati’s calls for Suharto’s resignation is a discourse which highlights a binary between the two actors and narratives, which infer Megawati’s future may be in the hands of others. Arguably, this functions to establish a framework that assuages Megawati’s responsibility for failing to win the presidency, a frame developed throughout 1998 and heightened in 1999.

Generally the context of May 1998 reporting were the machinations leading up to and including the resignation of Suharto. While episodic frames dominated reporting, as reporting generally was framed with immediate, on-the-spot accounts of developments as they unfolded, more interpretative narratives of Megawati were embedded in multiple news frames. Some accounts were positive and some negative. Symptomatic of coverage in The Australian was editorialising which suggested Megawati “would have no hope of being elected.” While suggesting “the most likely outcome would be the election of a president from the military,” no context was offered as to why this might be.31

Appearing to connote negativity, this type of framing, given its episodic nature, could still function to shape an understanding of the machinations working against Megawati. This is particularly evident when read as part of a broader narrative of victimhood at the hands of unseen others. As such it is indicative of the privileged framing attached to Megawati. This type of framing was comparable with coverage noted in The Age that similarly exemplified the binary and privileged framing seen in January, and also reinforced meanings about Megawati’s political status under the regime. The Age reported on 15 May 1998:

The problem is that, clear though it is that the President must go, it is far from clear who or what will be his successor...Habibie is deeply implicated in the web of patronage and the profligate spending practices that have led to Indonesia’s turmoil...the political leaders who might be able to devise a new form of government for Indonesia, such as Muslim leader Mr Amien Rais or the pro-democracy campaigner Ms Megawati Sukarnoputri, have been demonised and excluded from power.32

While The New York Times reporting conceptualised the events occurring in May 1998 with episodic frames focused on the drama of the political crises unfolding in Indonesia, as with The Australian, narratives were embedded in the frames that functioned to posit multiple meanings. One example indicates the multiplicity of meaning identified not only in the newspaper generally, but how the complexity of meaning was captured within one singular news report. In the opening excerpt of Mark Landler’s 21 May report, the newspaper reported:

...As successful as the students’ protests have been, it was clear the movement lacked a leader like Corazon C. Aquino, who inspired a “people power” revolution in the Philippines in 1986 and vanquished Ferdinand E. Marcos by the sheer force of her moral authority.\(^{33}\)

The meaning embedded in this opening refrain is alluding to Megawati’s failure to adopt a more significant profile as an opposition leader and thus missing a key political opportunity. However later in the report, Landler suggested:

...Megawati Sukarnoputri has more in common with Mrs. Aquino than Mr. Rais. Like Mrs. Aquino….Ms. Megawati has an emotive tie to her country’s political history…Ms. Megawati…is also a symbol of Mr. Suharto’s tactics.\(^{34}\)

Referring to her ousting from the head of the PDI in 1996, the narrative further mimics the Australian accounts by providing a context within which her failures are attributed to Suharto, rather than to her own inabilities. In this type of reporting, not only are multiple meanings evidenced within the frame, but it provides a more vigorous account of how framing analysis needs to conceptualise both the nature of the frame as episodic or thematic within the context of the news report.

In relation to 1999 news coverage, not only was there a significant increase in episodic framing, but the majority of news reports contextualised Megawati in relation to June general election and the October presidential election. Seth Mydans, writing for The New York Times in June 1999, offered the following account, again suggesting the privileged meaning being conceptualised about Megawati:

The world’s fourth most populous country, freed from the grip of its long-time dictator, marked a new era of political freedom today with its first free election in four decades…In contrast to the stage-managed elections of President Suharto, who was forced to resign one year ago after 32 years in power, the outcome of today’s vote is utterly unpredictable…For many people here this messy process, with its unknowns, amounts to a battle over the soul of a future Indonesia, pitting what are known as the forces of


reform against the forces of the status quo. The status quo is represented by Mr. Suharto’s party, Golkar, which still holds power...The leading symbol of reform in Megawati Sukarnoputri, the daughter of Mr. Suharto’s predecessor, Sukarno. She is the candidate of the conservative nationalist Indonesian Democratic Party of reform...Around these big-name players, the country’s politics, with its competing 48 parties, swirls and surges with factions, rivalries and hidden agendas.35

Evidenced in this account of the June general election are trends noted in 1998 coverage which functioned to induce a binary between the New Order and Megawati, and furthermore maintained narratives of the existence of others whom may act with dubious motives to deny Megawati the presidency. A similar version of the binary appeared in The Age. In this case Megawati, along with Wahid, were reported as “on one side” and Islamic parties including Golkar on the other.36 While the Melbourne-based newspaper was not as garrulous as other newspaper in stating Megawati’s claims on the presidency, it did maintain narratives of her victimhood and the threats that may still emerge. The newspaper’s 5 June 1999 coverage reported:

Only the foolhardy will call this race for sure. Megawati appears the one to beat because she symbolises Soeharto’s victimisation. But no single party will win a majority and a coalition is a most likely outcome. Even Golkar cannot be ruled out because of it well-established rural networks and a stash of cash it can use in the phrase of the times: money politics.37

As has been suggested, this type of episodic framing, which deflects blame on others, generally functions to obscure a political leader’s own failures and lack of responsibility.38 The Australian similarly framed the June elections in ways which posited a binary, noting the struggle between the “reformists versus the status quo”39 and reported the election as a crystallisation of the polarising forces of Islamic power on own side and secular-nationalists on the other.40 Suggestive of how privileged meanings were posited even in The Australian’s thematic accounts of the social reality of the Megawati-New Order binary, Don Greenlees’

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36 “Open approach may be too much to soon,” The Age, 3 June 1999, p. 13.
40 P. Walters, “Mega-crowd makes the others see red,” The Australian, 4 June 1999, p. 7.
June story “Daughter of Destiny” states:

In her own political career, she too was a victim of Suharto’s plots. As de facto opposition leader in 1996, she posed too great a threat to the status quo so Suharto arranged for her to be removed from the helm of the Indonesian Democratic Party. But she enjoyed the final word: she went on to create the breakaway PDI Struggle as a personal and even more successful election vehicle. Megawati embodies a contemporary and historical national struggle for justice. Her supporters look to her to right the wrongs of Suharto’s New Order regime; to eliminate the corruption, the blatant favouritism, the oppression and the widening gap between rich and poor. Her campaign is permeated with a certain irrational nostalgia. Street-side posters and banners often feature images of Sukarno who ruled Indonesia at a chaotic and distressed time.\textsuperscript{41}

While negative connotations are potentially attached to Megawati via the references to Sukarno, for the most part the narrative functions to maintain the binary between the regime and Megawati and, as such, evaluations and judgements about both are potentially shaped by the binary positioning.

Discourses identified in \textit{The Times} also engaged in polarisation, juxtaposing Megawati whom they described as “the most popular single politician,” against \textit{Golkar}. \textit{Golkar} was described as “Mr. Suharto’s party,” which “amounted to little more than repression and corruption,” and whose leader Habibie was “Mr. Suharto’s former lieutenant.” Habibie, it was reported, had “done little to allay suspicions that, as a crony of the former regime, he is covering up its corruption.”\textsuperscript{42} \textit{The Times} also maintained privileged positioning of Megawati. However, in this case it did so without the sense of threat from others. Rather, the newspaper shaped a sense of her invincibility, particularly noted in narratives of her “mythical powers.”\textsuperscript{43} Of further note is how the British newspaper, having adopted this position, maintained it well into October 1999, shaping reports with a discursive understanding of Megawati’s role in the “new era of Indonesian politics.” The following is an excerpt from an October 1999 report by David Watt:

\textsuperscript{42}“Yellow fire: Hopes and fears for Indonesia at the polls,” \textit{The Times}, 7 June 1999, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{43}“Indonesia faces its electoral test of unity,” \textit{The Times}, 4 June 1999.
Ms Megawati is expected in win the largest share of the vote…(and is) favourite for the post (of the presidency). The support for Ms Megawati is emotional and mystically linked to her charismatic father, whom many Indonesians believe she embodies. Her style is inclusive and secular…Ms Megawati’s Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle provides an umbrella for all.44

Binary positioning and privileged framing was also evidenced in The Independent. However, the framework was more subtle. The election itself was framed as a binary: the democrats, Megawati, Rais and Wahid, against the authoritarian New Order, Golkar and Habibie.45 Reinforcing the binary were descriptors of the electoral system under Suharto as fraudulent and government controlled, which forced opposition parties to “put up the pretence of competing” with elections won by “bullying and bribing voters,” whereas in June an “excess” of democracy was evident.46 In terms of privileged positioning, threats in this case were narrated in claims of the potential of electoral fraud. While not specifically attached to Megawati, a sense of foreboding at the hands of unseen others was still evident in news discourses.

While episodic framing was evident in reporting of the October presidential elections, a distinct shift in both binaries and privileged framing was noted within the schema. The social reality was no longer shaped by the struggle between Megawati and the New Order, but by the machinations of others who were acting against Megawati and, as such, threatening her “moral right” for the presidency.47 The other social reality posited in news discourses was the spectre of violence if Megawati failed to win office. This was overlaid with narratives that perhaps for the first time broadly captured Megawati’s own culpabilities. Arguably the problem here for audiences was that in relation to all three aspects, the nature of the framing as episodic meant a limited framework was available to critically assess, evaluate and judge the key actors and their value to the future of Indonesian leadership.

By October 1999, with some exceptions, the binary positioning identified in earlier coverage shifted from the New Order/Megawati paradigm to one conceptualising actors Rais and Wahid, with issues such as political alliances and Megawati’s gender as the issues likely to deny her the presidency. These actors/issues functioned to maintain much of the privileged framing that had been evidenced since January 1998. While earlier patterns in episodic framing demonstrated how the New Order regime was positioned as the problem and Megawati as the remedy, by October, the machinations of Rais and Wahid were positioned as a threat to Megawati’s chances for the presidency. An inversion of previous episodic frames, it still functioned to discursively frame Megawati.

In relation to Rais, his elevation to the Chair of the national parliament and his position within the Central Axis were reported as a threat to Megawati’s future. However, given the episodic nature of coverage, audiences may have lacked the context to understand why these factors were significant. Lacking context, what remained was an alleviating frame: Megawati’s chances of the presidency would be thwarted by the actions/alliances of others. As suggested, this type of alleviating frame generally functions to obscure a political leader’s own failures.

Positing as previous frames had that the actions of others (rather than Megawati’s own failings) would cost her the presidency, notions of victim hood were also perpetuated. Similarly, reports of Wahid’s betrayal functioned in much the same way. An indicative example of the ‘betrayal’ narrative is offered from *The Independent*:

Few political leaders have been as grievously betrayed as a supposed ally as she [Megawati] was yesterday by Mr Wahid. Earlier this year, the two were seen side by side announcing the formation of an anti-government coalition, along with Mr Rais. Days later, he was seen on TV sniggeringly denouncing her as “stupid” and intellectually unfit for high office…Somehow Mr Wahid has managed to get away with it…

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Similarly the issue of Megawati’s gender can be seen as a framework within which privileged positioning was maintained. *The Times*, while alluding to treachery of Wahid, more directly focused on the role of Islamic forces in denying Megawati the presidency because of her gender. Binaries of Megawati’s secularism were positioned against unnamed Islamic forces, who it was reported could “not stomach a woman ruler.” As an alleviating frame, it also appeared in *The Age* which reported: “Megawati’s gender was a barrier in the eyes of many Muslims to her becoming the nation’s leader.” *The Australian* adopted a broader interpretation of the forces likely to deny Megawati, shaping them as elites. Juxtaposed with Megawati it similarly maintains a sense of duplicity, hence victimhood.

The larger problem identified in examining how these actors (Rais and Wahid) and issues (Islam and gender) were framed to posit threat and victimhood was the propensity to frame news accounts episodically. Lacking broader thematic treatment, much of the context, history and politics surrounding the presidential vote was lost. Rather, framing positioned one actor/issue against the other in a binary suggesting a struggle between machinations of others and Megawati. Overlaying these binaries and associated aspects of privilege were narratives suggesting the spectre of violence if Megawati failed to be elected. For news audiences such framing, particularly the episodic accounts, is problematic, speaks to the discursive nature of the news to shape knowledge in ways which are emotive and contentious, and is reflective of salience.

**Empirical data: keywords**

While an examination of the context within which Megawati was reported demonstrates one aspect how a social reality and associated privileged meanings was constructed and maintained, linguistic choices made by media practitioners such as keywords, themes, stock phrases, stereotypes, catchphrases, metaphors

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50 “The morning after: Indonesia must now plot the next steps to full democracy,” *The Times*, 21 October 1999, p. 23.
and dramatic characterisations,\textsuperscript{53} when considered as “systems of communication,” also play a “significant role in shaping human subjectivities and social reality.”\textsuperscript{54} As such, the following empirical data and analysis examine how certain linguistic patterns functioned to further embed news discourses with privileged meanings regarding Megawati.

From the 478 news articles examined for the study, five sets of keywords were measured for frequency. The five themes were references to:

(1) Megawati’s lineage (both Sukarno/Sukarnoism);
(2) Gender (the use of gendered terms such as “housewife,” “mother,” “princess,” and “queen”);
(3) religious issues (including Islam and female leadership and Hinduism);
(4) Megawati’s status as a “democracy” leader; and
(5) crises narratives (including panic, riots, chaos, violence, turmoil, looting, unrest, conflict, clashes, killings, mass demonstrations/protests).

The results are illustrated in the following table. The following section demonstrates ways within which lineage, gender, religion and attributes of democracy shaped privileged meanings about Megawati. The form and function of crises frames are discussed in Chapter Four.

\textsuperscript{53} Ting Lee et al, “Asian Conflicts,” p. 502.
Table 3.4: Occurrences of selected keywords, all newspaper, 1998 and 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sukarno/ Sukarnoism</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Democracy Leader</th>
<th>Crises</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Age 1998</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Age 1999</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Australian 1998</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Australian 1999</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New York Times 1998</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New York Times 1999</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Times 1998</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Independent 1999</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>780</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis indicates that “crises” keywords were the most commons linguistic pattern evident in the 478 news reports examined for this project. It is noted that the overwhelming prevalence of references to “crises” likely had a strong impact on how audiences evaluated political conditions in Indonesia during 1998 and 1999. In regard to other keyword data, gendered framing was most prevalent in The Age and The Australian, with multiple references particularly evident in 1999. Similar trends were also noted in relation to religious themes. In this case, The New York Times, The Age and The Australian were the most prolific in their use of religious themes/narratives, particularly in 1999. Frequency of references in relation to Megawati’s status as a democracy leader was only noted in The Age, almost wholly occurring in its 1998 coverage. While other newspapers referred to her status as an opposition leader, the term “democracy leader” was not used.
Keywords: Megawati and Sukarno

Frequency of references to Megawati’s lineage significantly increased in 1999. The most pronounced increases were noted in *The Age*, with references rising from nine in 1998 to 40 in 1999, in *The Times* from one reference in 1998 to 14 references in 1999, and in *The Independent* from one reference in 1998 to five references in 1999. Minor increases were noted in *The Australian*, rising from 26 references in 1998 to 37 references in 1999. A more consistent level was noted in *The New York Times* with 13 references in 1998 and 16 references in 1999. Frequency data alone however fails to capture how Megawati’s lineage functioned to shape meanings about her character or motivations.

Analysis of textual references of Megawati’s lineage as Sukarno’s daughter noted distinct trends in the use of binaries and packaging to induce meanings about the Megawati. How Sukarno himself was framed, how the treatment of Sukarno was juxtaposed with Megawati’s treatment (both at the hands of the New Order), assertions that Megawati was drawing on the imagery of Sukarno but was not a Sukarnoist, and comparisons of Sukarno’s Guided Democracy with post-New Order democracy variously shaped privileged meanings about Megawati. The language used to describe how Sukarno lost power in 1965-1966 impacted how audiences understood Megawati and her claims in 1999. For example, *The Times* reported that Sukarno was “overthrown from power.”\(^{55}\) This is different from the textual reference used by *The Age* which described Sukarno as having “surrendered power.”\(^{56}\) Arguably, each posited different meanings when conceptualised in relation to Megawati.

Sukarno’s overthrow by Suharto could shape Megawati’s tilt at the presidency as a chance to revenge her father or, alternatively, as the daughter of a former president who surrendered, Megawati’s push could be seen more dynastically. In a related way, how Megawati was framed in relation to her father also sustained a sense of her victimhood. *The New York Times*, for example, melded the New Order’s treatment of Sukarno with their treatment of Megawati. Portrayed as “the

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long-time symbol of opposition to and victimisation by Mr. Suharto,” this characterisation asserted a privileged meaning about Megawati. This frame was strengthened when inverted in narratives about her father’s treatment. In the following 3 June 1999 account from Seth Mydan, aspects of binaries, privileged meaning and victim narratives are all evident:

…it was clearly the last thing he intended, it was Suharto who launched the candidacy of his most likely successor as Indonesia’s next elected leader - his longtime nemesis, Megawati Sukarnoputri. Swatting away a political irritant three years ago, he engineered the ouster of Mrs. Megawati as the increasingly popular leader of one of the country’s two normally subservient opposition parties. In a stroke, he created a martyr…Megawati’s party is riding a wave of popular momentum…Her extraordinary popularity is a puzzle to outsiders. A passive figure who sometimes seems not very interested in her political work, Mrs. Megawati, 52, is clearly more symbol than leader…many Indonesians now imagine that they have found a saviour and a kindred spirit in this fellow victim. And indulging in something of a historical fantasy, many see in her the incarnation of what they now imagine were better times under her father – Indonesia’s charismatic founding President, Sukarno - who also fell victim to Mr. Suharto when he was deposed in 1967. “Sukarno passed away a long time ago, but we believe his spirit is still here with Mega,” said a hairdresser named Bambang…And she suffered so much when Suharto was President.”

Similar in structure and content is the *The Age*’s article titled, “The Full Mega” also published in June 1999; a period noted for increased references to Sukarno.

Megawati…daughter of Indonesia’s founding President Sukarno and political victim of former President Soeharto can do no wrong in the eyes of the hundred of thousands of people who have spilled out on to the streets this week to show their support for her Partai Demokrasi Indonesia…The huge, jubilant crowds, she says, are the product of her long years of building her political credibility by struggling against former President Soeharto, a particularly personal battle with the man who brought down her father when she was just a teenager. Her critics, though, are less kind. They attribute her enormous appeal not to her skills of record, but to a dangerous and growing personality cult that has turned Megawati into a “symbol of revenge” for all the excesses, abuses and repression of more than three decades under the Soeharto regime.

A different approach was noted in *The New York Times* which generally adopted a more critical approach to Sukarno, noting in particular Sukarno’s 1964 speech rejecting American aid. Mark Landler, for example, reminded audiences of the chaotic state of Indonesia under Sukarno, albeit in relation to the state of the Indonesian politics under the New Order regime. What is of interest, however, is that even in critical reporting of Sukarno, a binary with Megawati was evident. What appeared to be being suggested was that while Megawati was pragmatically drawing on the imagery and symbolism of Sukarno, once in power she would adopt a more pragmatic approach, particularly in relation to the economy. So, while reporting Megawati’s campaign as “heavily symbolic,” “drawing on an emotional public yearning for a return to the Indonesia of her father,” *The New York Times* reassured audiences that “despite her credentials as a nationalist, Mrs. Megawati is not about to follow her father’s lead in spurning foreign money.” Rather, she had “embraced” the IMF reform package.60

The Megawati-Sukarno paradigm was framed differently again in *The Times*. For the most part this publication stylised meanings about Megawati by inverting her as an “emotional and mythical” link to Sukarno, the “charismatic father,” which David Watts suggested “many Indonesians believe she embodies.”61 Framing in *The Independent*, given its propensity to heavily rely on episodic accounts (the second highest user of episodic frames in 1998 with 73 per cent and the highest user in 1999 with 88 per cent), relied on similarly symbolic devices. Lloyd Parry, for example, narrated Megawati as a “heroine to many Indonesians for her stubborn, dignified and peaceful resistance to President Suharto,” denoting Megawati’s victimhood, adding “she is held in almost mystical regard by the country’s poor,” potentially functioning to denote her legitimacy. This was juxtaposed with references to Megawati’s lineage as the daughter of the “country’s nostalgically revered founder, Sukarno.”62 As such both British publications relied heavily on symbolic, almost messianic, narratives to shape privileged meanings about Megawati. As discussed in Chapter One, this type of

framing is indicative of gendered framing, which denies autonomy to female leaders in post‐colonial Asia.\textsuperscript{63} Moreover, as emotive framing, repeated over time it can “publically attribute” a degree of symbolic significance which suggests both competency and legitimacy.\textsuperscript{64}

*The Australian* newspaper adopted a different approach again to the Megawati/Sukarno relationship. In some instances, references to Sukarno’s “Guided Democracy” and the lack of free elections under Sukarno (and Suharto) functioned as a binary to position Megawati as a democrat, at the forefront of post‐Suharto Indonesia.\textsuperscript{65} In other instances, *The Australian* adopted a binary between Sukarno and Megawati which functioned as it did in *The New York Times* to posit that while Megawati was drawing on her father’s name, she was not a Sukarnoist. This was noted in Peter Barnett’s article titled, “Quiet pretender eschews greatness:”

A Megawati presidency will differ greatly from that of her father...Of all Sukarno’s five children, she was the particular favourite. She spent the first 17 years of her life as the privileged princess in the palace and shared the glory, and the ultimate rejection, of her father. In her political campaign, she has referred constantly to this direct link and has called for a return to the grand days of this past era...If she assumes power, how much will Megawati draw on the experience of Sukarno?...Megawati has claim on a name and a flawed heritage...She does not share many qualities of his greatness - his vision, political experience, the charisma, the oratory... But, unlike her father, she is acutely aware of the economic crisis Indonesia confronts...She endorses her father’s commitment to nationalism...The characters of father and daughter are poles apart. Megawati is a quiet, disciplined housewife and mother...She is apparently happily married...Her father was a noted womanizer...Without her father’s name, Megawati would have remained in obscurity. Instead, she may be charged with the responsibility of bringing 210 million people into a democratic millennium.\textsuperscript{66}

Don Greenlees also adopted a similar binary in his article, “Daughter of Destiny,” however in the following excerpt narratives of victimhood were also evident.

To millions of urban and rural poor, Megawati has a rare and fortunate appeal: the politician who is seen as being above politics. If Megawati succeeds…it would be the climax of a modern Indonesian fairytale. She is the daughter of Indonesia’s first president Sukarno - schemed against and deposed by Suharto in 1966. In her own political career, she too was a victim of Suharto’s plots. As de facto opposition leader in 1996, she posed too great a threat to the status quo so Suharto arranged her removal from the helm of the Indonesian Democratic Party. But she enjoyed the final word: she went on to create the breakaway PDI Struggle as a personal and even more successful election vehicle. Her campaign is permeated with a certain irrational nostalgia. Street-side posters and banners often feature images of Sukarno who ruled Indonesia at a chaotic and distressed time…For millions of Indonesians, she has become the symbol of their struggle for democracy. So deep are the passions of her followers many politicians and observers are fearful of the public reaction should she be denied.67

In some cases, the textual references to Sukarno functioned to establish and sustain narratives of Megawati’s victimhood. In other cases, it functioned to denote her democratic credentials by positioning her in opposition to her father’s Guided Democracy and Suharto’s authoritarianism. In even other cases, it functioned to capture the imagery of Megawati’s heritage, but reassuring her credentials as a pragmatic liberal-democrat. There is evidence that narratives embedded within these privileged meanings (in both episodic and thematic accounts) relied on symbolism, rhetoric and metaphors (frame devices) to induce understandings of Megawati and her heritage in ways which were familiar to audiences. This was further noted in relation to the use of gendered keywords.

**Keywords: Megawati and Gender**

Gendered references such as “princess,” “queen,” “mother,” and “housewife,” while sparsely used in 1998, became more common in 1999. In 1998 coverage, for example, *The Times* and *The Independent* made no specifically gendered references to Megawati. However, in 1999 coverage, 12 references were noted in *The Times* and six references in *The Independent*. Frequency of gendered

references increased in *The New York Times* from one reference in 1998 to five references in 1999. An almost four-fold increase was noted in *The Age*, with references rising from four in 1998 to 11 in 1999, while a six-fold increase was noted in *The Australian*, rising from three references in 1998 to 18 references in 1999. This trend is in line with increases in episodic framing noted to have occurred in 1999. This may suggest that, inherent in episodic framing, is a greater reliance on rhetoric and symbolism, given that episodic framing generally lacks a broader intellectualisation of the issues and actors. In terms of meaning-making aspects of gendered framing, what is noted is how the frame appears to sustain narratives of Megawati’s victimhood.

Accounts in *The Australian* in 1998, for example, noted Megawati had “remained a housewife until politics beckoned.”68 This is reflective of the claims made earlier in this thesis which suggested media framing of post-colonial leadership in Asia relied on positioning women leaders as being in service of the nation, often resulting in the frame being developed into notions of their leadership as “mothering” the nation.69 Unsurprisingly then, *The Australian* offered in a 1999 report that “Megawati is something of a Mother Earth to Indonesians.” Further, this report appeared to be suggesting that there was a concern that because she was “a middle class housewife” she was “an untested politician.”70 Greenlees’ assessment puts it even more directly: Megawati was “a poorly-educated homemaker” and any success she achieved would be a “modern Indonesian fairytale.”71 “Motherhood” narratives noted in *The Australian* in 1999 were also noted in *The Age* which reported “Megawati is a woman who is comfortable with the label ‘housewife’ and, as such, brings a motherly authority to the political stage.”72

*The Age* also appeared to be suggesting that Megawati’s leadership was in the service of the nation and, in this case, narratives appeared to denote a lack of agency. That is, the publication claimed that prior to her political career

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Megawati was “content” as housewife and mother, drafted in a political career for which she was ill-equipped, and only attained a level of authority because of how the New Order treated her. In this assessment, it appears to suggest a lack of agency and sustains notions of victimhood. The following is a broader excerpt of Louise Williams’ October 1998 report:

The daughter of Indonesia’s founding President Soekarno, Ms Megawati was a young woman when her father died under house arrest in 1970 - after being ousted by Soeharto five years earlier - and the children made a pact to stay out of politics. For more than two decades, Ms Megawati says she was content with her life as a mother and housewife. But, in 1992 PDI officials finally convinced her the pact was outdated, and she was elevated to party chair in 1993. Ironically, Soeharto’s strategy to force her off the political stage in 1996 only elevated the middle-aged housewife to a level of political prominence some thought was beyond her experience and capacity. “She wasn’t important politically, until she was marginalised so brutally and so blatantly, that it made people very, very angry,” said one academic. Now, in post-Soeharto Indonesia Ms Megawati is clearly emerging as a front runner in next year’s presidential race.73

While gendered terms were not particularly prevalent in American reporting, they were still evident. The most common narrative used in The New York Times was one of Megawati as “soft-spoken.” The term was generally used when describing Megawati as Sukarno’s daughter, contributing to the sense that Megawati was unlike her father, already noted as outspoken particularly in relation to the United States. Mark Landler’s March 1999 report filed from Bali, described as “Megawati Country,” demonstrates it use: “Throughout Bali the vast majority of campaign paraphernalia champions the soft-spoken [my emphasis] opposition leader, who is the daughter of Indonesia’s founding President, Sukarno.”74 The term was also used in June 1999: “The soft-spoken [my emphasis] daughter of Indonesia’s founding President, Sukarno, Mrs. Megawati ran a heavily symbolic campaign, drawing on an emotional public yearning for a return to the Indonesia of her father.”75 This framing confirms a propensity to frame post-colonial female political leaders within notions of “soft politics” that functioned as a binary to highlight the “hard politics” of the oppressive patriarchies, which were

generally framed as having caused social, economic and political instability and crises.

Given *The Times* use of symbolic rhetoric as already noted in their use of messianic narratives, gendered framing drew on monarchical themes. In some cases, monarchical references were overtly negative. In other cases, their function was to suggest transformation. In the case of the former, *The Times*’ Daniel Kestenholz claimed that Megawati “counts as a queen and as a commander. She is said to be arrogant, self-satisfied and lazy; to have no charisma or political talent. Her lineage recalls an epoch of freedom and dignity.”\(^76\) In other cases, it functioned to shape a sense of transformation from “housewife” to “queen,” an attempt to stylise her “ordinariness.” This is evidenced by the following account from David Watts, published in June 1999:

> An “ordinary housewife” who is the daughter of Indonesia’s founding father was last night on course to lead the world’s third largest democracy. Megawati Sukarnoputri has undergone a difficult grounding in the hard school of Indonesian politics that will stand her in good stead when the presidency is decided in November...Quiet, and with no discernible policies, Ms Megawati is the daughter of Ahmed Sukarno, the first President. She has risen almost despite herself and sometimes looks petrified by the adulation her reputation as “Queen Mega” inspires among her followers... for most people, “Queen Mega” might provide just what they need: a period of peace to rebuild their lives under a government of which they can be proud.\(^77\)

Notions however of Megawati’s ‘ordinariness’ were not forthcoming from *The New York Times*, which claimed under the headline “Indonesia’s Vote: Reformers May Be Disappointed” that “Megawati is the daughter of Indonesia’s founding President, Sukarno, and has spent her life within the country’s political establishment.”\(^78\) Similarly *The Australian* noted Megawati herself was a “product of the New Order political system.”\(^79\) While monarchical references were noted in *The Times*, they were not used in *The Independent*, *The New York Times* or *The Age*. *The Australian* used it in the context of Megawati’s election to

\(^{77}\) D. Watts, “‘Queen Mega’ in sight of throne,” *The Times*, 9 June 1999, p. 16.
the vice-presidency, reporting Megawati “has to carve out a role for herself in Government, instead of presiding as the symbol as she has previously wished [my emphasis].”\(^80\) A similar discursive tone is noted in \emph{The Australian’s} reference to Megawati as Sukarno’s “particular favourite” who “spent the first 17 years of her life as the privileged \emph{princess} in the palace [my emphasis].”\(^81\) Of some interest was \emph{The Australian’s} description of Wahid, on his election to the Presidency, as a “king-maker” who won the “crown.”\(^82\)

Gendered terms such as “princess,” “queen,” “mother,” and “housewife” functioned to shape privileged meanings about Megawati by drawing on culturally understood, though assumed, values. It is suggested that religious aspects similarly shaped understandings about Megawati. However, in this case the framing reverted to alleviating frames noted earlier.

**Keywords: Megawati and Religion**

As with lineage and gendered references, empirical data indicates significant increases in textual references to religion and religious issues in 1999. Data indicates single-digit references to religion in all newspapers in 1998, but in 1999 increases were noted in \emph{The Age} with 16 references, \emph{The Australian} with 18, and \emph{The New York Times} with 11 references. Nominal references were noted in \emph{The Times} (three) and \emph{The Independent} (two). As with gendered framing it is posited that religious narratives also functioned as alleviating frames.

As early as October 1998, \emph{The New York Times} raised the spectre of religion as a factor in the election of Indonesia’s next president. The newspaper reported claims made by New Order Minister A. M. Saeffuddin that Megawati “should not be elected president of predominately Muslim Indonesia because she is a “Hindu.””\(^83\) While the newspaper clarified that in fact Megawati was a Muslim, it began a pattern in Western reporting which positioned Megawati in a binary with Islamic forces. Expansion of the frame, particularly in 1999, provided a context

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\(^80\) G. Sheridan, “Destiny calls presidential dream team,” \emph{The Australian}, 23 October 1999, p. 15.


\(^82\) G. Barton, “Maverick king-maker wins crown,” \emph{The Australian}, 23 October 1999, p. 16.

\(^83\) “8,000 Students Urge Indonesian Leader to Quit,” \emph{The New York Times}, 29 October 1998, p. 11.
within which Megawati could be alleviated of responsibility for not winning the presidency in October 1999. As such, it is further evidence of privileged framing.

By June 1999, *The New York Times* inverted both gender and religion to provide an alleviating frame for Megawati. The reported titled “Can She Run Indonesia? It’s About Islam, or Is It?” by Seth Mydans demonstrates the binary, its privilege, and its alleviating frame:

> Can a woman be president of Indonesia, the world's largest Islamic nation? It is the question of the day. The leading contender for the presidency in Indonesia’s long, tortured political process is a woman, Megawati Sukarnoputri. And as coalition lobbying intensifies…some of her opponents are playing the Islamic card. A restive but largely quiescent political force for decades, Islam has suddenly emerged, in the vacuum of the slow vote count, as a potentially divisive issue…all of Indonesian politics is in flux now, one year after the forced resignation of President Suharto, and Islamic factions are shifting and roiling as they seek a new place in a new political order. The wedge issue is gender.  

Lloyd Parry, in this case writing for *The New York Times*, maintained the inversion of gender and religion, writing one month later that Megawati’s path to the presidency would be obstructed by a “complicated presidential election system,” by a “raft of smaller parties opposed to her reformist policies,” and to the “very notion of a female head of state.” A similar framework was noted in *The Times* coverage of the 1999 June elections, which noted while Megawati was the “most popular single politician,” her “appeal could be undercut by Muslim suspicion of women rulers.”

This narrative was repeated in the context of Megawati’s defeat in the presidential election in October 1999. Reports claimed her defeat was a result of “some conservatives” not being able to “stomach a woman ruler.” This framework functioned over time to establish a framework within which Megawati’s defeat could be attributed to others, hence alleviating her of responsibility. While *The Times* acknowledged her failure to “parlay her party’s good showing in parliamentary elections into solid political alliances,” an alleviating frame is still evidenced.

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86 “Yellow fire: Hopes and fears for Indonesia at the polls,” *The Times*, 7 June 1999, p. 21
87 “The morning after - Indonesia must now plot the next steps to full democracy,” *The Times*, 21 October
Hardly a factor in 1998 coverage, by 1999 *The Australian* extensively reported Islamic machinations as a potential factor blocking Megawati’s path to the presidency. In relation to the June elections, the publication noted that “the prospect of a female head of State troubles Indonesia’s more orthodox Muslims, who say it would be impossible to endorse Ms Megawati.” It was also reported that “Muslim elders issued an urgent call for Muslims to refrain from supporting Megawati’s PDI-P and vote only for religious-based Islamic parties,” and that Megawati was “likely to be hurt by reluctance by conservative Muslims to back a woman for president.” Religion was offered as a possible explanation for the fraying of the relationship between Megawati and Wahid, in this case because of Megawati’s “apparent lack of concern for Muslim sensitivities.” As with gendered references which shaped a lack of agency on Megawati’s behalf, religious machinations were offered by *The Australian* as one framework in which to explain Megawati’s defeat in October. This excerpt, published on 22 October 1999, is offered as an indicative example:

The key to Wahid’s victory was the last-minute withdrawal of B. J. Habibie. In a three-way race, the Muslim vote would have been largely split between Habibie and Wahid. Wahid would have come in third, and Megawati Sukarnoputri would have beaten Habibie head-on. But in the turmoil created by Habibie’s withdrawal, the People’s Consultative Assembly was faced with the stark contrast between the most respected Muslim figure in the country and a secular woman. For Muslims, this was a non-choice…Ironically, then, Habibie’s fall cost Megawati the race.

The most notable aspect of *The Age*’s use of religious references to denote meaning about Megawati was the repeated attachment of the term “secular” to describe Megawati, and its often conjunctive use in references to Rais and Wahid as Islamic leaders. Her position as a “nationalist” was also commonly used and, in a similar way, juxtaposed. Most notable in *The Age* was also the repetitious description of Megawati as a “pro-democracy” leader in 1998 (though by 1999 the term all but disappeared). When reading the totality of *The Age*’s coverage,
trends emerged which appeared to suggest that the terms “secular,” “nationalist” and “pro-democracy leader” were used to position Megawati in a binary with others. For the most part, the binary appeared to function by inferring that the secular, nationalist, pro-democracy Megawati was on one side of what was a polarised struggle with Islamic leaders (Rais and Wahid), Islamic parties, Central Axis forces, and Golkar on the other. For most of The Age’s coverage in 1998 this appeared to be the dominant narrative used to shape meanings about Megawati.

By 1999 reporting notably shifted, with more of an emphasis on the machinations of Islamic leaders and politicians to deny Megawati the presidency, thus reverting to the victimhood narrative noted earlier. 93 Also noted was the lack of agency attributed to Megawati, with her chances of victory linked to the actions of Rais, whom the newspaper reported had failed to “overcome policy differences with her party” and, with the actions of Wahid, had “publicly raised doubts about Mrs. Megawati’s credentials.” 94 Given the episodic approach to reporting, The Age’s claim that, regardless of machinations “her party is also seen as being not Muslim enough” 95 added little to the understanding of the complexities of events unfolding in Indonesia. Binaries, rather, appeared to be the frame reasoning used to sustain the social reality. The following is an example from The Age, published in June 1999:

In many ways Indonesia has turned a full, and deeply symbolic, circle. It was Sukarno who had presided over Indonesia’s experiment with democracy in the 1950s, and it is his daughter who is most likely to lead the first democratically elected Indonesian Government in more than four decades. But behind the scenes, as the coalition-building horse-trading begins, the parallels with the past extend way beyond the Sukarno name, as the front-runners line up along the political divisions of old. On one side stand the nationalists, who support Sukarno’s vision of a unified nation binding together the Muslim majority and the myriad ethnic, cultural and religious minorities, and on the other, the Islamic bloc, compromising those who seek a greater say for the Muslim majority in political and a greater stake in the economy. 96


In this keyword analysis, it is evident that particularly privileged meanings were being attached to Megawati. While it can be said that her ‘story’ was unique, considering she was a woman attempting to succeed to power in a predominantly Muslim nation and the daughter of Sukarno, a leader with significant stature (sometimes reviled and sometimes revered), it was how her “story” was interpreted and woven in the news frame to posit meaning that was noteworthy. In some cases this was done with juxtapositioning and binaries and, in other cases, it drew on value-laden narratives, particularly noted in relation to gendered themes.

**Conclusion**

In summary, empirical data indicates that the Western news media examined for this framing analysis had a propensity to frame news accounts episodically throughout 1998 and 1999. The use of episodic framing was highest in all publications except *The Australian* in 1999. Data reveals it was most used in *The Age* in 1998 (78 per cent), followed by *The Independent* (73 per cent), *The New York Times* and *The Times* (71 per cent), and least used in *The Australian* (64 per cent). In 1999, it increased in all publications except *The Australian*, where it marginally decreased to 62 per cent. The most prolific used of episodic framing in 1999 was *The Independent* (88 per cent), followed by *The Age* (83 per cent), *The New York Times* (81 per cent) and lastly *The Times* (79 per cent).

Episodic framing is considered detrimental to news audiences because it lacks aspects of social, political, cultural, or historical context required by audiences to cognitively understand the broader relationships between issues, causes and remedies. 97 By framing news accounts within immediately occurring, event-oriented frames, meanings about events, issues and actors are contained within a limited frame of reference. In the case of *The Australian*, readers were exposed to the most thematic news accounts (36 per cent in 1998 and 38 per cent in 1999). This compares to thematic accounts noted in *The Age* in 1998 (22 per cent) and in *The Independent* (27 per cent).

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From this data it is can be claimed that *The Australian* provided a more contextual framework within which audiences could evaluate both Indonesian politics and its key actors than did *The Age* or *The Independent*. Trends however indicate a decline in thematic framing in 1999. Again, with the exception of *The Australian*, all papers decreased thematic accounts, ranging from 12 per cent in *The Independent*, 17 per cent in *The Age*, 19 per cent in *The New York Times* and 21 per cent in *The Times*. Arguably, readers of *The Independent* were more disadvantaged than those of *The Australian*.

When episodic framing is interrogated in relation to periods of high frequency, data indicates that in 1998 episodic accounts decreased in *The Age* (to 64 per cent), *The New York Times* (to 67 per cent) and *The Australian* (to 42 per cent). For the British publications, periods of high frequency saw a decrease in *The Independent* (to 50 per cent) in January 1998, but in its other month of high frequency (May 1998), episodic frames accounted for 100 per cent of its news reports. Similarly, coverage in *The Times* in January 1998 (its highest month of frequency for 1998) episodically framed all of its news stories. This trend of mainly decreasing accounts of episodic frames in high months of frequency reversed in 1999. All newspapers increased their use of episodic frames in the high frequency period of October 1999. Episodic accounts in this month ranged from 63 per cent in *The Australian* (the lowest) to 93 per cent in *The New York Times* (the highest).

While periods of high frequency in 1998 indicate a decrease in episodic framing, high frequency periods in 1999 indicate an increase in episodic framing. It was the type of event occurring in each period that shaped trends in episodic accounts during 1998 and 1999. Data reveals that 215 of the 478 news stories examined contextualised reporting of Megawati in relation to the New Order and elections. Given that a general election was held in June 1999 and presidential and vice presidential ballots was held in October 1999, this accounts for the increase in frequency in these months, and also indicates the use of more episodic than thematic frames to shape reports of these events. Within this context, framing of Megawati was shaped for the most part by the electoral process, normatively framed as a contestation between two competing forces in a zero-sum approach.
Given the hypothesis that the broader discourse evident in Western news reporting during 1998 and 1999 was the end of the New Order and a Megawati presidency, it is unsurprising that the electoral process was framed episodically and with frames privileging Megawati above all others.

Further supporting the argument that Megawati was framed with privileged meanings during 1998 and 1999 is data indicating the use of frame devices, specifically the use of lineage, gender and religious narratives to shape meanings about Megawati. Occurrences of Megawati’s lineage to Sukarno were evident in all of the examined news reports. While their use varied in how references to Sukarno and Sukarnoism functioned to shape meanings about Megawati, the textual reference appeared to generally suggest that while Megawati was drawing on Sukarnoist imagery, she was not a Sukarnoist. Other references to Sukarno functioned to juxtapose Megawati’s treatment at the hands of the New Order with her father’s treatment, hence aiding in the development and maintenance of an appearance of victimhood. In some cases, the references functioned as monarchical references, for the most part gendered, to posit that her future leadership of Indonesia was destined.

The use of gendered references also indicates ways in which privileged meanings were attached to Megawati. Data indicated increased uses of gendered narratives in 1999. *The Times*, for example, made no gendered references in 1998, yet in 1999 references dramatically increased. As with framing of Megawati’s lineage, this publication relied heavily on monarchical references, such as “Queen Mega.” Other publications similarly relied on the term “princess.” While in some case the terms were used negatively, generally they functioned with privilege. Similarly, gendered references to “motherhood” were also noted. These were more discursive, for the most part, shaping Megawati’s campaign for the presidency as in the interest of “saving the nation,” as opposed to being driven for revenge against Suharto. Shaping reports of the debates regarding a woman leading an Islamic nation also functioned to privilege meanings about Megawati, in this case to alleviate her inability to win the presidential vote. The reporting of this issue reinforced notions of her victimhood, coupled with betrayal narratives at the hands of Islamic leaders Wahid and Rais.
From this analysis, coupled with indicative examples of the episodic frames used in the Western news media during 1998 and 1999, a social reality was constructed and maintained in ways that privileged meanings about Megawati, her character, values, and motivations. The construction and maintenance of social realities is an inescapable consequence of framing. Its function is to make events, issues and the actions/inactions of actors ascertainable to audiences, who may lack direct experience or knowledge of the relevant events that are occurring. Coherence is attained by embedding news accounts with themes, stereotypes, metaphors, and dramatic characterisations.

The consequences however were that public knowledge regarding Megawati and her value to the post-Suharto period were contained. Episodic frames function to deflect blame on others, often obscuring the political actors’ own failings and lack of responsibilities. In the case of Megawati, her lack of both political acumen and policy prescriptions were generally ignored. Framing functioned more so to maintain its dominant discourse regarding the end of the New Order, ostensibly to ensure democratisation and liberalisation. Central to this discourse was the framing of Indonesia as in a state of ‘crisis.’ This theme is addressed in the following chapter.

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CHAPTER FOUR

STRENGTHENING THE SOCIAL REALITY:
ACCOUNTS OF CRISSES FRAMING AND THE POSITIONING OF MEGAWATI

An inescapable aspect of framing is the construction and maintenance of social realities. The previous chapter demonstrated how reporting of Indonesian politics during 1998 and 1999 shaped a social reality. In 1998, this social reality was one which juxtaposed Megawati as the remedy/solution to the crisis/drama caused by Suharto and the New Order. By 1999, frames consolidated not only privileged meanings about Megawati, but shaped a set of conditions which would alleviate Megawati of blame for failing to win the presidential vote later in that year. The analysis demonstrated how episodic framing contained meanings about political actors, in particular Megawati, Suharto and Habibie, in ways that shape public views about their legitimacy.\(^1\) The objective was to show aspects of how political and emotional meaning-making derives from the way the news is framed, thus demonstrating that the Western news media actively engage in practices that influence public opinion and knowledge.\(^2\)

This chapter evaluates in what ways “crises” functioned to strengthen the social reality constructed by the Western news media about Indonesian politics during 1998 and 1999, and to assess if the framework similarly privileged meanings about Megawati. In order to evaluate crises framing, three events/issues are examined: reporting of the state of the Indonesian economy in January 1998; reporting of the student demonstrations and fatalities at Trisakti University (Jakarta) in May 1998; and reporting of events prior to and immediately following the presidential vote in October 1999. The following chapter evaluates if crises framing similarly functions when reporting policy (as opposed to events/actors). Reporting of the decision by Habibie to allow an independence vote for East Timor, as well as the aftermath of the ballot (September 1999), are examined in terms of “issue frames” and the “elite orientation of frames.”

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\(^1\) Public knowledge is used in this study as a way to think about how citizens/audiences broadly think about, and structure their ideas, feelings, fears, and beliefs about political actors. This was outlined in detail in chapter one. A version of this appears in W. Neuman, M. Just, and A. Crigler, Common Knowledge: News and the Construction of Political Meaning, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 3.

This analysis does not dispute that Indonesia was facing serious economic, social and political problems during 1988 and 1999. Rather, the aim of this chapter is to interrogate how, by naming occurrences as “crises,” Western news reporting interpreted events in ways which shaped meanings about who was responsible for and who was the solution to these “crises.” “Crisis framing” is adopted as a way of examining how social problems, “named” as “crises,” were used by the Western news media to assert their own facts, value judgements, and emotions that supported their particular version of reality. It is not a case of necessarily exposing journalistic falsehoods, but rather demonstrating how by taking an aspect of an event or an issue and “naming” it as a “truth,” a social reality can be constructed and maintained. Reinforced with frame devices and frame reasoning, it is posited that such practices will arguably influence audience understandings about nations and their political leaders.

To evaluate how Indonesia was framed as being in “crisis” by in the Western news media, the media’s impact on strengthening social realities about Indonesia, and its function in privileging meanings about Megawati, this chapter firstly conceptualises the relationship between “crisis” frames, meaning-making, and the maintenance of social realities. This is followed by a statistical analysis of the use of “crisis” themes in the 478 news articles examined for this study. As noted in previous chapters, statistical data alone fails to capture the knowledge-shaping function of framing. To that end, issues and events from January and May 1998 and October 1999 are evaluated.

**Crisis and affective framing**

The “appearance of crisis”, argues Edelman, is a “political act, not recognition of a fact or of a rare situation.” When an occurrence is narrated in the public sphere as a “crisis,” the reality of the occurrence is often disparate to the reality of the social and political conditions involving the events that has been “named” as the crisis. That is, “reality” is “irrelevant to the construction of reality.” As a political act, naming what is a “crisis” involves taking an aspect of an occurrence,

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4 Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle*, p. 31.
5 Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle*, p. 5.
framing it as evidence of social or political malaise, and positing a “truth” that a solution is required to remedy the situation. The solutions offered to the state of “crises” in public education, for example, are often privatisation. In the case of framing an authoritarian state as in “crisis,” the solution usually posited is democratisation and liberalisation, often via regime change.

The news media are central actors in “naming” what is a “crisis” and what is not. By highlighting (salience) an occurrence as a “crisis,” they shape evaluations and judgments about the cause. The manner in which the cause is framed generally shapes meanings about the solution. In the case of political leadership, how blame and accountability is attributed will shape audience evaluations about that leadership’s legitimacy. Given that framing juxtaposes politics in binaries, leaders with contrary positions will be positioned as solutions. In the case of representations of crises in Indonesia during 1998 and 1999, by naming the New Order as the cause of “crises,” solutions were posited in democratisation, liberalisation and regime change. It was Megawati who was positioned above all others as the political actor likely to deliver theses changes to Indonesia. Whether a future Megawati presidency was an advantage or disadvantage to post-New Order Indonesia is beyond the scope of this project. Rather, the objective is to demonstrate how in naming Indonesia as in crisis, the Western news media assembled emotional and political meanings about its leaders in ways which influenced public perceptions.

Naming events and issues as “crises,” argues Edelman, is a “creation of the language used to depict it.” The linguistic choices made by news frames involve taking an aspect of reality, shaping it with value judgements and emotion to posit a version of reality. This reality is then named as “truth.” The use of emotive and emblematic language (framed devices) functions to provoke an immediate emotional reaction (affect). Affect functions to illicit “common sense” responses

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7 Edelman, Constructing the Political Spectacle, p. 31.
8 Edelman, Constructing the Political Spectacle, p. 29.
9 Edelman, Constructing the Political Spectacle, p. 5.
to the occurrence, the cause and the solution. Indicative of crisis frames are the use of “emblematic representations,” sometimes referred to as “condensation symbols,” which turn everyday words (names) into binaries such as “battle” and “victory,” “friends” and “enemies,” “heroes” and “villains” and “good” and “evil.”

Inherent in crisis framing are “rituals of story-telling,” devices that use perennial characterisations and timeless themes of “good” and “evil” to posit a problem/drama/crisis, a struggle/battle and a resolution/solution. “Rituals of story-telling” induce audiences to “re-experience the news, rather than be informed by it.”

Dramatisation of the news within these rituals is problematic in terms of how audiences form meaning and understanding, because it downplays complex policy information and the workings of governments, while negating critical analysis and limiting historical, cultural, social and political background.

In analysing “crisis frames,” the objective is not to expose journalistic falsehoods, but to understand how crisis framing takes what are generally complex events and issues and makes them understandable to audiences via culturally and socially understood narratives. The consequences of this are that while events and issues are “real,” when treated with rituals of storytelling, only representations of the “truth” are defined and “named.” The power of the news media lies in its ability to “provide the forms in which declarations [of truth] appear.” It transfigures via linguistic structures what is the problem/crisis and what is the remedy/solution.

Devices such as crisis framing and affect shape meaning and perception.

The study of what extent affect shapes public opinion and knowledge is a relatively minor field in political communication and media studies. “Frame strength” research generally seeks to understand what makes some frames more persuasive than others. While the inclusion of expert, scientific or evidentiary content may be influential, it is unclear how this makes one frame more

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persuasive than another. Druckman and Bolsen in fact claim that adding facts to the frame does nothing to enhance its strength. "Facts," however, are subjective, as demonstrated in Edelman’s critique of how the “truth” is named in news discourses. Alternatively, research suggests that the affective or emotional nature of the frame is more persuasive than the normative aspects (logic, evidence or fact) of the content. This has led some researchers to claim that affective or emotional frames can resonate more directly with audiences than frames grounded in rationality.

According to Gross, those seeking to frame social and political issues do so recognising the “power of emotional appeals." To test this hypothesis, Gross examined audience reactions to episodically and thematically framed news reports about a public policy issue (mandatory minimum prison sentences). The study found that episodically framed articles (which featured a woman who received a harsh sentence under the policy) generated an emotional response that shaped how the audience then viewed the policy. Similarly, Arceneaux examined frames grounded in affect and found that audiences were “more likely to be persuaded by political arguments that evoke cognitive biases.” Specifically, examining gain and loss frames, Arceneaux argues that frames that contain emotional tones, as opposed to rational tones, resonate to a greater extent.

The relationship between affect and frame strength in the news media has been examined from the side of the news producers and from the side of the news receivers. Litterst examined the relationship between affect and frame strength in relation to news producers (in this case, news anchors broadcasting live following

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the attacks on New York and Washington on 11 September 2001). Litterst found evidence that the emotions of journalists functioned as nonverbal signs, which potentially shaped audience reactions to the events they were witnessing. Affective framing in that study examined emotion as nonverbal cues and found that instances of emotional arousal shape audience responses. This contrasts to the receiver-audience model developed by Guerrero et al. These researchers examined the impact of the use of affective frames on news consumers and found that such frames functioned to generate an emotional response in three ways: (1) as “affect,” signifying the arousal of the audiences’ emotional state; (2) as “emotion,” the specific clustering of feelings elicited in response to an event or issue; and (3) as “mood,” which refers to the state of pleasant or unpleasant feelings generated by the frame.

In this study, aspects of crisis framing and affect are evaluated to demonstrate how emotional and political meaning-making and knowledge were shaped in response to Indonesian politics during 1998 and 1999. While not evaluating frame strength, it does suggest that aspects of affect, emotion and mood were evident in Western news reporting. Arguably, these aspects shaped public knowledge about Indonesian political leadership in the late 1990s.

**Empirical data: crisis framing**

Underpinning the claims made about the nature of crisis framing in Western news accounts of Indonesian political and social developments during 1998 and 1999 is empirical data developed from measuring the frequency of a list of keywords that signified the suggestion of “crises.” These were: crisis, chaos, panic, riots, protest, demonstrations, violence, turmoil, looting, unrest, conflict, clashes, killings, coup, and revolution. In total, 780 references were found in the 478 news articles examined for this study. On average this was more than one reference for each of the news stories published over the 24-month period examined.

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Table 4.1: Occurrences of references to ‘crisis,’ by newspaper, by year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Number Of Articles</th>
<th>Number Of References To ‘Crisis’ In Total Articles</th>
<th>Average Number Of References Per Article</th>
</tr>
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<td><em>The Age</em> 1998</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Age</em> 1999</td>
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<td><em>The Australian</em> 1998</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Independent</em> 1998</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2.82</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Independent</em> 1999</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Textual references denoting crisis were more prevalent in 1998 than 1999. For 1998, *The New York Times* was the most prolific user of crisis themes. Indeed, of the 24 articles examined, 153 references to crisis were noted. This is an average of 6.38 references per news article. *The Times* averaged 3.43 references to crisis, *The Age* 2.85 references, and *The Independent* 2.82 references. *The Australian* relied less on crisis themes, with only 87 references (1.47 per article) noted in its 59 articles examined for this study. With the exception of *The Australian*, each of the newspapers in 1998 contained on average more than two textual references to crisis. While crisis references decreased in 1999 (most notably in *The New York Times*, dropping from over six references per article to two per article), the drop was less significant in other publications.
The Times was the highest user of crisis references in 1999. Of the 14 news articles examined, 41 crisis references were noted (on average 2.16 per article). References in The New York Times declined to 86 references in 43 articles (2 per article). Crisis references were also lower in The Independent (averaging 1.52) and The Age (1.22). The Australian, as in 1998, relied less on crisis themes. Data indicates a total of 102 references in 166 news articles, on average less than one reference per article throughout the year.

Given The Australian has the least accounts of episodic framing, it is surmised that crisis references were more likely to occur in episodic accounts than thematic accounts. In terms of audience evaluations, this data indicates that New York Times readers, especially in 1998, were probably more likely to form a view of the chaotic state of Indonesia than readers from The Australian. Similarly, for British audiences, those reading The Times were more likely to form that view than those reading The Independent. Readers of The Age were arguably more likely to form a view about the crisis-ridden state of Indonesia than those reading The Australian.

While statistical data indicates a propensity to frame Indonesia in crisis, it fails to capture the ways in which “crisis” strengthened the social realities posited by the Western news media. More so, it fails to demonstrate how in strengthening the social reality of Indonesia in crisis, this privileged meanings about Megawati. As such, the following section examines the form and function of crisis framing in relation to three key issues/events: (1) reporting of the state of the Indonesian economy (January 1998); (2) the shooting at Jakarta’s Trisakti University (May 1998); and (3) events surrounding the vice-presidential and presidential vote (October 1999). It hypothesises that crisis framing did in fact contribute to the social reality being constructed in news discourses regarding Indonesian politics and its future leadership.
Crisis framing: The Indonesian economy (January 1998)

The country’s economy swirls in crisis. A crash in the currency…touched off a wave of panic buying…officials sought to calm fears of food shortages that have been spurred by the worst economic crisis since Mr Suharto took office in 1965…After three-decades of almost-uninterrupted growth in the world’s fourth-largest nation, economists predict a recession this year, along with widespread bankruptcies, huge unemployment and a likelihood of social unrest…[my emphasis]24

This is an indicative example of how The New York Times reported the state of the Indonesian economy in January 1998. Textual references highlight aspects of both drama and chaos. While similar textual references were used in other publications, what is noted in The New York Times approach to framing the state of the Indonesian economy is how it positioned Suharto as both the cause and the solution. That is, the framework adopted by The New York Times “names” (using Edelman’s approach) New Order recalcitrance as the problem, resolvable by the administration accepting the IMF bailout and embracing liberalisation.

New Order recalcitrance was framed in reports of Suharto’s apparent reluctance to accept the conditions attached to the IMF bailout, namely restructuring of banking and foreign investment laws. Without such reform, the position adopted in The New York Times was the threat of contagion, not only to regional markets but also with a flow on effect to American markets. While American reporting noted Suharto’s nepotism, corruption and denial of civil and political rights, the publication did not posit his need to resign. Rather, it suggested that through his acceptance of economic reform, governance would improve. Hence, Suharto’s acceptance of the IMF bailout and its liberalisation conditions were positioned as the remedy. Resolution was considered necessary to contain the flow on effects and to contain social unrest unleashed by Suharto’s ineffective response to the currency devaluation.25 The following excerpt captures the meaning: 26

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The American interests in this process are complex. Clearly American officials are loath to be seen meddling in the delicate issue of Indonesian succession, for fear of a ring of colonialism….But American officials do not want to lead Mr. Suharto into economic retrenchment decisions that could result in violence on the streets. And there are effects beyond Indonesia…the general decline in the value of assets around Asia reduces the ability of countries in the region to invest elsewhere, potentially triggering deeper economic troubles.  

Also noted in *The New York Times* was the positioning of foreign intervention as welcomed by Indonesians, paternalistic descriptions of IMF and American officials, and the lack of agency attributed to Suharto. This was evidenced in reports that the New Order’s budget measures were seen as “failing to address the country’s crisis” and claims that Suharto had little choice but to accept the IMF conditions in order to “create confidence.” On acceptance of the IMF bailout, the American newspaper suggested the “crisis” was resolved, hence Suharto’s/Indonesia’s future were more secure. Even though reports claimed that doubts persisted about Suharto’s commitment to the IMF, the frame was still one of resolution. Suharto’s recalcitrance was the cause of the crisis and, in accepting the IMF bailout, the crisis was resolved. In terms of affective framing, the emotional appeal for economic stability functioned to induce audiences to overlook the reality of Suharto’s corruption and issues involving foreign intervention in a sovereign nation, or to offset more critical views about the impact of liberalisation on the Indonesian people.

Given the discourse was one that positioned Suharto as the remedy, the frame was forced to trivialise Megawati’s challenges to Suharto. That is, the frame could not position both Suharto and Megawati as the solution. While reporting Megawati’s announcement to challenge Suharto for the presidency, it was framed as unlikely to succeed. The following is an indicative example of how *The New York Times* trivialised Megawati’s claims:

The possibilities for Ms. Megawati to assume power are limited and her speech today seemed to involve protest as much as politics...Ms. Megawati is not legally the leader of a political party and is therefore not eligible to be chosen by this assembly, and it was not clear how she could succeed Mr. Suharto. Nor was it clear how seriously she intended to push forward with her declaration of readiness to lead the nation.\textsuperscript{32}

Complimenting this assessment from Seth Mydans were David Sanger’s claims that “She [Megawati] stands little chance of gaining the nation’s leadership.”\textsuperscript{33} The chaotic state of the Indonesian economy was positioned as the motivating factor for Megawati’s challenge. Hence, with its resolution (framed as Suharto’s acceptance of the IMF bailout), Megawati’s challenge was framed as mute.\textsuperscript{34} Reinforcement of this frame was provided in claims that, while Megawati was the “main standard-bearer of the opposition,” she had “little support.” Alleviating frames, (those that provide conditions that can assuage future responsibility) were also evident. While trivialising Megawati’s claims, \textit{The New York Times} also asserted that:

\begin{quote}
Despite the crisis atmosphere here, produced by a severe economic downturn and the continuing steep slide of the currency, only an eruption of unrest that he [Suharto] is unable to control – or some other event of that magnitude – could derail his plans to stay in office.\textsuperscript{35}
\end{quote}

In this interpretation of \textit{The New York Times} coverage of the state of the Indonesian economy, the “crisis” was “named” as New Order recalcitrance and the remedy as New Order agreement to liberalise the economy. Binaries of IMF agency (paternal though benevolent) were positioned against the inaction and failures of the New Order. Juxtapositioning functioned to dramatise the struggle between the IMF and Suharto, ending with Suharto’s capitulation. Because the New Order was framed as the solution, frame reasoning demanded the trivialisation of Megawati’s claims. Yet the inclusion of alleviating frames suggests that the framing adopted in January 1998 was temporary rather than permanent. This interpretation of how \textit{The New York Times} used crisis framing,

\begin{itemize}
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when compared to the Australian publications, notes distinct differences, namely how the Australian publications used crisis framing to shape more privileged meanings about Megawati.

The Age surmised in its January 1998 coverage that, regardless of the state of the Indonesian economy, Indonesia was already experiencing a political crisis, namely the issue of who would succeed Suharto as president. The economic crisis was positioned as heightening the need for political reform, with the New Order’s nepotism and corruption “named” as the cause of the economic crisis.\textsuperscript{36} Framing in The Age polarised the New Order as the “status quo” on one side, and those demanding economic and political reform, namely Megawati, Rais, Wahid and the students, on the other. Dramatic framing however suggested the likelihood of a collision between Suharto and Megawati.\textsuperscript{37} Dramatic framing in this case is reflective of the power of emotion to arouse audience responses, thus strengthening the frame, as noted in the earlier claims of Littersat.\textsuperscript{38}

Given this framing, The Age reported “unprecedented” calls for Suharto to resign and hence did not trivialise Megawati’s presidential challenge, though did acknowledge that “Under Indonesia’s tightly controlled political system, there is no mechanism by which the assembly could formally nominate Ms. Megawati for the presidency.”\textsuperscript{39} Again, this demonstrates the use of alleviating frames and their attachment to Megawati. The deteriorating state of the Indonesian economy was narrated as indicating a “new momentum” for challengers of the regime.\textsuperscript{40} However, as with Megawati’s challenge, the only avenue, surmised The Age, was “public demonstrations,” actions the newspaper reports the “military has pledged to squash.”\textsuperscript{41} As reporting developed, it is perhaps unsurprising that crisis framing intensified to encapsulate that the “spectre of civil unrest is real” and “Suharto’s future was unclear.”\textsuperscript{42} Crisis framing in The Age relied on binaries and juxtapositioning to contextualise Megawati in opposition to the New Order.

\textsuperscript{36} “Storm clouds in the north,” The Age, 9 January 1998, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{39} L. Williams, “Megawati push to grab reins from Suharto,” The Age, 12 January 1998, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{40} L. Williams, “Indonesia under pressure during IMF crisis talks,” The Age, 13 January 1998, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{41} L. Williams, “Indonesians seize chance to break code of silence,” The Age, 14 January 1998, p. 11.
This framing method was one noted not only in the newspaper’s January coverage, but was a permanent frame noted in this study’s examination of the Melbourne-based newspaper. It was noted that *The Age* had a propensity to binarise the pro-democracy Megawati with the anti-democracy New Order, in the case of the former often attached to notions of a “people power” movement. References to political change noted in relation to public demonstrations as an avenue for resolution (as noted above) confirm this assessment.

Differences again were noted in *The Australian*. In this case, Suharto was reported as being forced into “crisis talks” with the IMF and was in a “fight for survival of his government.” Megawati’s announcement to challenge Suharto was reported as adding to the “sense of crisis enveloping Indonesia.” Suharto was reported as under pressure from the IMF, the Clinton administration and the Howard government. Reports of panic buying were evident, although *The Australian* claimed there were no reports of unrest. In naming who was responsible for the conditions being experienced in Indonesia in January 1998, *The Australian* relied on quotes from others, mainly Megawati, to attribute blame. The following excerpt from Patrick Walters, published on 12 January 1998, demonstrates how this was achieved:

In her strongest critique of the Suharto Government, Mrs Megawati said the lack of clarity over the presidential succession had been a major contributor to the nation’s economic crisis. She said the New Order regime was morally bankrupt, citing “the continued promotion on unbridled greed by those with economic power in our country.” The economy had run out of control while there was a “wrenching stranglehold” on the political system by “those in power in the interest of him who holds absolute power”...“Uncertainty has now destroyed our economy. Confusion concerning the possibility of Suharto becoming incapacitated is the main factor affecting our society, both politically and, worse still, economically. Suharto’s rule as President for 32 years is quite enough...to renominate retired general Suharto as the sole presidential nominee for a seventh term will only add to the crisis of confidence.”

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The report continued with Megawati’s claim that blame for the economic crisis was because of the economic greed by those with “political and economic power,” the “total lack of transparency and the attempted distinction of democracy,” and “violations of the principles and ideals of freedom and independence.” Given *The Australian* adopted this approach to reporting, its claims that “the once unshakable dominance of Indonesia’s President has begun to falter” remain consistent with the social reality being constructed. While Megawati’s announcement for the presidency was reported as “defiant,” the newspaper claimed her bid unlikely to succeed because she lacked the backing of the Indonesian army. Other accounts reported it as “brave,” while maintaining she lacked army support. Privileged framing however posited that she “retains grass-roots support.”

While other newspapers quoted Megawati’s claims about the New Order and their responsibility for the conditions experienced in Indonesia (both political and economic), the methods by which *The Australian* appeared to centralise Megawati’s claims (evidenced by its reliance on her quotes to posit blame and accountability) suggest privileged meanings. Further, the methods by which *The Australian* attributed blame, namely to the New Order via direct quotes from Megawati, is reflective of salience; the claims of others, in particular Rais, were not reported as extensively as the claims made by Megawati. The method is considered influential in meaning-making. The fact that it was Megawati making the claims, rather than a journalist, arguably gave the frame more legitimacy.

In relation to the British publications examined for this study, crisis framing in *The Times* was more reflective of aspects already noted in *The New York Times*, while crisis framing in *The Independent* was more reflective of trends noted in relation to *The Age*. Framing in *The Independent* clearly “named” Suharto as the cause of the state of the Indonesian economy, with resolution suggested by his resignation. The economy, described as in “deep crisis,” was linked with

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Suharto’s “unravelling authority” and positioned against Megawati’s “passionate speech” excoriating Suharto as the cause. Suggesting the spectre of violence, reporting claimed Jakarta was “relatively calm,” but that the military was “prepared to act, if necessary, to maintain public order.”

Evidenced in these linguistic choices are aspects of affect that rely on the clustering of emotionally charged terms to strengthen the reality being constructed. In line with framing evidenced in *The Age*, the economic crisis was reported as a crisis of the New Order’s making, thus its resolution would emerge by way of Suharto’s removal.

While *The New York Times* and *The Australian* posited Suharto was under pressure from external sources (the IMF, and the Clinton and Howard governments), *The Independent* suggested the pressure was coming from inside Indonesia, as noted in this extract from Richard Lloyd Parry:

> In the last three weeks, the country’s financial and economic crisis has quickly become a political one as Indonesians have begun to speak with unprecedented openness about the need for a new leader to deal with the country’s plummeting economy and soaring prices. At 76, and in uncertain health, President Suharto is the object of increasingly direct criticism about his mishandling of the economy, his tolerance of corruption, and the business favors which he bestows on his family…Suharto’s most important loss of support appears to be among ordinary Indonesians.

Noted in *The Independent* was an intensification of linguistic treatment of “crisis.” Initial reports suggested panic buying, soaring prices, a devaluing currency, defaults on foreign loans, and the “first signs of social unrest.” This shifted to reporting of “political riots” and rather astonishing claims of “outbreaks of cannibalism.” In the case of the later, linguistic structuring was certainly at its most discursive and affective.

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This method varied dramatically in accounts published in *The Times*. Crisis framing in this publication mirrored accounts found in *The New York Times*. Suharto’s nepotism and corruption were positioned as the cause of the economic crisis, and in his acceptance of external aid, the crisis would be resolved. There was no sense of the political crisis noted in *The Age*, *The Australian* or *The Independent*. There were no references to the pre-existing political issues (such as the succession issue), though Suharto was described as an “ailing autocratic ruler,” repeatedly framed as under pressure from the IMF and the U.S. Suharto’s capitulation to the IMF was framed as saving Indonesia from anarchy. This was juxtaposed with references to domestic protests, though they were reported as peaceful.  

While on the surface this appears as a contradictory frame, it is still one positing the end of the crisis. As with *The New York Times*, Megawati’s challenge to Suharto was trivialised in *The Times*. Described as a “symbolic opposition leader” with discounted chances for success, her actions at best were reported as possibly serving as a “catalyst for others.”

In summary while each publication relied on textual references of crisis to inform understandings about the state of the Indonesian economy, it was how the “crisis” was “named” in ways which positioned responsibility/blame and remedy/solution that is of interest. In the case of *The New York Times* and *The Times*, both positioned Suharto as the cause of the economic crisis. For *The New York Times*, this crisis was a result of Suharto’s recalcitrance, while for *The Times* it was due to his autocratic style of governance. In both cases, however, the crisis was resolved in Suharto’s capitulation to the IMF. Given that Suharto was framed as the cause and the solution, frame reasoning forced both *The Times* and *The New York Times* to trivialise Megawati’s claims. In the case of *The Australian*, crisis framing was evident, although its suggestion of drama/crisis was not as much editorialised by journalists. Rather, it was enabled by reporting Megawati’s claims, in essence allowing her to narrate the sense of drama/crisis herself to its audiences.

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The Age and The Independent more directly “named” Suharto as the cause of the crisis, with its resolution coming in his resignation. Both posited that he was losing domestic support and legitimacy. In this context, framing shaped privileged meanings about Megawati, for the most part by positioned her in a binary with Suharto and the New Order. Adding strength to the social reality was affect. In the case of The New York Times it was the threat of contagion; for The Age it was the likelihood of collision between Megawati and Suharto; for The Independent it was the intensification of social and political implosion; and for The Times it was the potential for anarchy. In The Australian, affect was enabled via Megawati herself.

Crisis framing appeared a permanent function from January 1998 until the days after the presidential vote in October. However, there were noticeable trends in the degrees to which by May 1998 the linguistic structuring of crisis framing became more emblematic and affective. In order to demonstrate this, reports of the 12 May (1998) deaths of students at Jakarta’s Trisakti University are evaluated. Aspects of crisis, and emblematic and affective framing are highlighted.

Crisis framing: Trisakti University shootings (12 May 1998)

The Independent: “Ten killed on Jakarta’s streets of rage” (14 May 1998)

Richard Lloyd Parry, reporting from Jakarta, filed this edited account of the events surrounding the Trisakti shootings.

In some of the worst mob violence ever seen in Jakarta, 10 people were killed and shops, homes and cars were burned…At least one other person was killed and more than 25 were injured as police and soldiers fired live rounds and plastic bullets in intermittent attempts to control the mob in the streets around Trisakti University. It was the second day of violence in the Indonesian capital. On Tuesday police shot dead six students from the Trisakti campus. But what began as an act of remembrance for the dead students then degenerated into a frightening outburst of racist resentment directed against Indonesia’s wealthy Chinese minority [my emphasis].

What is firstly noted here is that Lloyd Parry is reporting the aftermath of the events that occurred on 12 May. Secondly, as an episodic account, there is no political context to understand why the students were shot and no historical context to understand why the Chinese were targeted, though later in the article there was a reference to the Chinese being scapegoated for the economic crisis. Given the lack of thematic detail, meanings are shaped by the emotive language, particularly the references to the “mob,” considered to have negative connotations. Given its episodic frame and linguistic structuring, meaning is discursive. Further excerpts demonstrate how crisis framing, in this case a sense of chaos and anarchy, functioned to “name” the protesters as accountable. Security forces, in this account, are positioned as reacting to the protesters, weakening a sense of their responsibility.

But it was in the streets surrounding the campus that the most amazing scenes occurred as thousands of young men, mostly working class Jakartans, embarked on a five-hour rampage...“Kill the President!” the crowd screamed, as the police were driven back under a barrage of hurled rocks...At first the police did no more than throw the stones back, but eventually they started firing, apparently with blank or plastic-coated rounds...in full view of several hundred riot police and marines, who made little effort to intervene even when they came under fusillades of stones and petrol bombs...By mid-afternoon, black clouds of smoke rose from at least five separate fires...Shots rang out and the crowd scattered. A few minutes later, The Independent was shown the mutilated body of a man whose skull had been cracked open, apparently in a collision with the truck...There were intermittent volleys of shots all afternoon. Twenty-five people were treated...eight of them for wounds from plastic bullets...There were similar, although less destructive demonstrations at universities in the cities of Surabaya and Yogyakarta [my emphasis]. 57

A sense of chaos is certainly evident in this report. The problem, however, arises from how representations of the event function to induce meanings. In understanding representations of crisis, as Edelman claims, it is not about exposing the “truth,” but it is about understanding how crisis is “named” to shape social realities. In this case, linguistic structuring positions the security forces as passive until forced to react, hence positing blame on the protesters. Parading as “truth,” the “naming” of who is responsible augments how reporting of a “crisis” can shape a social reality. In this case, one interpretation may be that the

protesters, described as “working class,” (not students), were out of control and acting anarchically (given the references to “kill Suharto”). Their actions therefore provoked authorities to react, “apparently” with gunfire. A sense of “truth” is injected into the account with references to The Independent witnessing injuries, thus positing the entire event was truthful. In positioning the protesters in this way it would be difficult (if not impossible) for audiences to evoke any sympathy for their plight, and certainly there was no context within which to understand their actions. The use of affect arguably strengthens this conclusion.

Of further note is how Lloyd Parry contextualises the roles/actions of Suharto and Megawati within this report. With the “crisis” described as “fluid,” taken to mean ongoing, Lloyd Parry reminds audiences that Suharto is “still absent from the country” [my emphasis] and has “made no public comment on the rioting in Indonesia during his stay in Cairo.” In this case Suharto, who was “silent,” as opposed to Megawati, was often accused of not speaking up at critical times throughout 1998 and 1999. Again, “naming,” in this case regarding inaction, functions to suggest how Suharto may be evaluated as a leader who has lost control. Whereas in reporting Megawati, along with Amien Rais and General Ali Sadikin (the former mayor of Jakarta), as attending memorial services, they are positioned in an active binary. In this case however Rais, given that he was quoted, is attributed more agency than Megawati. As an episodic account, there was no context for Rais’ appeal for the Indonesian military to stop protecting Suharto and to start protecting the nation.

Two days later Lloyd Parry filed a follow-up story titled “Thousands flee raging Indonesian violence.” The opening sentence sets the tone of the article: “President Suharto’s government appeared paralysed yesterday as thousands of people fled violence in the Indonesian capital, Jakarta, which has left hundreds dead.” This appears to suggest an escalation of violence, given the report two days earlier suggested a working class mob running amok in a Jakarta suburb. In

59 Rais was quoted as saying: “We make our appeal to the senior commanders of the Indonesian armed forces...They have two options. Either protect the interests of one man and his family - or protect the entire nation. Muslims call on you to overthrow the power of exploitation.” R. Lloyd Parry, “Ten killed on Jakarta’s streets of rage,” The Independent, 14 May 1998, p. 14.
this report, the claims of protesters are more clearly expressed as “against Suharto,” however they still lacked any thematic context. Given that, the accounts from The Independent appeared to trivialise the protesters. In accounts of Suharto’s fall six days later (22 May), no agency was attached to them for his resignation. That is, no acknowledgement was given to the role of social protest as a factor in forcing Suharto to resign. Rather The Independent attributed Suharto’s resignation to his loss of support within the national parliament.

The Times: “Riots force Suharto to cut short Cairo visit” (14 May 1998)

David Watts (in Jakarta) reported events for The Times. His report, like that of The Independent’s, similarly appeared two days after the Trisakti shootings. The following is an excerpt of Watts’ story, titled “Riots force Suharto to cut short Cairo visit”.

President Suharto was cutting short a visit to Cairo and flying home as mobs rampaged through Jakarta and other Indonesian cities yesterday in a renewed onslaught on his regime...Police fired on the rioters a day after the security forces had shot dead six student demonstrators. The rioting in Jakarta started when the police tried to break up a rally marking the deaths of the six students. Motorcycle police charged the memorial rally, firing in the air as they came. Troops abseiled from helicopters on to the gathering and opened fire with plastic bullets. One doctor said live ammunition had been used...Many in the crowd [referring to the memorial services held for the students killed on 12 May] were people who do not normally take part in political events, but were drawn to the gathering out of concern at the human cost of the three-month confrontation between the Government and the people...Violent unrest was also reported in several other cities [my emphasis].

While also an episodic account reliant on emotive linguistic structuring, when compared to The Independent’s account there is a noticeable difference in how the protesters are framed. The title in itself suggests some agency is attached to the protesters, at least in the sense they “forced” a reaction from Suharto. In The Independent’s account, security forces were positioned as reacting to the protesters, whereas in this account from The Times, security forces were...

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positioned as pro-active in the confrontation. The linguistic structuring adopted by Watts evidences their accountability. Also of note in the account from Watts is the positioning of participants as those “who do not normally take part in political events.” This “naming” functions to counter discursive representations of protesters as an unruly mob and gives some credibility to the participants, hence their cause. Again, unlike The Independent’s account, The Times’ version suggests the confrontations evidenced in Jakarta were not localised, but rather discontent was evident elsewhere.

In Watts’ version, Megawati was reported as attending a peaceful memorial service for the students killed on 12 May. She was said to have joined 6,000 mourners in a minute of silence, laid a wreath and to have said; “We are people who love peace, but what we want most is our freedom.” Rais was also quoted as saying; “They shot the wrong people. They shot innocent people.” He added; “It’s the police who are the criminals.” Watts’ claims attributed to The Jakarta Post reported Suharto had announced he was willing to stand down on his return. Megawati’s and Rais’ participation at the memorial services functions to align them with the protesters, but without attaching them to the violence. References to Suharto’s impending resignation in effect confirmed his culpability.64

Watts’ follow-up story published on 21 May focused on the likely contenders to replace Suharto. Megawati was described as “the biggest disappointment…Thrust into a political role for which she has never felt equipped…has few ideas of her own and relies heavily on advisers.”65 On the same day, 21 May, Dominick Donald, also writing for The Times, adopted a similar view of Megawati. In this case, alleviating framing was offered to suggest she may have future claims on the presidency (this is noted in the conditions required for the presidency in the last line of Donald’s report). In the account from Donald, what is also noted is the almost immediate introduction of negative framing of Habibie, a trend noted in each newspaper examined for this study.

Every other country in the region has varyingly democratic safety valves for dissent. Indonesia does not. The crucial moment for the region will be when its new President, Jusuf Habibie, announces his Cabinet. No one - perhaps not even Dr Habibie himself - expects him to stay for long. He is loathed by the army, seen as Mr Suharto’s lapdog by the Opposition, and mistrusted by the international financial institutions whose support is essential to arrest the nation’s economic meltdown…Yet if Dr Habibie is a fig-leaf, who will take his place? It is likely that whoever is appointed to the Vice-President’s slot is the President-in-waiting. He - the only possible she, Megawati Sukarnoputri, has failed to impress - will have to have the confidence of the IMF, little taint of corruption, and be beyond Mr Suharto’s reach.⁶⁶

The Age: “Morning Reveals A Deadly Toll of Sharp Bullets” (14 May 1998)

Perhaps the most subjective and emotive of all accounts examined was that offered by Louise Williams writing for The Age. The following is an extract of her accounts of events in mid-May 1998. While a long extract, it is included to give a sense of the affective nature of the report.

From the top of a pedestrian overpass, which straddles the chaos raging across the 12-lane airport highway in central Jakarta, there is a clear view to a kill. In the confusion of the fighting between students and police at the elite Trisakti University last night, there was only the terrifying crack of gunfire, rubber bullets indistinguishable from live rounds. But this morning as thousands of students and bystanders poured across the same bridge, the traffic held back by black-clad riot troops…the source of the shots that killed six student protesters seemed clearer…It appears that the unarmed university students were shot dead as they fled, attempting to seek sanctuary inside the university. Scores more were injured and by this afternoon a new battle was raging between those who had come to mourn and those who would not let the funeral parade pass. Today as thousands cheered and clapped the speakers condemning the action of the security forces, hundred of trucks and buses from other universities poured in, bringing young people carrying black banners and wreaths. Soon it all went wrong again. The riot troops again closed the main road and the confusion of another street battle erupted…thousands fled as the air cracked with the sound of gunfire. The official version of events as told to Western embassies by Indonesia’s armed forces was that the crackdown against unarmed students was taken because the students had attacked and beaten a military intelligence officer. I know that is not true because I was standing only metres from the confronting forces when the military attacked [my emphasis].⁶⁷

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In this account, there is no ambiguity. The security forces are “named” as the villains, connoted by their description as being “clad in black,” and as being responsible for the violence. Young, unarmed students “seeking sanctuary” were defined as the victims. A binary is evident in the ongoing battle between protesters/mourners and security forces. Those protesting/mourning were not alone, but were joined by others, thus giving their cause and claims a greater sense of legitimacy. Williams posits the “truth,” as she was there to report on it firsthand, her account challenging that of the official sources. The “truth” is not only posited in Williams’ self-evidenced account, but in the “truth” of naming who the victims and the aggressors were. This interpretation is offered not to challenge Williams’ account of events, but to demonstrate how naming functions to shape social realities. Moreover, it provides an indicative example of how affective frames may resonate more than frames grounded in rationality.68

The following day, in her article “Soeharto Must Go, And Quickly,”69 Williams offered the following account. What is noted is that while *The Independent* localised the crisis to the suburbs of Jakarta, *The Times* posited the violence as more widespread. Williams expands it even further to surmise the spectre of revolution.

The *six unarmed students killed* by Indonesian *riot police* on Tuesday and a seventh killed subsequently are not the first people to have met their deaths at the hands of President Soeharto’s security forces. But the world will not be able to ignore these seven deaths as it has ignored so many others. The shots that *killed the students* are likely to be the shots that bring down the 32-year-old Soeharto regime, for they have set in motion a tide of protest that threatens to become a *total breakdown of civil order*. President Soeharto should recognise that the question is no longer about whether Indonesians will accept the demands that the International Monetary Fund is making on them. *It is about when the popular revolt in Jakarta and other cities will become a revolution.* He should spare the Indonesian people the pain of such an upheaval by resigning now [my emphasis].70

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In this account Suharto’s culpability is clearly “named,” with resolution coming in his immediate resignation, without which the crisis will continue and develop into something more potent, namely revolution. This framing of crisis is consistent with that demonstrated in *The Age’s* January coverage. Political and economic crisis is interwoven and the threat of ongoing and escalating violence is suggested. Suharto is “named” as responsible, and only through his resignation would resolution come. The difference however was the editorialising that only in Suharto’s resignation could the “foundation for genuine democracy” be laid.\(^71\) While democratic reform was not articulated as a factor in early reports from *The Age*, from this point on it became a dominant theme, and for the rest of 1998 it was discursively attached to Megawati (more than any other actor) as Indonesia’s “pro-democracy” leader.\(^72\)

*The Australian: “Students defy military bans” (13 May 1998)*

In *The Australian’s* reporting of the Trisakti University protest prior to the shooting, Patrick Walters provided an account of the protesters’ claims, which was not clearly articulated in the other reports examined:

…students continued their drive yesterday to oust President Suharto from office, mounting a large street protest in central Jakarta…In a *show of defiance* against the military’s ruling not to take to the streets, 5000 students from Trisakti University blocked for more than an hour the inbound West Jakarta toll road leading to the city centre. The students attempted to march to Indonesia’s parliament building…but were prevented by police from advancing more than a few hundred metres from the Trisakti campus. University staff joined in the protest…students again burned portraits of President Suharto and carried banners calling on him to quit…After weeks of mounting student protests, plus rioting and looting over fuel price rises, the 76-year-old president has shown no sign of moving to implement the reforms they demand…The students’ path to the parliamentary precinct was immediately blocked by about 500 *heavily armed riot police and army troops*. After lengthy negotiations with military officers, the students elected to sit down in the middle of the road…Student leaders climbed on police-armoured vehicles pleading with the crowd to maintain discipline and not assault the military who had blocked their march…the students ended their protest peacefully around 3pm.\(^73\)

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As a background, the above account provides a context for the shooting. While not a wholly thematic account, there is at least some sense of the economic-political events that led to the events of May 1998. However, there are still aspects of linguistic structuring which positioned the students in ways that shaped meanings. The protesters’ passivity is particularly noted and, as in accounts by Williams for *The Age*, the security forces are positioned as the aggressors. When read in conjunction with accounts of the shootings, reported by Patrick Walters and Don Greenlees as “troops firing” on students following “violent protests,” the linguistic structuring of the earlier report arguably shapes meaning, especially given the use of affect.\(^74\)

Follow-up accounts in *The Australian*, while maintaining references to ongoing violence, positioned the Trisakti shootings as a “galvanising popular sentiment against Mr Suharto.” While not going so far as to suggest revolution was imminent (as in accounts from *The Age*), crisis framing ensured a sense of the drama was maintained.\(^75\) Reports of the waning support from the military and growing support from the middle class and “ordinary Indonesians” functioned to suggest that what was occurring was more than just mobs running amok in the suburbs.\(^76\) As reporting continued in the days after the Trisakti shootings, framing posited that the government/military were losing control and that it was the “beginning of the end” for Suharto.\(^77\) In this sense, crisis framing elevated events from that of indications of Suharto’s unpopularity to conjecturing his resignation. As Walters reported on 16 May 1998:

> Indonesia has passed a point of no return…the New Order’s much-trumpeted vision of a “just and prosperous” society had dissolved into anarchic chaos as supermarkets, banks, shops, cars and buses were torched all over this city of 10 million people. In some districts, a mad, festive atmosphere prevailed as mobs of excited kampong kids streamed in to loot luxury shopping malls.

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…Indonesia has experienced a decisive mood swing in recent days as the country’s political and business elite have lost faith in Suharto’s capacity to arrest a declining economy. The spectacle of students freely burning photo portraits and effigies of the President on university campuses, legally a grave criminal offence, has been the most striking evidence of the change in national sentiment towards Suharto. This week, as the nationwide student push to oust Suharto rapidly gained momentum in the wake of Tuesday’s shootings, senior army leaders were admitting privately that the veteran’s position had become untenable [my emphasis].

Unlike The Independent, accounts in The Australian attributed significant agency to the students in the fall of Suharto. According to Greenlees, “Indonesia’s students have played a pivotal role in nourishing the discontent with President Suharto.” Given that it were “ordinary Indonesians” that were “named” as the active participants, references to elite political opposition were sparse. References did note Megawati’s and Rais’ memorial speeches, for the most part directing their criticism at the Indonesian military.

Megawati for example was quoted as saying: “I ask our soldiers in the field, please realise what you are doing, you are beating your own children.” Other accounts reported Megawati as saying: “I remind soldiers on the field that when they engage in violence, they are doing it against their own children, and they are causing disunity in their own nation.” As with earlier examples, The Australian relied on Megawati’s statements to stimulate affect.


For New York Times readers, a sense of drama and crisis was evidenced in the following excerpt from Mark Landler. There is no suggestion that Landler was in Indonesia. Rather, the following report appears to be reliant on Reuters:

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Riots exploded...as residents outraged over the police shootings of students on Tuesday tore down lampposts, set fire to trucks and looted stores. At least one person was killed this afternoon...[Reuters reported that 12 people died in Jakarta, most of them burned to death in a bar set on fire by rioters.] The looting continued into the night, when crowds turned their anger on the familiar target of ethnic Chinese shopkeepers, with reports of people being trapped in burning buildings. The latest violence was serious enough that President Suharto is cutting short an official visit to Egypt and plans to return here on Thursday. Mr. Suharto appealed for calm in a statement delivered tonight by Indonesia’s Vice President, B. J. Habibie. The President’s decision to leave the country last Saturday at a time of rising turmoil had been seen as a show of confidence in his control...Word of President Suharto’s plans to return to Indonesia prompted a fresh round of rumors in this already jittery capital. Some people said they feared that Mr. Suharto might impose martial law [my emphasis].

While in Landler’s account the police are framed as responsible for the shooting of students, the ongoing violence is attributed to the actions of protesters. Attacks on Chinese shopkeepers are noted, however, as an episodic account, with no further explanation of its relevance offered. While the violence was reported as serious (serious enough to force Suharto to react), meaning was counter-balanced with the inclusion of comments of Suharto’s confidence. This was countered again with a view that “Jakarta seemed anything but under control.” There were no references to demands that Suharto resign. Rather the concern was about the effect of riots on the Indonesian economy and suggestions that martial law may be introduced. This is consistent with framing evidenced in The New York Times in January 1998.

Given there was no suggestion of the likelihood of a change in the national leadership, no significant references were made to likely candidates. There was no reporting of Rais’ or Megawati’s reaction to the shooting. Follow-up articles did not appear until 21 May, mostly reporting the fall of Suharto. Even then, accounts were dismissive of Rais and Megawati, as well as doubtful of the abilities of Habibie. In terms of Suharto, The New York Times framed him as a leader who was under siege and finally capitulated to domestic and international

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pressure, while little agency was attributed to the students and none to Rais, Wahid or Megawati.84

In summary, the events surrounding the Trisakti University demonstrations and fatalities were tragic. However, in this review of how they were reported, what is evident is how the framing shaped understandings of who was culpable in ways which posited who, and what, was the remedy. For the most part, crisis framing, complete with affect, shaped a reality that the New Order needed to be replaced.

While in this case privileged framing was not always directly attached to Megawati and her claims for the leadership, framing did ensure a new leadership was needed in Jakarta. “Naming” functioned to denote blame and remedy, as well as to “name” the need for political change. Crisis framing therefore did function to shape social realities. Of broader concern is how crisis and affect were used to posit the state of Indonesia as in chaos and on the brink of anarchy, for the most part in ways that arguably appealed to Western stereotypes regarding social and political upheaval in the Third World.

Crisis framing: Presidential vote (October 1999)

The Independent’s coverage of events leading up to the presidential election relied on the use of binaries to shape understandings of who was worthy of the presidency and who was not. Reporting on President Habibie, for example, focused on his lack of public support, while reporting on Megawati noted extensively the public mandate she received at the June general election.85 Reports of Habibie’s decision to nominate General Wiranto as his running mate were indicative of how framing posited his illegitimacy. Lloyd Parry reported on 14 October 1999:

85 R. Lloyd Parry, “President Habibie asks army chief to be his deputy,” The Independent, 14 October 1999, p. 17.
Despite presiding over the most chaotic period in his country’s history, Mr Habibie was confirmed as the ruling Golkar Party’s candidate. And his nomination of General Wiranto clearly represents an attempt by the President to salvage his dwindling chances of re-election. Even within Golkar, there is strong opposition to Mr Habibie, who has been beset with economic misfortunes and scandals since taking power 16 months ago…Mr Habibie has always been unpopular with the military, and his nomination of General Wiranto is seen by many to be an attempt to win its support.86

Frame maintenance included naming the “truth” of Megawati’s popularity, and for The Independent this was exemplified by citing polls that showed Habibie’s support at five per cent and Megawati’s at 50 per cent. While no details on the poll details accompanied the story, alleviating frames were included, noted in the suggestion that “Despite his unpopularity, enough votes could be bought to secure a Habibie victory.”87 As a discourse, its function was to infer New Order corruption, and to “name” this as the obstacle which Megawati must overcome. On Wiranto’s decision not to stand as Habibie’s vice-presidential candidate, The Independent framed this as elite abandonment, further positing the “truth” that Habibie lacked support among the elite.

Given the social reality being framed in The Independent of Habibie’s illegitimacy (hence the need for him to be replaced) versus Megawati’s legitimacy (evidenced in polling and the June election results), framing turned to the spectre of violence, “named” as “revolution” should Megawati be denied the presidency.88 Assertions of violence, even revolution, functioned to suggest to audiences that Megawati was the “people’s choice,” otherwise why would Indonesians revolt. Yet again, alleviating frames were maintained. In this case it was accomplished with reports suggesting it was not the people who would decide the presidency, but the parliament, and that Megawati may yet lose the vote to Wahid, who could “snatch a political victory,” the latter implying surreptitiousness.89 This framing was a return to the “naming” of Megawati as a

86 R. Lloyd Parry, “President Habibie asks army chief to be his deputy,” The Independent, 14 October 1999, p. 17.
political victim. While references in *The Independent* were made to Megawati’s failure to build the necessary political alliances to secure the presidential vote, the newspaper maintained Megawati’s “right” to the presidency, evidenced in the “moral mandate” given to her at the June elections.90

Given that *The Independent’s* framing positioned Megawati as the “peoples choice” battling the illegitimate Habibie and the perfidious Wahid, it is unsurprising that Wahid’s election was trivialised. To accomplish this, *The Independent* opened its account of Wahid’s victory with a disparaging account from an “ordinary” Indonesian rejecting Wahid’s sovereignty: “Wahid is not my president, he is not president to any of us.”91 The immediate task facing Wahid, to bring “order to the streets,” functioned to further suggest that Wahid’s election was not welcomed by all Indonesians.92 Follow-up reports framed Megawati’s defeat as a rejection of the aspirations of Indonesians. Once again, reporting relied on an account of an “ordinary” Indonesian. In the following extract, aspirations and violence are intertwined, indicative of how an episodic account relies on affective framing to strengthen the broader discourse being constructed:

The man in the red shirt, one among thousands on the street leading to the parliament building, was getting very angry even before the car exploded. “I can no longer stand to see the people’s aspirations being ignored,” he said, as the crowd streamed past, all of them men, most of them young, some of them carrying rocks and sticks. Parked nearby was a black jeep with the word “Struggle” written on the side, the slogan of the defeated heroine, Megawati Sukarnoputri. Megawati’s loss was the “rejection of the people’s will,” he said…”We working-class people will fight for the nation until the last drop of our blood,” said the red-shirted man. “It will get worse if they do not listen to the will of the people.” Seconds later we heard a deafening boom, and a halo of orange flames enveloped the jeep, blowing off its roof, and scattering the panicked demonstrators. It was the second of three explosions in Jakarta yesterday - why they were set off, who was behind them, and whether more will follow, nobody knows.93

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90 R. Lloyd Parry, “Cliffhanger vote brings Habibie’s regime to an end,” *The Independent*, 20 October 1999, p. 16.
92 R. Lloyd Parry, “Indonesia in turmoil: This new leader faces a dazzling range of problems,” *The Independent*, 21 October 1999, p. 14
The violence so dramatically and affectively narrated following Wahid’s election, according to The Independent’s account, eased with the election of Megawati as Vice-President. The “bloody violence,” suggested The Independent, that followed the presidential vote had “ petered out.” Framing in this case “named” the problem, narrated the struggle and then resolved the crisis. This is indicative of the core function of framing. Given that The Independent framed reports of the resolution of the crisis as having ended with Wahid’s election, the vice-presidential vote was reported as a matter of fact, a vote between Megawati and Hamzah Haz, leader of the United Development Party. Some references were made to backroom deals leading to the withdrawal of other vice-presidential candidates, including General Wiranto (Commander of ABRI) and Akbar Tanjung (Chairman of Golkar). No references were made to Islamic concerns about a female vice-president. Rather, the framing that developed in the post-election period was one of the “dawning of democracy.” Of note is how Megawati, despite losing the presidency, was still positioned in privileged ways. This was evident in the following excerpt from Lloyd Parry published on 22 October:

Megawati is expected to take a much more active role, which is all the more crucial given the poor health of Mr Wahid. Apart from being nearly blind, the 59-year old President has suffered from two minor strokes. In the event of his death or incapacity, constitutional authority would pass to Ms Megawati.

What is also evident in the immediate period following Megawati’s election as Vice-President was the framing of the inevitability of a future Megawati government, as evidenced by the following passage: “So frail, however, is Mr Wahid’s health that he may well not complete his allotted five-year term. In which case Mrs Megawati, by then a politician wiser and more adept from having seen the exercise of supreme power at close quarters, would become president in her own right.” For a future Megawati government, the threat of an imperfect electoral system and elite machinations, in this case “named” as the Indonesian military, were positioned to suggest the struggle that lay ahead for Megawati.

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96 “Indonesia is only at the start of the road to democracy,” The Independent, 22 October 1999, p. 3.
Similar binaries of Habibie’s illegitimacy and Megawati’s legitimacy were also noted in The Times. “Dissatisfaction” with Habibie’s rule was positioned against the “popularity” of Megawati. Megawati, the “popular choice of the people,” wrote David Watts, “might not have sufficient support to win the presidency outright. Ms Megawati’s Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle can muster 154 votes to the ruling Golkar Movement’s 130 in the Assembly.” As an episodic account, no further information was offered to suggest why this lead over Golkar in the parliament would not translate into a Megawati presidency. Rather than thematic treatment, The Times maintained multiple “struggle” narratives between Megawati and Golkar, pro- and anti-Megawati demonstrators, Megawati’s struggle against those opposing a female president, and a possible Wahid-Golkar alliance that may deny Megawati the presidency. While The Independent shaped Wahid’s election as one not representative of “ordinary” Indonesians, The Times reported his election as sparking violence. In both frames, however, Wahid’s election is trivialised. The Times report of Wahid’s election began:

Within minutes of Indonesia electing its first democratically chosen President, violence erupted on the streets of Jakarta yesterday. A car bomb exploded and thousands of protesters tried to march on the parliament building. Some of the 40,000 police deployed in the capital used teargas and rubber bullets to hold off the demonstrators angered by the defeat of Megawati Sukarnoputri. The police were pelted with stones and petrol bombs. Two people were reported killed and at least 11 injured by the car bomb.

A version of the ‘dawning of democracy’ narrative noted in The Independent also appeared in The Times. In this account, however, it is a pessimistic sense of “democracy re-born.” “The fact that democracy has been reborn at all, after decades of rule by a corrupt strongman followed by unrest across Indonesia’s thousands of islands, is an achievement. But it is too early to relax. Now the watch must begin to ensure that the infant survives.” This was followed with reports of ongoing violence.

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100 “The morning after: Indonesia must now plot the next steps to full democracy,” The Times, 21 October 1999, p. 23.
Gendered themes and references were noted in both British accounts. *The Independent,* for example, published Megawati’s comments, denoting herself as the “mother” of Indonesia. Indeed, she was reported to have said: “To all my children throughout the nation, I beg you to return to work with sincerity…Do not be goaded into emotional acts because here today you see your mother standing before you.” Alternatively, *The Times* reported Megawati “close to tears,” arguably a reference rarely used to describe a male electoral defeat, and made references to Megawati’s “queen-like” status. Given the “birth”/“re-birth” of democracy narratives evidenced, gendered references take on specific meaning when positioned in relation to Megawati. Moreover, such linguistic treatment is indicative of how emotive framing functions to support the dominant frame being posited. Reporting the aftermath of the presidential vote, *The Times* made some references to violence and ongoing concerns over the state of the Indonesian economy (maintaining the framing noted in its January 1998 coverage), but for the most part, like *The Independent,* *The Times* also posited that the crisis was resolved.

In framing the events of late 1999, *The New York Times* asserted that the struggle had shifted from public demonstrations that had stained the streets of Jakarta with “blood” to the struggle occurring within the national parliament. Megawati’s struggle in this case was “named” as one with the parliamentarians who would vote on her future. Given this was the frame adopted, the violent demonstrations that were occurring outside of the parliament were trivialised. Initially, public demonstrations were reported as passive accounts of the “noise of democracy,” or as localised religious conflicts occurring in the outlying provinces, far removed from the “real” battle occurring in the MPR. The potential for further violence was noted however only as the “truth” of the volatility of Indonesia.

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102 R. Lloyd Parry, “Jakarta calms as Megawati is appointed deputy,” *The Independent,* 22 October 1999, p. 15.
While Megawati’s political acumen was reported as questionable, the broader frame adopted in The New York Times was that of the imperfect Indonesian political system, a system that had allowed the illegitimate Habibie to remain in office. Moreover, it was an illegitimate system that had, and would, deny Megawati the leadership of Indonesia, a position that regardless of her political faults she should hold because of the electoral mandate she received at the June general election.

Given the view of The New York Times that Indonesian-style democracy was deficient in reflecting the will of the people (because it was limited, demanded alliance-building, and engaged in backroom deal-making). In its discursive account of Indonesian democracy, violence was then surmised as a normative element of the political process in Indonesia. This is noted in the following account from Seth Mydans:

Tonight, the student demonstrators chanted and waved banners opposing Mr. Habibie…They threw rocks and gasoline bombs and charged at massed ranks of soldiers and riot policemen with their samurai-style helmets and tall plastic shields…The security forces fired tear gas, water cannon and plastic bullets in a replay of scenes that have become an integral a part of Indonesia’s political process [my emphasis].

Here, privileged framing was attached to Megawati with the demonstrators positioned as representing “Mrs. Megawati’s political strength: a personal popularity that no other candidate comes close to rivalling.” Increasing accounts of public demonstrations, complete with amplified references to violence, were framed as “one of Mrs. Megawati’s strongest cards.” This is a similar frame to that of the spectre of revolution noted in The Independent.

Maintaining a sense that the political process was the problem in 1999, The New York Times framed the election of Wahid as a step “toward meaningful democracy.”\textsuperscript{114} Wahid was positioned as indicative of how democracy can overcome authoritarianism, resulting in the need to frame Wahid positively. This interpretation may explain why the American newspaper went to what appeared to be great lengths to reassure its audience about Wahid’s credentials as a moderate Muslim, secular, and above all, a democrat.\textsuperscript{115} Having adopted this position, Megawati was trivialised. Supporters of Megawati were described as “disappointed,” while reports claimed only sporadic violence, in part suggesting the “crisis of democracy” had been overcome, signalling the beginning of a “post-Suharto dawn.” Political and economic reform would thus begin.\textsuperscript{116} Reform, in the guise of liberalisation, was the initial discourse noted in New York Times reporting in January 1998. Its use in October 1999 suggests it was a permanent frame in The New York Times. For the American newspaper there was no sense however that Megawati would contribute to the post-Suharto period. This varied dramatically from the frames adopted in Australian reporting.

Reporting in The Age from 16 October onwards noted multiple accounts of violence and social unrest occurring in Indonesia. Lindsay Murdoch, for example, reported:

Indonesia’s armed forces fired warning shots and teargas today as a fresh wave of protests against the embattled President, Dr B.J. Habibie, spread through the streets. Violent clashes erupted after Dr Habibie’s speech defending his 16-month rule failed to appease opposition parties. Protesters overturned buses and set fire to cars…in a second day of street violence which underscored fears that unrest will erupt if the country’s People’s Consultative Assembly (MPR) returns Dr Habibie to power next week. In separate demonstrations in Jakarta, hundreds of protesters against Australia’s role in East Timor pelted the front gate of the Australian Embassy with petrol bombs…Student leaders vowed today to continue protesting until Dr Habibie abandoned his re-election bid. They blocked a main road near the Parliament and built makeshift camps after running battles with police and soldiers [my emphasis].\textsuperscript{117}

\textsuperscript{117} L. Murdoch, “Habibie Called To Account,” The Age, 16 October 1999, p. 19.
Crisis framing was also noted in reports that Megawati supporters were “threatening to launch a bloody revolution unless she takes office.” A sense of crisis was not initially evident in relation to the machinations occurring inside the Indonesian parliament, rather the frame was one in which the parliament was going through the formalities, particularly in receiving Habibie’s accountability speech. However, when it came to Habibie’s withdrawal from the presidential race it was reported as an event of drama and emotion. Habibie’s withdrawal was reported as a sense of relief and a joyous occasion, and the signal that Indonesia was “witnessing a remarkable transition to democracy.”

In terms of reporting Megawati, rather than binaries, contradictions were offered by *The Age*. Megawati’s “immense popular support” for example was positioned against claims she lacked political acumen and had been reluctant to “aggressively pursue political allies.” On the election of Wahid, *The Age* returned to crisis framing. The following account, also from Lindsay Murdoch, was published on 21 October:

Thousands of angry supporters of failed Indonesian presidential candidate Megawati Sukarnoputri rioted in Jakarta today after a Muslim intellectual who campaigned as a compromise candidate became Indonesia’s first democratically elected leader. Indonesia’s armed forces went on an immediate state of high alert as thousands of Mrs Megawati’s angry supporters threw rocks and Molotov cocktails at police and soldiers, who responded with rubber bullets [my emphasis].

In the same article, the election of Wahid, claimed *The Age*, was “likely to strengthen the influence of Islam in Indonesian politics and society.” Further, the leader of NU Wahid’s election “could spell further trouble for Australia’s relations with Indonesia.” This is a significantly different approach to that adopted by *The New York Times*, which appeared to go to some lengths to reassure its audiences about the Islamic leader. However, the day after the above comments were published, an editorial in *The Age* adopted a softer approach to Wahid, suggesting he was the only candidate able to stabilise Indonesia, and that his election was a “small, tentative step” towards democracy. There was some

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alleviating framing of Megawati with suggestions she was defeated not because of her popularity, but because she was outmanoeuvred by Wahid. Crisis framing however remained evident, noted in reports of embassy warning of violence, particularly in Jakarta and Bali. Murdoch (again) reported:

The election of Mr Abdurrahman Wahid as President may increase the risks to foreigners, especially Australians. “With the election of a new President, the next 48 hours may see reactions from some quarters that could lead to pockets of unrest in Jakarta in particular and perhaps other areas of the country,” the statement said.

In these indicative examples, a sense of drama and crisis was interwoven with a sense of threat to Australians. Affective framing, particular a sense of threat and fear, strengthened the broader discourse embedded in The Age’s accounts of events. Megawati for the most part was alleviated of responsibility for failing to win the presidency, outmanoeuvred by an Islamic cleric that at least for Murdoch was seen through a gaze of suspicion of Islam, again arguably an example of irrational affective framing.

Similar to The Age, The Australian reported the violence occurring in Indonesia in the lead-up to the presidential election. Don Greenlees reporting on 16 October offered this affective account:

Protesters blocking Jakarta’s main boulevard hurled molotov cocktails at ranks of riot police...as the city braced for an surge of unrest before next Wednesday’s presidential election. A day after President B.J. Habibie defended his 17-month-old administration in a speech to the parliament, students joined by inner-city residents took to the streets to again demand that he quit. Security forces tried to clear about 1000 protesters by using batons and firing numerous rounds of tear gas and warning shots. By late afternoon, several students and local residents had been treated for minor injuries but the protest was expected to build as parliament prepared to vote on whether to accept the so-called “accountability address” delivered by Dr Habibie on Thursday night...It followed wild scenes on Thursday night as protesters battled with security forces only a kilometre from where Dr Habibie was delivering his speech...with bloody street protests demanding that Dr Habibie be removed, and fears of mass unrest if he wins, ...[analysts] are tipping a Megawati victory [my emphasis].

124 D. Greenlees, “Unrest blocks Habibie’s path to power,” The Australian, 16 October 1999, p. 16.
The use of binaries was noted in *The Australian*. Greg Sheridan, *The Australian’s* foreign editor for example, juxtaposed Wahid’s “anti-Australianness” with claims that Megawati was the “most likely and, democratically, the most credible candidate” to lead Indonesia. Noting her electoral popularity, Sheridan however balanced this with claims she was “almost certain to be indecisive and depend heavily on her family, her close advisers, and perhaps her vice-president and cabinet.” Rather than attributing agency to Megawati, Sheridan suggested her election as President would require a “soupcon of good fortune” ensuring she would become a “great international heroine of democracy.” Should Habibie be re-elected, in Sheridan’s assessment, this would be problematic given he lacked public legitimacy. Indonesia’s presidential choice, asserted Sheridan, would be of “profound importance to Australia.” From this account Megawati was attributed little agency, and the dominant frame was one of Australian interests.

In Walter’s assessment, Habibie, Megawati and Wahid were the three leading presidential contenders, with Megawati reported as “undoubtedly” having “the most legitimate claim on the presidency.” Alleviating framing however was evident in claims that Indonesia’s “military and political elite remain sceptical of Megawati’s leadership capacity and distrustful of some of the political factions aligned behind her Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P).” Further, Walters asserted that Megawati might lose the vote because of the machinations of the military and Golkar. Returning to crisis framing, *The Australian* reported that should Habibie, “against all odds,” win the presidential vote, the parliament will be responsible for “unleashing chaos and possibly bloodshed in the streets of Jakarta. The protests of the past weeks will be just a taste of things to come.”

Wahid’s election as President was reported in *The Australian* as a “shock.” Reflective of *The Age’s* uncertainty about Wahid was Paul Kelly’s assessment of Indonesia’s fourth president:

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He has been a moderate, a voice for reason and democracy, an intellectual, a good talker, an anti-sectarian who believes in Christians and Muslims working together, a defender of the Chinese minority, and a compulsive political opportunist whose manoeuvrings have infuriated other Indonesian leaders. Popularly known as Gus Dor [sic], he is a stroke victim, near-blind and increasingly erratic. Wahid’s election must raise the prospect of a weak, unpredictable presidency with a health shadow over the incumbent…Wahid has enjoyed a good relationship with Australia in the past and regularly saw Australian visitors. But his attitude has been soured recently by the East Timor crisis, where he has been extremely critical of Australia.  

From this point on *The Australian* posited the future of a Wahid-Megawati government. That is, reporting for the most part suggested to audiences the notion of a coalition attempting to “save” Indonesia. Crisis framing however was still evident, if anything strengthening the discourse that Indonesia needed saving.

Greenlees’ account of 21 October is indicative of the sense of drama and crisis, strengthened by the use of emotion:

Tens of thousands of **stunned and angry** Indonesians took to the streets yesterday, **clashing** with security forces, after the surprise victory of Muslim leader Abdurrahman Wahid in a showdown for the presidency with the popular Megawati Sukarnoputri. The defeat of Ms Megawati…has plunged Indonesia into new uncertainty as it battles to overcome two years of political and economic crisis…Huge numbers of supporters from Mrs Megawati’s Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), who were anticipating victory, milled on the streets. Amid chants of “Megawati or revolution”, they thronged the main thoroughfares of Jakarta. Some burnt a car and clashed with riot police blocking approaches to the MPR buildings. The atmosphere in the city remained charged hours after the announcement of Mr Wahid’s 373 to 313 victory. Riot police near the parliament fired warning shots and rounds of tear gas to disperse a crowd of youths, some of whom threw rocks. Earlier, two bombs exploded in the downtown area [my emphasis].

With Greenlees asking “Can they save Indonesia?” and with Florence Chong surmising the uncertain future of Indonesia, a sense of pessimism was evident in *The Australian’s* coverage of Megawati’s election to the Vice-Presidency.  

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more than any other concern appeared to be the focus of The Australian’s coverage of the presidential/vice-presidential election. It is indicative of how affective framing appealing to irrationality, rather than rationality, functions in news framing.

In summary, aspects of crisis and affect were evident in coverage of the presidential and vice-presidential election in October 1999. From this analysis it can be surmised that crisis framing was a permanent frame, as evidenced from January 1998 onwards. In the case of the October reporting, aspects of crisis and affect functioned in ways to posit the end of the Habibie government and the beginning of a new political terrain. Differences however are noted in how each publication used crisis and affect to shape privileged meanings about his replacement.

**Conclusion**

In review, the empirical data analysed for this study indicates that there was a propensity to frame Indonesia as being in constant crisis during 1998 and 1999. Of the 478 articles examined for the primary study, 780 references to “crisis” were noted in the two-year period. On average, every article examined had at least one reference to crisis. The most prolific user of the frame was The New York Times in 1998 and The Times in 1999. In both years The Australian used crisis framing the least. How crisis framing functioned in each publication however varied significantly. In an evaluation of three distinct occurrences; the state of the Indonesian economy in January 1998; the student demonstrations and subsequent fatalities in May 1999; and the vice-presidential and presidential elections and their aftermath in October 1999, differences were apparent.

In relation to the reporting of the Indonesian economy, how it was framed to posit accountability and remedy varied. Both The New York Times and The Times positioned Suharto as responsible for the “crisis,” the former because of his recalcitrance, the latter because of his authoritarianism. In both cases, however, Suharto was also framed as the solution, ostensibly by capitulating to the IMF. In doing this, both newspapers hypothesised the crisis would be resolved. Given this
framework, both papers also trivialised Megawati’s challenge to Suharto. *The Age* and *The Independent* more directly named Suharto as the cause of the crisis and asserted that, only with his resignation, would the crisis be resolved. Reports in both newspapers framed Suharto as losing international and domestic support. In this framework, Megawati’s challenge was not trivialised. Privileged framing of her and her claims were most notably present in both publications. This was evidenced in how she was positioned in a binary with Suharto.

*The Australian*, in a unique approach, relied less on journalistic editorialising and more on Megawati’s own statements to narrate the sense of drama and crisis. Strengthening the sense of crisis in all publications was use of affective framing. A sense of threat of economic contagion was noted in *The New York Times*. For *The Age*, affective framing was evident in reports of a collision between Megawati and Suharto. *The Independent* used affective framing to highlight the intensification of social and political implosion. For *The Times* it was the potential for anarchy. In *The Australian*, affect was enabled via Megawati herself.

The events surrounding the Trisakti demonstrations and fatalities demonstrated how crises and affect framing shaped understandings of who was culpable in ways which posited who and what were the remedy. In each publication’s account the overall discourse was one of regime change. The naming of who was responsible was more confined to the participants, either the protestors or the security forces. Most notable in how this event was framed were subjective accounts, witnessed and therefore “named” as the “truth,” and the use of emotive language. Of the three issues examined, this proved the most insightful in examining the meaning-making potential of affect. Analysis suggested this issue clearly posited that Indonesia was on the brink of anarchy in ways that would have arguably confirmed Western stereotypes about Third World politics.

Reporting of the vice-presidential and presidential ballot in October 1999 confirmed the permanent use of crisis framing to shape reporting in the Western news media. Differences however are again noted in how the frame functioned. For *The Independent*, the spectre of violence was a clear theme in reporting. Megawati’s popularity was positioned against Habibie’s illegitimacy, and should
Habibie win the presidential vote, the crisis would be inflamed. Wahid’s election, though framed as not representative of all Indonesians, was welcomed (given it meant the end of the New Order). The election of Megawati as Vice-President signalled to readers of *The Independent* that the crisis was resolved.

Similar themes were noted in *The Times*, although Wahid’s election was trivialised even further. A sense of the multiple struggles that Megawati needed to overcome were noted in *The Times*, suggestive of its maintenance of alleviating framing. The approach adopted in *The New York Times* was to “name” Indonesian-style democracy as deficient and therefore the source of the problem. However, in the election of Wahid as President the “crisis of democracy” was overcome. It was of some interest to note the lengths the American publication went to reassure its audiences of Wahid’s secular and democratic credentials. As with *The Age* and *The Times*, *The New York Times* signalled the resolution of the crisis, reliant on narratives of the “dawning of democracy.” *The Australian*, while perhaps the most critical of Megawati and her value to post-Suharto Indonesia, similarly framed the period as one of crisis, resolved not so much by the election of the Wahid-Megawati government but by the end of the New Order. What appeared to concern *The Australian* however was the Islamic credentials of Wahid and what consequences this may have for Australian interests.

Crisis and affective framing shaped a social reality about Indonesian politics and its political leaders during 1998 and 1999. For the most part, Suharto and Habibie were framed as the cause of the drama/crisis, either via their own actions or via their establishment and maintenance of an ineffective economic and political system. Megawati, for the most part, was framed with privileged meanings, particularly when juxtaposed with Habibie. This was particularly evidenced in “naming” the “truth” of her moral mandate following the June general election. When juxtaposed with Wahid, arguably the privilege was less effective. As reporting had to adjust to an overwhelming amount of discrepant information, namely a view that Megawati had failed to build the alliances required to deliver her the presidency; alleviating frames that had been evidenced in 1998 were consolidated. In assuaging Megawati of her failings, framing reaffirmed her as a political victim. In relation to the presidential vote, alleviating frames highlighted
her as betrayed by the machinations of others and blamed her failure on Indonesian-style democracy.

To date this study has examined how episodic framing functioned to privilege meanings about Megawati, and has examined how crisis and affective framing functioned to strengthen social realities and privileged meanings. The following chapter examines “issue framing.” It interrogates Western news reporting of Habibie’s announcement on East Timorese independence and the aftermath of the August 1999 ballot. The aim is to evaluate if “issue framing” (the juxtapositioning of public policy into competing strategic, material and values frames) similarly structured social realities and privileged meanings. Given Megawati’s opposition to any form of provincial independence or succession, and given that the Western news media adopted a pro-Independence narrative on East Timor, this issue is insightful. The objective is to evaluate how it had the potential to disrupt the privileged meanings being posited about Megawati and to assess how journalists adjusted frames to respond to this potential disruption. It considers if the elite orientation of frames in relation to East Timor weakened meanings about Megawati, or if the issue was framed to sustain privileged meanings about Megawati while maintaining the need for East Timorese independence.
CHAPTER FIVE

FRAMING EAST TIMOR: CONTESTED MEANINGS – MEGAWATI AND HABIBIE

The previous chapters examined how “episodic framing” functioned to shape meanings about Megawati Sukarnoputri by containing them within an apolitical context (Chapter Three) and how “crisis framing” functioned to shape social realities about Indonesia that produced meanings which arguably privileged Megawati (Chapter Four). The broader objective of each chapter was threefold: to establish how framing functions to shape meanings; to posit that no actor or issue is immune from framing; and to demonstrate the influence of the news media in shaping public knowledge about the character, motivations and legitimacy of political leaders. As outlined in Chapter One, public knowledge is conceptualised in this project as how citizens/audiences broadly think about and structure their ideas, feelings, fears, and beliefs about political actors.¹

This chapter examines how “issue framing” of East Timor shaped meanings about two post-Suharto leaders, Megawati and Habibie. Its aim is to demonstrate how issue framing shapes public policies in ways that are evaluative of political leaders. The hypothesis is that how an issue is framed, normatively as a conflict between competing positions, shapes audiences evaluations not only about the policy, but about the political actors who are juxtaposed as representing each side of the conflict. By framing issues within conflicting “dualisms,” journalists reduce complex public policies to a set of contestations.² How the issue or policy is reduced to a clash of political interests (strategy frames), to a clash of moral principles (value frames), or to an assessment of the economic consequences (material frames) contains and limits meanings.³ It does so, in Entman’s assessment, by framing some aspects of the perceived reality in ways that promote particular problems, and shapes casual interpretations, moral evaluations and/or treatment recommendations.⁴ Applying issue framing to a public policy

(as with episodic and crisis frames) seeks to identify the way frames organise and contextualise meanings via selection, emphasis and elaboration.

In the case of issue framing, interactions between journalists and sources, conceptualised as the elite orientation of frames, influence, augment and strengthen how public policy issues are framed in ways that are evaluative of the issue, as well as political leaders. This influence is considered profound when it is only a small number of journalists who are reporting the news. As Entman (and others) argues, reporting the news is a communication process immediately reliant on interactions between journalists (in some literature designated as elites given the position they hold in the public sphere) and their sources (similarly those who hold positions in society in which their opinions and views are valued as heuristic).\(^5\) In these interactions, the news frame is not only developed, but privileged meanings are embedded. How the issue is framed, by whom, and the sources they rely upon actively produce meanings and bolster particular interpretations and evaluations about the issue, as well as the actors centralised in the news frame.\(^6\)

In order to evaluate how issue frames are structured to posit meaning, and to examine the influence of the elite orientation of frames, this chapter interrogates reporting of the issue of surrounding East Timorese independence. As outlined in Chapter Two, the former Portuguese colony had been under Indonesian control since 1975. On assuming the leadership of Indonesia in May 1998 (formalised in January 1999) Habibie announced a U.N. supervised referendum would occur on the issue in August 1999.\(^7\) As with the broad objectives of this project, this analysis does not seek to evaluate the merits or motivations of the policy. Rather, the aim is to evaluate how it was framed in the Western news media in ways that


shaped meanings about the social realities of Indonesian governance and were evaluative of Habibie and Megawati’s value to the post-Suharto period.

Apart from the considerable coverage given to this issue over the two-year period of 1998 and 1999, this issue is insightful in examining several key themes of this project. In terms of the technical nature of frames, firstly, it aims to evaluate if issue framing functioned in a similar way to episodic frames and crisis frames to shape realities and meanings about East Timor, Indonesia and key political actors. Secondly, it seeks to determine if issue framing (as with episodic-crisis frames) relied on frame reasoning and devices to shape meaning and knowledge. Thirdly, it attempts to assess whether issue framing similarly relied on salience.

The issue is also insightful in examining the cognitive nature of frames. Firstly, it aims to evaluate how “truths” were named about East Timor in ways that shaped emotional and political reactions which attributed blame and responsibility, as well as framed solutions and remedies. Secondly, it seeks to determine if strategy, value and material frames functioned to shape meanings about Habibie’s motivations for the policy shift in ways that were evaluative of his agency, authority or legitimacy. Thirdly, it aims to discover if issue framing shaped privileged meanings about Megawati, and given her opposition to East Timorese Independence, if issue frames weakened privilege meanings about Megawati.

As with “episodic framing” and “crisis framing,” it is hypothesised that issue framing shaped social realities about the state of Indonesian politics that deemed the need for regime change. In 1999, this was framed as the end of the Habibie Government. Issue framing of East Timor arguably augmented this discourse. In reporting East Timor, certain “truths” about the social realities of East Timor (and Indonesian governance) were named. For example, there appeared to be a general view that Indonesia was responsible for problems facing East Timor: that the military were responsible for human rights abuses; that East Timor should be

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8 A Factiva database search of the five newspapers examined for this study revealed 3,215 references to ‘East Timor’ from 1 January 1998 to 31 December 1999. For the month of September 1999 (the highest month of coverage for the two-year period) Factiva returned 1,172 references to ‘East Timor’. As outlined in Chapter One, the same inductive methods were used to select 626 articles that formed the basis of this secondary study.
granted independence on moral grounds; and that it was inevitable that East Timor would achieve independence. While different frames were employed to shape these meanings, a liberal view on East Timor was evident.

Analyses conceptualise how this emerged, with specific attention paid to the “hero myth-maker” narratives of foreign correspondents. It posits that in reporting East Timor, the experiences of Western journalists reporting from East Timor and the impact of the murder of foreign correspondents (the “Balibo Five” and Roger East in 1975 and Financial Times correspondent, Sander Thoenes, on 21 September 1999) were factors in how the news was framed. While this project is not a critique of the journalists and their motivations (rather it is a critique of how they framed Indonesia generally, and Megawati specifically) this analysis does consider how to evaluate the human experiences of foreign correspondents (particularly when reporting in a war zone). It remains mindful that journalists are not mechanical ciphers but are politically and culturally aware discursive agents. Locale, newsroom values, human experiences, morals and ideologies will shape foreign correspondents and hence shape their work product. It is how to evaluate their work product, in this case how they framed the news, in ways that acknowledge these conditions which concludes this project.

Beginning this chapter is an outline of how issue framing functions to posit meanings in ways that shape public knowledge, before demonstrating indicative examples of how the issue was framed in British, American and Australian accounts. In each instance, the similarities and differences in how issue frames shaped evaluative meanings about East Timor, Habibie and Megawati are examined. A more detailed discussion of the elite orientation of frames precedes empirical data that shows that it was only a small group of journalists who were framing news accounts about Indonesia throughout 1998 and 1999, and more so about East Timor in September 1999. Empirical data is also presented which indicates a propensity by Western journalists to use political and foreign elites to source their accounts, in ways which impacted on how news frames were developed. It concludes that how the issue of East Timor was framed does posit

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the influence of the news media in shaping public knowledge. What impact this had on how public knowledge about Indonesia and its political leaders are summarised in the final chapter of this thesis.

Issue framing

Issue framing is the shaping of news reports with definitions, constructions or depictions of a political issue or public policy in ways that seek to influence or change audience evaluations about the issue/policy and the central actors responsible for its development and implementation.\textsuperscript{10} Its meaning-making function is evident in the way it normatively defines and constructs issues as problems, public controversies, or conflicts.\textsuperscript{11} It emphasises certain aspects of an issue and downplays other aspects (salience) in order to guide the audience to “the essence of the issue.”\textsuperscript{12} Issue frame analysis seeks to demonstrate how issues/policies are constructed in ways that “afford privileges to some, and stigmatise and disenfranchise others.”\textsuperscript{13} They are more than a “single argument or a position on an issue,” it is the reasoning and devices used to “provide meaning to an issue” and to “suggest how to understand and think about it.”\textsuperscript{14} In numerous studies, it has shown its ability to “influence distributions of opinion.”\textsuperscript{15} Based on empirical evidence, Sniderman and Theriault surmise that: “It is widely agreed that citizens in large numbers can be readily blown from one side of an issue to the very opposite depending on how the issue is specifically framed.”\textsuperscript{16}


How a public policy is framed has been shown to influence public knowledge and opinion on a variety of racial, social and human rights issues, as well as international issues. Kinder and Saunders’ examination of how issue framing can shape public support for ameliorative racial and social policies found that “how citizens understand a debate, which features are central and which are peripheral, is reflected in how an issue is framed.” In studies by Nelson and Oxley of a fictitious environmental development and associated economic issues, they found issue framing relied on a variety of “cues” which affected judgments made by participants about issues of environmental protection and economic progress. Nelson and Oxley concluded that:

Through framing, communicators seek to establish a dominant definition or construction of an issue. In a way, issue framing is issue categorisation: a declaration of what a policy dispute is really all about, and what it has nothing to do with. Like any social category, issue frames carry perceptual and inferential implication, guiding how their recipients ponder and resolve issue dilemmas. We maintain that frames influence opinion by suggesting which of many, possibly conflicting considerations should predominate.

The effect of issue framing is contested among communication scholars. In some assessments, the probability of audiences acquiring “cueing” information depends on their level of awareness of the issue. If too “poorly informed to be aware of the cues,” audiences tend to “uncritically accept whatever ideas they encounter.” Other research posits that, regardless of issue framing, audiences may reject the dominant or preferred meaning if it is inconsistent with their political predispositions. In a different approach, Druckman argues framing effects may

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18 Kinder and Saunders, *Divided by Color*, p. 39.


occur because audiences delegate to “ostensibly credible elites” to help them sort through the multiplicity of frames. In this assessment, audiences turn to elites for guidance, meaning they only believe frames that come from sources they determine as “credible.” Numerous studies have shown that perceived source credibility is a factor in determining the success of framing public knowledge. Research by Callaghan and Schnell, for example, examined how the evaluations of the credibility of elite spokespersons altered the priorities audiences assigned to various social policies.

Some issue frame studies posit that how an issue is framed can “change what citizens think about an issue and their policy support [my emphasis].” Cognitive models of communication, for example, theorise that how an issue is framed can persuasively change public judgments and evaluations about the qualities and characteristics of the issue under consideration. Persuasion takes place when a communicator effectively revises the content of audience beliefs about the issue, replacing or supplementing favourable thoughts with unfavourable ones. Other studies hypothesise that how issues are framed influences rather than changes how an issue, policy or actors intentions or plans are understood and evaluated.

Haider-Markel and Joslyn examined how public knowledge was influenced by the repeated attention given to it by elites in both the media and in public policy circles. They argued that public knowledge and opinions on gun policy were shaped by salience. The aim of this approach was to examine the structure of
issue frames (rather than solely evaluate the frame content) in order to demonstrate that configuring elements (such as salience) is a decisive variable in what make some frames more persuasive than others. Similarly, research by Lecheler et al found that salience ensured audiences were more likely to be exposed to issue frames. Krosnick found that continuing focus of public discourses on a specific political issue causes audiences to recognise connections between an issue, their personal self-interest, identification with a country, or their basic values. Thus, heightened attention by elites to an issue can influence audience evaluations and judgments about policies.

The language choices by elites (both journalists and sources) are also a factor. Researchers have noted that survey responses are affected by variations in question wording. Wording effects, however, have largely been considered a technical issue, albeit one with occasionally important implications for the interpretation of substantive trends in public opinion. More recently, theories of issue framing and its relationship to public knowledge have propelled wording into a central theoretical place in public knowledge/opinion research. In Borrelli and Lockerbie’s assessment, even the most well informed respondents can be sensitive to linguistic structuring in the presentation of an issue. The recent debates over American action in Iraq have underscored the importance of linguistic structuring, issue framing and framing effects in foreign policy.

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attitudes. Put simply, what words, phrases, or ideas can be expressed in an issue frame can systematically increase or decrease public support for a policy, for evaluations of its merit, and for evaluations of political leaders.37

Bleich’s research of how U.S. funding for HIV/AIDS in developing countries was framed, sort to investigate how wording of an issue affected public evaluations. The research found that Americans were more likely to reject the policy when it was framed as foreign aid.38 Jacoby, in examining the broader questions of domestic government expenditure in the U.S., found that while there were partisan and ideological differences in how elites framed government spending, evidence suggested that issue framing had been successful in affecting American public knowledge and opinion about the role of a welfare state versus individual responsibility.39 Complimenting the linguistic structuring of issue frames is the practice of “issue dualism.”

Journalists, argues Bennett, tend to reduce public policy issues that are generally complex, multifaceted issues with multiple stakeholders and competing partisan, ideological or national interests to opposing positions upheld by “two familiar, predictable, legitimate groups or actors.”40 Referred to as “issue dualism,” the rationale is that it ensures a balance between competing groups, with journalists giving both sides equal opportunity to register their positions and propose solutions to problematic aspects of the issues or policy.41 Critics however argue that the practice of issue dualism emphasises conflict and is therefore a contributing factors in the “erosion of public trust” and the “marginalisation of minority voices” in issue/policy debates.42 Arguably, the practice has provided

journalists with the ability to defend the fairness and independence of their coverage as part of the journalists’ rituals by which the “illusion of objectivity is maintained.”

While news practitioners portray their colleagues as “neutral transmitters,” framing researchers suggest that journalists, even within the bounds of issue dualism, exercise a “substantial degree of freedom to define issue conflicts by applying frames of understanding.”

The following section evaluates issue framing of East Timor. Its primary aim is to demonstrate how the issue was framed as dualism, how it was reliant on salience, how linguistic structuring shaped emotive and political meanings and judgments, and how strategy frames, value frames and material frames functioned to shape meanings about two of the central actors competing for power in the post-Suharto period, Megawati and Habibie.

**Framing East Timor: Megawati and Habibie (1998 and 1999)**

**British reporting**

Civil and political unrest in the “annexed” and “occupied territory” of East Timor was indicative of the state of disorder occurring in Indonesia the last two years, according to *The Independent*. Habibie’s announcement of the Independence ballot was reported as “capitulation to international pressure.” This framing posited that Habibie’s motivations were strategic, rather than moral or principled. East Timor was positioned as a problem for Jakarta, given that the United Nations had never accepted Jakarta’s incorporation of East Timor. More so, Indonesian military actions in East Timor had provided “years of criticism” from international human rights groups, and subsequently led to international denunciations. For *The Independent*, East Timor was polarised as a struggle between Jakarta on one side and the international community on the other.

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In terms of how the issue of East Timor shaped knowledge about Habibie, *The Independent* reported that he was a “weak civilian president with little influence over conservative nationalists in the army.”47 Ongoing reporting of human rights abuses, particularly the ill-treatment of East Timorese political and religious leaders, stigmatised Habibie’s New Order government, while also shaping emotive responses to the plight of the Timorese. Habibie’s decision to select General Wiranto, the “man who presided over the violence in East Timor,” similarly functioned to discredit Habibie.48 Even when acknowledging his reform agenda, *The Independent* continued to frame Habibie as a Suharto acolyte and as dismissive of his commitment to reform. The following excerpt from 20 October 1999 is indicative of how the British newspaper devalued both Habibie and his reform agenda:

…Suharto’s former vice-president, who succeeded to the post by default after the forced resignation of his old friend and patron. During his brief tenure, he has liberalised press laws, released political prisoners and brought about the long-awaited referendum on independence in East Timor. But Mr Habibie’s achievements have been swamped by his omissions - his failure to check corruption or to bring successful prosecutions against Suharto and his family. Far from winning credit, he has secured a reputation as a bumbling incompetent, deaf to the wishes of his people.49

In terms of the process of East Timorese independence, *The Independent* lauded it a celebration of the ballot box, even though acknowledging ongoing acts of violence may disrupt the outcome. A sense of the inevitability of independence pervaded reporting; discursively suggesting that democracy would prevail over violence and anarchy.50 In reporting the results of the August ballot, the celebration of democracy discourse was reinforced in *The Independent’s* lead story, titled “East Timor sees birth of democracy.”51 However, by September 1999, reporting adopted a more sombre tone, positing the failure of the process to deliver “freedom” to East Timor. Of note in this analysis was the way democracy and freedom were juxtaposed in a normative duality.

48 R. Lloyd Parry, “President Habibie asks army chief to be his deputy.” *The Independent*, 14 October 1999, p. 17. Wiranto went on to reject Habibie’s offer.
As events unfolded, issue dualism was noted in how the outcome for Indonesia was framed as either an “outright military dictatorship or gradual disintegration.” That is, issue framing in this case functioned as a zero-sum within which only one outcome was possible. In order to make the unimaginable imaginable for audiences, *The Independent* posited that the “unfolding tragedy in East Timor constitutes the most dangerous crisis for South East Asia since the Vietnam war 25 years ago.” Adopting a material frame, the newspaper claimed that should Indonesia crumble China would emerge as the region’s superpower.\(^52\)

In terms of Megawati’s position on East Timor, *The Independent* made no mention of her opposition to any process that would disrupt or weaken the Republic of Indonesia. Rather, the newspaper reported she would “respect” the result of the Independence ballot.\(^53\) In evaluating the need to save Indonesia from disintegration, the newspaper reported: “If not the generals, then at least opposition civilian politicians like Megawati, who aspire to lead it, surely realise that only consent, not coercion, can hold Indonesia together.”\(^54\) Arguably, in this framing Megawati was positioned as the more likely solution to the problems facing Indonesia than Habibie. References to her as a “civilian” inferred she was not beholden to the Indonesian military (in thematic accounts held responsible for the violence that had occurred, and was occurring, in East Timor) and more than likely functioned to reinforce the fact she was not a member of the New Order (as Habibie was). References to “consent” rather than “coercion” also functioned to posit that a Megawati Presidency may provide a peaceful solution.

Throughout 1998 and 1999, *The Independent* framed the question of East Timor as one of “crisis,” a trend noted in the general reporting of Indonesia. However, in this case of East Timor, reporting was not confined to episodic accounts. Significant thematic accounts appeared at regular intervals throughout the two-year period examined for this study.\(^55\) Thematic accounts, in this case, functioned to privilege international condemnation of Habibie’s New Order and to privilege

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52 “Only consent can save Indonesia from disintegration,” *The Independent*, 11 September 1999, p. 3.
54 “Only consent can save Indonesia from disintegration,” *The Independent*, 11 September 1999, p. 3.
emotive reactions to the plight of the East Timorese. By ignoring Megawati’s nationalism, privileged framing of Megawati, in this case as the likely peaceful solution to Indonesia’s social and political problems, was maintained. In effect, salience functioned as the tool for *The Independent* to sustain its privileged framing of Megawati.

Issue framing in this assessment of *The Independent’s* coverage of East Timor functioned to stigmatise Habibie and his government. Habibie’s motives were framed as strategic rather than principled. His leadership of the issue, and of Indonesia generally, was shaped as inept and not in control of the military, and he was portrayed as a Suharto acolyte. The process of independence was framed as inevitable and as a celebration of democracy. Should it fail, a material frame was adopted to posit the consequences for the region. Issue framing highlighted Habibie’s failures, rather than focusing on how challengers such as Megawati (or even Rais or Wahid) may respond, and as such it was reflective of salience.

While there were several thematic accounts of the events surrounding East Timor, for the most part they emphasised the New Order’s role in the annexation of the region and the ongoing oppression there. Episodic accounts focused on Habibie’s flaws and the strategic motivations for his shift on East Timor.

While *The Independent* described East Timor as annexed and occupied territory, *The Times* described East Timor as having been “illegally annexed” and “invaded.”

Linguistic choices such as “invaded” are more suggestive that “occupied territory.” Moreover, when “invaded” is attached to the New Order, blame is clearly attributed. Similarly, *The Times* describes Habibie as a protégé, as opposed to other newspaper references to him as an acolyte. The former is arguably more benign than the latter. Almost immediately on assuming the presidency, *The Times* framed Habibie as under pressure from Western governments to shift Indonesian policy on East Timor. In itself, this frame denied Habibie agency. His motivations for the policy shift were shaped within material frames, in this case economic realities. Habibie claimed *The Times* “Knows that the $1million per day cost of repression in East Timor is a millstone around

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Indonesia’s weakened economic neck.”\textsuperscript{57} As with \textit{The Independent}, this framing posited that his motivations for changing policy on East Timor were not a result of principled or moral considerations.

As with \textit{The Independent} there was a sense of scepticism about the genuineness of Habibie’s announcements, and a cynicism about the likelihood of the Indonesian military complying.\textsuperscript{58} Rather, the policy shift was reported as more likely a political-economic strategy designed to solve the long-term problem of East Timor. Under Habibie’s plan, the East Timorese would accept autonomy under Jakarta, abandoning their claims for independence or, in rejecting it, would be granted independence and cut off from Jakarta financially.\textsuperscript{59} According to \textit{The Times}, Indonesian government leaders hoped that East Timor would opt to remain with Indonesia.\textsuperscript{60}

Rather than the “celebration of the ballot box” noted in \textit{The Independent}, \textit{The Times} focused more on the violence occurring in East Timor, blamed on Jakarta-backed militias and ignored by Indonesian generals and political leaders, though reporting did not name which leaders. “Repression,” suggested \textit{The Times}, had been “privatised” in East Timor, and the United Nations was framed as ineffective in dealing with either the violence or Jakarta.\textsuperscript{61} The polemic in \textit{The Times} therefore was a struggle between Habibie and the Indonesian military, which were “reluctant to see its sacrifices wasted at the beginning of a process that it fears could encourage secessionists in other parts of the country.”\textsuperscript{62} Similarly, the Independence vote itself was framed as a duality, bringing East Timor either autonomy or full independence. The broader problem narrated in \textit{The Times} was the potential for Balkanisation, that is, other provinces seeking and winning independences, leaving Indonesia to disintegrate.\textsuperscript{63} Reflecting the

\textsuperscript{57} “Hope in East Timor: After Suharto’s fall, an opportunity to right a wrong,” \textit{The Times}, 24 July 1998, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{58} P. Nunan, “Jakarta opens way to Timor freedom,” \textit{The Times}, 29 January 1999, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{59} “East Timor’s Agony: Indonesia is not delivering on its political promises,” \textit{The Times}, 20 April 1999, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{60} “Indonesia’s shame: The defenceless against the indefensible,” \textit{The Times}, 7 September 1999, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{61} “East Timor’s chance: A terrible wrong that must now at last be put right,” \textit{The Times}, 26 August 1999, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{63} “After East Timor: Indonesia must heed warnings from its restive provinces,” \textit{The Times}, 1 September 1999, p. 19.
newspapers sombre view, it reported, “Democracy was in flames.” Violence, at the hands of the militias intended to make East Timor “ungovernable,” was framed to reflect both Habibie’s lack of control and his political isolation.64

Neither Habibie nor Megawati was positioned as the solution to East Timor in The Times. In the case of East Timor, the privileged framing attached to Megawati (as noted in other chapters) dissipated. The Times more directly named Megawati’s position on East Timor, stating she did not favour constitutional reform and opposed East Timor seceding from the federation.65 She was reported as having “Blown hot and cold about Mr Habibie’s pledge to give East Timor its voice, raising fears that she could imperil the U.N.-sponsored deal.”66 In relation to Habibie, the following is indicative of the newspaper’s framing of his leadership, while positing the political implications and likely outcome. As evidenced in the previous chapter, a sense of crisis is evident in the report:

However much the visible agonies of East Timor have pushed foreign governments towards intervention, most recognise that President Habibie must be given some leeway to try to impose order himself. His control of his army is minimal. Many officers resent the Timorese referendum that he ordered and had a vested interest in spoiling his chances of re-election in November by prolonging violence now; Jakarta is alive with rumours of army coups.67

Thematic accounts in The Times were more evident when reporting the issues surrounding East Timor.68 Like The Independent, they functioned to remind audiences of the New Order’s culpability for human rights abuses in East Timor since 1975. There was no ambiguity in The Times narratives: East Timor was Indonesia’s “shame,” the “defenceless” struggling against the “indefensible,”69 and “the world will not allow East Timor’s cry for freedom to be drowned in

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67 “Rein in the war horses: East Timor’s troubles are better resolved by negotiation,” The Times, 10 September 1999, p. 25. For a similar view see D. Watts, “Anti-Habibie drive begins,” The Times, 18 September 1999, p. 16.
68 See for example “East Timor’s Agony: Indonesia is not delivering on its political promises,” The Times, 20 April 1999, p. 25; “Indonesia’s disgrace: Jakarta is entirely to blame for the violence in East Timor,” The Times, 2 September 1999, p. 21 and D. Donald, “The best option is to leave restoration of order to Jakarta. For Jakarta has lost East Timor...” The Times, 7 September 1999, p. 18.
69 “Indonesia’s shame: The defenceless against the indefensible,” The Times, 7 September 1999, p. 19.
These examples are indicative of linguistic structuring, in this case emotive orientations designed to reinforce meanings and evaluations about the issue. Several articles in The Times compared the problems facing East Timor with those facing Kosovo. Common in both were references to genocide. The use of comparatives provided a framework within which European audiences could conceptualise the distant events occurring in Indonesia.

While there were similarities between The Times and The Independent’s framing of East Timor, such as the sense of scepticism about Habibie and cynicism about the Indonesian army, significant differences were noted in the frames adopted. The Times tended to adopt more material frames than The Independent, which relied more on strategic frames. This is unsurprising given The Times generally tended to focus more on economic frames than political frames (as demonstrated in Chapter Three). Rather than a “celebration of the ballot box” narrative, The Times also focused more on the violence, positing the likelihood of disintegration of the Indonesian state and the economic consequences for the region.

Linguistic structuring left readers clearly able to designate who was responsible, who was blamed, who the oppressors were, and who the victims were. Comparatives functioned in both The Times and The Independent to ensure that audiences could imagine the unimaginable. For The Independent, it was comparisons with the Vietnam War to suggest the enormity of the crisis. For The Times, it was comparisons with genocide in Kosovo, allowing audiences to relate to the drama and tragedy of the events occurring in distant East Timor. Of significant difference in The Times was its framing of Megawati. In this instance, issue framing lacked the privileged meanings previously attached to her. While salience ensured The Independent’s audiences lacked a more critical context to evaluate Megawati, The Times more directly framed Megawati as an unlikely solution.

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70 “Rein in the war horses: East Timor’s troubles are better resolved by negotiation,” The Times, 10 September 1999, p. 25.
Australian reporting

Like *The Independent*, *The Australian* framed Habibie’s motivations towards East Timor as strategic and used material frames to posit the consequences of the decision. *The Australian*, for example, reported that Habibie’s decision to allow a U.N.-supervised vote on East Timor was done “in exchange for international recognition of Indonesian sovereignty.”\(^{72}\) Editor-at-large Paul Kelly described the policy shift as “designed to give Indonesia a last chance to get East Timor right.” The consequences were that “Australia may have to live with a new, tiny, fragile and economically risky nation, heavily reliant upon Australian patronage, emerging on its doorstep.”\(^{73}\) This is evidence of a material frame, which highlights economic consequences to shape meanings. Again, like *The Independent*, in Don Greenlees’ assessment Habibie’s shift reflected his “political weakness” rather than a commitment to independence.\(^{74}\)

*The Australian* initially framed East Timorese independence as dangerous, suggesting it would give rise to separatist movements elsewhere in Indonesia, and that an independent East Timor would be a “chaotic, broken-backed, unviable state, desperately poor, chronically in conflict, prey to foreign interference, effectively mendicant.”\(^{75}\) Shaping *The Australian*’s coverage of East Timor was arguably a view of the importance of protecting the Australian-Indonesian relationship. *Foreign Affairs* editor, Greg Sheridan admitted that “The preservation of the Indonesian State intact has always been of fundamental strategic interest to Australia.”\(^{76}\) This view was prevalent for most of *The Australian*’s coverage until the second half of 1999. After this period, and coinciding with the violent aftermath of the Independence ballot, this reporting was juxtaposed with value frames that most directly named the tragedy of East Timor. Value framing, noted particularly in reports from journalists reporting from the East Timor capital Dili, demanded a moral and humanitarian response, regardless of the consequences to the Canberra-Jakarta relationship.

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Given the discourse of *The Australian* was the strategic protection of Australia’s relationship with Indonesia, reporting suggested that while independence was likely, it was not necessarily inevitable. Sheridan however conceded “That the old Indonesian orthodoxy on East Timor will no longer work.” The issue of East Timor, for *The Australian* was woven into the broader issue of Indonesian governance, with the newspaper positing that Indonesian governance was in crisis, and the only remedy was economic and political reform. How Habibie was framed posited that he was not the leader likely to deliver that reform. The following excerpt is one example of how *The Australian* discursively framed Habibie within crisis frames to posit the need for more structural reform:

The Habibie Government represents in many ways a continuation of elements of the Suharto regime. But it lacks credibility, legitimacy and authority. It is barely able to keep itself in existence. In order to try to do so it has embraced democratic political and economic reform. The situation is chaotic and no outcome assured, but the direction is for a more democratic Indonesia.

Megawati’s position on East Timor in January 1999 was reported as being “more liberal on East Timor than Habibie,” though no explanation was forthcoming of how this was so. The publication did note the promise made by Rais of a “binding referendum on independence for East Timor.” By framing Rais and Megawati in this conjunctive way, framing isolated Habibie. Rather than suggesting Megawati or Rais had adopted a radical position, Sheridan (again) noted: “All of liberal opinion within Indonesia is tending in that direction.” Also rather than directly focusing of Megawati’s opposition to Independence (as *The Age* did), *The Australian* initially reported Megawati’s claims that Habibie had “no authority” to make the decision, given he was not “democratically elected.” However, shifts were evident in how Megawati’s position was framed.

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Under the May 1999 headline “Megawati in two minds over East Timor independence” Greenlees reported that while her Party “deplored the option of independence (for East Timor),” she would “respect the signature on an international agreement,” a reference to the U.N. accords that allowed the August ballot to go ahead.\(^{81}\) Of her visit to the East Timor capital, Dili, The Australian reported Megawati’s statements that the question of East Timor “should be solved peacefully and with love,” and her concern about East Timor’s “suffering.”\(^{82}\) Her visit to Dili, her statements on the legality of the annexation, and her pleas for the East Timorese to remain part of the Republic were framed in The Australian as strategic, with her aim consolidating ABRI support.\(^{83}\)

In an approach already noted in analyses of The Australian, thematic reports were regular throughout 1998 and 1999, consistent in their adoption of broader historical and political contexts for the events occurring in Indonesia and East Timor. In the case of specific framing of the issues surrounding East Timor, thematic accounts strongly noted Australia’s ongoing material and strategic interests in maintaining its relationship with Jakarta. This, suggested by several accounts in The Australian, shaped the Australian government’s responses to East Timor.\(^{84}\) However, as reporting developed (especially throughout the second half of 1999), these accounts were juxtaposed with increasing accounts of trauma and suffering being experienced by the East Timorese.\(^{85}\) This was specifically evident in the period immediately following the August ballot.

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For *The Age* each of the key stakeholders, Habibie, Megawati, the Indonesian military, the Australian and American governments, and the U.N., were variously framed as part of the problem, not part of the solution to the question of East Timor. Using material and strategic frames, these stakeholders were dualised against the moral frames of the East Timorese. The overall reading of *The Age* suggests that while maintaining the inevitability of East Timorese independence, the solution would come from the ballot box, not from the actions of Jakarta, Canberra, Washington or the U.N. While a similar frame to that noted in *The Independent, The Age* directly attributed accountability to both national and international actors.

The U.N. was framed as inept in their response to East Timor. Lindsay Murdoch, for example, reported the claim that the Indonesian military should be the only force to oversee the Independence ballot should be seen as unacceptable to the U.N. and that “true to form” the U.N. had failed to “act quickly to prevent a human catastrophe.” Murdoch continued that “Only months before the scheduled vote, the U.N. has no arrangements in place to supervise it. Given that U.N. peacekeepers arrived 12 months late in Cambodia in the early 1990s to supervise a vote in that unfortunate country, it is hard to see how it can get its act together in such a short time for Timor.”

Suggesting Australia’s isolated policy on East Timor, *The Age* noted it was the only Western nation to “recognise Indonesia’s sovereignty” over the former Portuguese colony. Moreover, in maintaining its pro-Jakarta policy on East Timor, Australia was looking after its economic interests in terms of protecting its “lucrative off-shore mining interests and a potential re-negotiation of the Timor Gap Treaty.” Material frames were also evident in reports of Australia’s economic reluctance to provide troops, should civil war break out in East Timor.

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Timor,\textsuperscript{90} and concerns that an independent East Timor would be dependent on Australian aid.\textsuperscript{91}

The latter claim was also noted in \textit{The Australian}. In one clear rebuff, \textit{The Age} reported claims that an independent East Timor would be “very expensive” for Australia, and “smacks of the same self-interest and mean-spiritedness that has dominated Australian policy on East Timor for the past 23 years.”\textsuperscript{92} Strategic frames were also used to shape understandings of Australian policy, particularly noted in references to fears of the “risk of a fragmentation of other parts of Indonesia.”\textsuperscript{93} However, as Louise Williams editorialised, outbreaks of “ethnic and religious tensions do not mean ‘Balkanisation’ will necessarily follow if East Timor is granted independence.”\textsuperscript{94}

Described as a “tragic province,” \textit{The Age} suggested that Australia had a moral obligation to do “something approaching honour and respectability,” arguably suggesting current policy approached neither. The “worst case scenario,” claimed \textit{The Age}, was that:

…the independence of East Timor could be accompanied by a collapse of law and order and a descent into civil war…It is the task of the international community to ensure, as far as possible, that it does not happen. In this, Australia has a responsibility to take a leadership role, not only because of its historic debt but because of its regional position. This should include the commitment of Australian troops to a United Nations peacekeeping force. It is past time for Australia’s policy on East Timor to be based on honour and decency, rather than on short-term self-interest.\textsuperscript{95}

\textit{The Age} further editorialised that “The [Australian] Government’s response to the atrocities on East Timor is inadequate” and that Australia “must put strong pressure on Indonesia to disarm the militias. It must also push for a U.N. peacekeeping force to be established in East Timor without delay. And Australian


\textsuperscript{92} “Making Amends to East Timor,” \textit{The Age}, 25 February 1999, p. 16.


\textsuperscript{94} L. Williams, “Abuse and Exploitation have Fuelled Separatism,” \textit{The Age}, 30 January 1999, p. 21.

\textsuperscript{95} “Making Amends to East Timor,” \textit{The Age}, 25 February 1999, p. 16.
troops should be part of that force." 

Describing Habibie’s shift on East Timor as an extraordinary back flip, *The Age*, as with the British publications, appeared sceptical of Habibie’s ability to deliver any sort of reform on East Timor, and posited that the Indonesian military were unlikely to cede power of a province it considered a “fiefdom” for most of the past quarter century. Maintaining crisis framing, *The Age* posited that the potential for renewed bloodshed was ominous. More so, *The Age* reported that Habibie “seems to be making policy on the run,” particularly evident in his policy shift on East Timor. This reporting framed Habibie as acting out of political and strategic interests rather than out of moral imperatives or principles. Similarly, reports of Golkar’s remorse for its approach to East Timor were treated as part of a political strategy having “less to do with genuine contrition than the fact that Golkar is now fracturing badly.”

Several thematic accounts, complete with emotive frames, shaped meanings about the conditions facing the East Timorese, particularly at the hands of “paramilitary units” who “clashed with supporters of independence, killing and mutilating civilians and terrorising villagers.” More directly, *The Age* claimed the Indonesian military were deliberately “creating chaos” in order to prevent a peaceful settlement. Crisis framing, noted in references to a “vicious cycle of violence and possible civil war,” functioned to discredit Habibie, in particular highlighting his lack of control over the Indonesian military. Murdoch, for example, wrote: “The question that must be asked of Indonesia’s President, Dr. B. J. Habibie, and his armed forces commander, General Wiranto, is who is in charge of East Timor: the paramilitary thugs or Indonesia?” Headlines in *The Age* posited the zero-sum outcome of “democracy or mob rule.”

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reports of the “state of siege” in East Timor and reports of widespread violence contributed to public evaluations of Habibie’s poor leadership. As with The Independent, The Age framed the question of East Timorese independence as one of a “slow march to freedom.” Yet the “truth,” claimed The Age, was that Indonesia’s rule over East Timor has been “bloody and unforgiving.” As such: “The struggle of the East Timorese people would seem to be far from over.”

Megawati, described as the “nationalist daughter” of Sukarno, was reported as not wanting to “let the province break away.” Her position, posited The Age, was one of the reasons she was reluctant to form a coalition with Rais’ PAN party, which did favour “giving more autonomy to far-flung provinces.” This is a significantly different approach that that adopted by The Australian, which positioned Megawati and Rais as sharing a “liberal” view on East Timor. In reporting Megawati’s visit to East Timor in the days prior to the June 1999 general election, the newspaper noted that as a “staunch nationalist” she had “refused to promise, publicly at least, that she would abide by the wishes of the East Timorese people.” It was further reported that Megawati had criticised it as “risky” of Habibie to give the people of the East Timorese a choice between autonomy or independence. The paper also quoted Megawati as saying that the “momentum towards independence for the territory should be slowed down.”

Megawati was reported to have said:

East Timor is a “complicated issue. It needs careful handling. I would like to consider it from the point of view of regional stability…The mistake of Habibie’s Government is erratic policies that create more problems than solutions. There are more killings in East Timor now. In the end it destabilises the country, particularly when we are in an economic crisis.”

In other reports, The Age reported that, “like her father, Megawati is obsessed with nationalism and fears the disintegration of the Indonesian state.” While likely to respect the outcome of the U.N. agreement on the Independence ballot,

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104 L. Williams, “Timor’s Slow March To Freedom,” The Age, 16 January 1999, p. 22
she rejects provincial autonomy claims in both East Timor and Aceh. Louise Williams surmised how this view may shape a future Megawati government. While noting Megawati’s opposition to independence and surmising what it may mean in the future, reports in *The Age* tended to focus on how an independent East Timor would be problematic for Australian material and strategic interests.

While *The Australian* adopted a view of the likelihood of independence, it did so with a view as to what impact this would have on the Australian Government’s relationship with Jakarta, and at what cost to Australia of having an impoverished nation so close to its borders. *The Age*, while reporting what impact an independent East Timor would have on Australian economic interests, was less concerned with the protection of the Australian-Indonesian relationship. In both *The Age* and *The Australian*, as with British reporting, Habibie’s motivations for the policy shift were seen through strategic frames, in particular his need for international legitimacy. *The Age* however more directly suggested Habibie’s waning domestic authority.

Framing in both Australian newspapers negated Habibie’s commitment to reform, and as such questioned his motives for the policy shift. In positing a social reality, the issue was framed by *The Australian* as the “truth” of the need for reform, likely to occur under the leadership of others. In *The Age*, regime change was also posited as the “truth”, although it would not come via international intervention but rather via the ballot box. By conjunctively framing Megawati and Rais as reflecting a “liberal” approach to Indonesia, *The Australian* not only isolated Habibie, but posited their approach was reflective of “Indonesian thinking.” Conversely, *The Age* isolated Megawati from both Rais and Habibie and, in so doing, failed to maintain privileged meanings about Megawati and her future to post-New Order governance in Indonesia. While noting Megawati’s nationalism, *The Australian* tended to focus on her more benign statements of national unity. Given this framework, *The Australian* retained privileged meanings about Megawati. In its more critical assessments of Megawati, *The Age* denied

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privileged meanings of Megawati. The overriding theme in *The Australian* however was Australian interests and, in this sense, Megawati was not framed as posing a threat. A significant trend was noted in *The Australian* of journalists juxtaposing the need to protect Australia’s relationship with Jakarta, while extensively reporting the suffering and tragedy occurring in East Timor. While this may appear contradictory, it reflected a situation wherein national interests were juxtaposed with events being witnessed by journalists in East Timor. The need to “tell the truth” dominated reporting, particularly in late 1999. Trends noted in *The Age* were the consistent uses of issue frames to question Habibie’s motivations, to de-privilege meanings about Megawati, and to criticise Australian governmental policy.

*American reporting*

American reporting noted the 1975 takeover of East Timor variously as “annexation” and “invasion,” although the latter tended to dominate reporting. In either case, the circumstances of the takeover and the consequences of the annexation/invasion, for *The New York Times*, meant the issue of East Timor caused Indonesia considerable international criticism. For Seth Mydans, the “status of East Timor has been the single most difficult question for Indonesia in international forums” since Indonesia “invaded.”\(^\text{109}\) In other reports, Mydans wrote that East Timor’s “annexation” proved to be “Indonesia’s greatest international embarrassment, the source of most of the complaints about its human rights record.” Mydans also noted that with its “poverty and instability” East Timor was also a “drain on the resources and energy” of the Indonesian government.\(^\text{110}\) In both instances, international condemnation and the cost to Jakarta, framing posits a set of strategic and material frames to shape meanings about Habibie’s shift on East Timor.

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Habibie was reported in *The New York Times* as saying that on becoming President that there would be “no change in policy on the separatist movement in the island province of East Timor.” On 11 June 1998, *The New York Times* reported that Habibie proposed East Timor be granted special administration status, although he ruled out independence. It was reported that he was “reluctant to yield to demands for a referendum on independence in East Timor. Instead, he has offered the area a special status that might include some autonomy.” A sense of agency and control was initially attributed to Habibie, given these reports contain no reference to external or domestic pressures. Other reports though noted that Habibie had “little popular backing” on the issue.

While some 1998 reports in *The New York Times* noted that Habibie seemed to be “breaking with Mr. Suharto’s repressive ways,” other accounts of Habibie reported that he had “not yet won broad backing within the political establishment and his continued tenure is a source of discontent among many Indonesians who had hoped for a clean break with the past.” Mydans continued, “No matter what steps he has taken, many Indonesians just do not think he is credible as a President.” In a more positive assessment however, Mydans wrote that Habibie had “set an energetic pace and a populist tone that are in sharp contrast with the style and substance of Mr. Suharto.”

The reasons for Habibie’s shift on East Timor were variously framed as strategic and material. Initially, international condemnation and domestic cost were framed as the reasons for the shift. However as reporting developed through late 1998 and into 1999, reports claimed with “so many problems to deal with,” including international criticism for its “brutal occupation,” Habibie had “wisely recognised that an Indonesia struggling to recover from economic collapse and

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moving toward democratic elections would be better off letting East Timor go its own way.” The notion of Habibie “letting East Timor go its own way” is a significantly different frame from that adopted in Australian and British reporting, which posited Habibie’s more strategic/political interests in devolving power in East Timor.

While other publications framed the issue of East Timor as a contestation between Habibie and the international community, in the case of *The New York Times*, framing posited Habibie as in a struggle with ABRI. Notably it was ABRI, rather than Suharto or his New Order government, who were generally attributed responsibility for what American officials described as a moral crisis in East Timor. While reporting that ABRI were “mostly seen” not as a threat but as a “promise of stability” still “respected among Indonesians,” they were “named” in both episodic and thematic accounts as responsible for human rights abuses and “massacres,” for “mistreatment” of dissidents, for “abuses in power,” and for “corruption” across Indonesia, including in East Timor. Their resistance to East Timor independence was framed as strategic; should East Timor win independence it would encourage other separatist movements and weaken ABRI’s dual function. Unwilling to “give up a territory they seized a quarter century ago,” ABRI, it was reported, would risk chaos sparked by international economic sanctions and national disintegration.

Like *The Australian*, of note in *The New York Times* was the impact of East Timor on the Washington-Jakarta relationship. American strategic interests, reported as its protections of its relationship with “mineral-rich” Indonesia, were positioned in a dualistic relationship balanced against the “fate of East Timor.”

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This functioned as a rationale for the American administration resisting economic or military sanctions against Indonesia. Arguments that sanctions would result in further economic collapse and “undermine” Indonesia’s transition to democracy were positioned to justified American inaction on East Timor. 123 Mydans, reporting in September 1999, encapsulates the juxtapositioning of American realism with the morality of the East Timor cause:

…the options of the international community are extremely limited. It is most unlikely that any military action will be taken without Jakarta’s consent - and that consent is also most unlikely. And any economic sanctions would jeopardize hopes for the recovery here that foreign nations have worked so desperately to foster. Though the carnage in East Timor arouses moral outrage, the territory is a tiny one with little international importance. Any intervention on its behalf must be weighed against the costs to relations with Indonesia, the world’s fourth most populous nation, with more than 200 million people. 124

As the issue developed, The New York Times shaped the problems of East Timor as indicative of the problems of Indonesian governance. Narratives of regime change (the need for further democratisation and liberalisation) were evident in news reports. While initially some agency was attributed to Habibie, by late 1999 the American publication reported that Habibie appeared to have little control and was “distrusted by the military.” 125 Mydans reported, for example, that “The crisis in East Timor comes against the backdrop of a broader crisis of leadership in Indonesia.” 126 Imploring Habibie to act against the military to “disarm the militias and see that the referendum results are carried out,” framing posited that it was the Indonesian military that were responsible. This framing functioned to posit Habibie’s lack of authority. 127 Further confirming his lack of authority was the questioning of Habibie’s motives. Barbara Crossette, for example, questioned whether Habibie ever intended to abide by his promises (to the United Nations) and, even if he did, he “may not have the political clout to carry them out.”128 The

paper also reported President Clinton’s view that “nobody’s got the authority” among Indonesia’s “military or civilian leaders to quell the violence.”

Like Crossette, Mydans similarly questioned what control Habibie had over the forces that were “taking revenge” against the “inhabitants” of East Timor, described as “unlucky.” It was the militias, with ABRI’s “apparent complicity” who had “set East Timor on fire” and were “murdering residents.” In Mydans’ assessment, “the proposals coming from Jakarta to stop the terror are less than reassuring.” Habibie’s capitulation to allow peacekeepers into East Timor was framed strategically as a “fear” of Indonesia “being punished by the outside world.” By the end of September, The New York Times reported: “Habibie seems more politically fragile than ever.” Returning to American interests, The New York Times further stated: “Washington wants to save lives in East Timor without derailing Jakarta’s transition to democratic government.”

Several thematic reports were noted in American coverage. While most referred to the initial act of annexation/invasion and the cost in human life, some reporting noted American acquiescence and even complicity:

In December, 1975, President Ford and Henry Kissinger, visited President Suharto...They reacted with a nod and a wink to his plans to seize East Timor. The day after they left, Indonesian forces invaded the distant island, using American arms. In the invasion and ensuing occupation, a third of East Timor’s 600,000 people died. When it was pointed out that using American arms aid for aggression violated U.S. law, Mr. Kissinger reportedly told his staff: “Can’t we construe [stopping] a Communist government in the middle of Indonesia as self-defense?” (East Timor was in fact remote from Indonesia, and its mostly Roman Catholic people wanted independence, not Communism.) That episode tells us that an element in American foreign policy also fell when Suharto resigned last week. He was one more in a string of dictators who were admired by U.S. governments but rejected, in the end, by their own people.

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In describing Habibie’s reform agenda, which included amendments to the “vague and undemocratic constitution” and East Timorese independence, Mydans claimed that Habibie was “more liberal” than Megawati.\(^\text{136}\) This is opposite to *The Australian’s* assessment that Megawati (and Rais) were “more liberal.”\(^\text{137}\) *The New York Times* did report Megawati was a candidate of the “conservative, nationalist Indonesian Democratic Party of Reform”\(^\text{138}\) and a “strong supporter of a unified state,” [and] as well as “a sceptic about independence for the disputed territory of East Timor.”\(^\text{139}\) She was reported as thought to be a “nationalist in her father’s mould.”\(^\text{140}\) As argued in Chapter Three, framing of Sukarno in *The New York Times* was generally negative, hence references to her father functioned discursively. What is of more interest in a review of how *The New York Times* framed Megawati’s position on East Timor though was the way her treatment was amalgamated with the treatment of separatists. That is, acts against Megawati described as “bullying” and “crackdowns on dissidents and separatists” in East Timor and Aceh were positioned as the “truth” of why the regime, particularly ABRI (as noted, framed as accountable) were “reviled.”\(^\text{141}\) In this instance of framing, Megawati, the East Timorese and the Acehnese were all positioned as collective victims of the New Order.

Reporting Megawati’s apology to the East Timorese for a “quarter-century of violence,” it also reported that she “blamed” the Habibie Government for the “situation.”\(^\text{142}\) Concerned that Megawati was “echoing the strong nationalism of her father,” *The New York Times* questioned that if she became President the “agreement” on East Timor may be in “jeopardy.”\(^\text{143}\) While reporting that Megawati had “manoeuvred adeptly around the Timor issue,” she was “voicing support for the politically powerful military.”\(^\text{144}\) Given it was the military who

\(^{137}\) G. Sheridan, “Too late to turn back now,” *The Australian*, 29 January 1999, p. 11  
were blamed for the “situation” in East Timor this framing did not privilege Megawati. Her position was framed as strategic, aiming to attract support from ABRI and other “strongly nationalist groups” in the upcoming election.145

In summary, American reporting of the issues surrounding East Timor binarised Habibie in a struggle with ABRI for control of the situation in East Timor, but more so in a struggle for control of Jakarta. While initially appearing to suggest Habibie’s reform agenda was genuine and evidence of a shift away from Suharto’s authoritarianism, as reporting developed, his motivations and commitment to reform were questioned. Habibie’s agenda for East Timor, as with other publications, was framed as strategic, rather than out of a moral concern for the East Timorese. Seeking international legitimacy and hoping to avoid a clash with the international community (in the form of sanctions), as well as acknowledging that East Timor was one further problem confronting his government, *The New York Times* framed the final decision on independence as Habibie benignly “giving away” East Timor. Whatever agency and authority was initially attached to Habibie devolved as events developed, particularly in the second half of 1999. While framing the issue of East Timor as a moral crisis and a tragedy, *The New York Times*, as did *The Australian*, tended to position national interests over the interests of East Timor.

Framing, in the case of both these broadsheets, confirms that national interests will shape how nations, issues and actors are framed in the news media. The issue of East Timor similarly devolved into privileged framing of Megawati. Attachments to her father (particularly his nationalism) and her apparent acquiescence to the military (to attract military support in the upcoming presidential ballot) posited that Megawati’s motivations were strategic and material. Positing that Megawati was a conservative nationalist, less liberal than Habibie in relation to reform, *The New York Times* posited that Megawati would disappoint “reformers.”146

Having broadly critiqued how the issue of East Timor shaped meanings about Habibie and Megawati, the last examination provided in this framing analysis is that of the elite orientation of frames. Data indicates that it was a small number of journalists generally that were framing the events occurring in Indonesia during 1998 and 1999. This is particularly so in relation to reporting of East Timor. Data also indicate that these journalists relied on a small group of elites as sources for their news reports.

The elite orientation of frames: Journalists and sources

It is acknowledged that the news media do not have a mandate to educate the public, nor is the public required to learn from journalists. However, as argued in this thesis, framing conceptualises that influential communicative interactions do occur between elite news producers and their audiences. As demonstrated in previous chapters, the essence of public knowledge formation is grounded in the frames of references that form the core of these communicative interactions. Shaping the news frame from the moment the communication process begins, argues Entman, are immediate interactions between journalists and sources.

Sources play an ongoing and important role in frame development and maintenance, particularly when the source is powerful and in control of the flow of information. Peng argues that to some extent, the source is the story. Social, political, and economic elites are usually the source of issue frames. In Cobb’s view, this is important because audiences/citizens rely on elites as a primary heuristic when forming opinions about issues.

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McLeod and Hertog have found journalists tend to be reliant on elite or official sources to add prestige to the story, to increase the efficiency of news production, and to maintain the illusion of objectivity. Journalistic norms of fairness and balance require source-oriented reporting in an effort to establish an air of neutrality and add story credence. Studies have also found that the news media rely heavily on official sources not only for information, but also for explanations of the contested aspects of issues. As “source cues,” elites, particularly those viewed as “credible,” play a significant role in enhancing framing effects. In terms of credibility, journalists frequently rely on, and cite, political figures who enjoy established reputations on specific issues. Sources who have gained recognition as “experts” through media exposure tend to be utilized repeatedly, while reporters often neglect other potential but less well known sources.

In Druckman’s assessment, credible elites will enhance the effectiveness of framing. Examining media framing of poverty, Druckman argues:

…that a credible source can use a frame to alter the perceived importance of different considerations, and this, in turn, can change overall opinion. In contrast, a perceived noncredible source cannot use a frame to affect opinions - either overall opinion or the perceived importance of different considerations (i.e., source credibility is a moderator while belief importance is a mediator). Framing works when the statements are attributed to a credible source; framing fails when the same statements are attributed to a noncredible source.

Callaghan and Schnell, however, question in whose eyes is a source (elite or otherwise) credible. They argue, for example, a spokesperson for the National Rifle Association is perceived as highly credible to gun enthusiasts or to its

members, but is less credible to gun control supporters. The credibility of a source reflects both the source’s expertise on the topic and the trustworthiness of the communicator. That is, it reflects the extent to which a source possesses information that is “correct” and the extent to which she or he is motivated to communicate that position without bias.\textsuperscript{161} Credibility is not however an intrinsic property of messengers. A source qualifies as an “expert” when he or she is “skilful or highly trained or informed in some special field.”\textsuperscript{162}

Expertise cues the recipient to pay greater attention to the issue frame, guides the reader to conceptualise the issue in a particular context, and enhances the weight a person attaches to a frame in the knowledge-making process.\textsuperscript{163} In this sense, the choice of sources can reinforce or legitimise frames. In some instances, however, the non-expert source, the \textit{vox populi} view, can be influential.\textsuperscript{164} The use of “eyewitness accounts” can provide a human face to issues and can illicit an emotive reaction. This was the case in framing the tragedy of East Timor in 1998 and 1999. Before specifically examining the elite orientation of frames used to shape meanings about the issue and its key actors in September 1999 (the period that produced the most coverage on East Timor in the two-year period examined in this project), a review of the number of journalists and types of sources used in 1998 and 1999 is outlined.

**Elite orientation of frames – Journalists: Empirical data**

Each of the 478 articles examined for this framing analysis were evaluated in terms of who was reporting and in what periods. The quantitative data indicates that a relatively small number of journalists were reporting for \textit{The Age}, \textit{The New York Times}, \textit{The Independent} and \textit{The Times} during 1998 and 1999. A significantly higher number of journalists contributed to \textit{The Australian} in both years. \textit{The Age}, for example, tended to rely on two journalists: Louise Williams


and Lindsay Murdoch. Williams produced 29 of *The Age’s* 41 stories in 1998 (70 per cent) and Murdoch produced 43 of *The Age’s* 83 stories in 1999 (52 per cent). Seth Mydans wrote half of *The New York Times’* articles in 1998 and 25 of the paper’s 43 articles in 1999 (58 per cent). Mark Landler wrote 25 per cent of *The New York Times’* 1998 stories and contributed 19 per cent of the paper’s 1999 stories. *The Times’* 1998 coverage was shared between David Watts and Tom Rhodes, however in 1999 David Watts contributed 13 of *The Times’* 19 stories in 1999 (68 per cent). Richard Lloyd Parry was the major writer for *The Independent*, writing nine of the newspapers 11 stories in 1998 (82 per cent) and 17 of the papers 25 stories in 1999 (68 per cent).

*The Australian* had the most diverse amount of contributors in both 1998 and 1999. Of the 59 stories that appeared in *The Australian* in 1998, the most prolific contributors were Don Greenlees (27 per cent), Patrick Walters (19 per cent) and Greg Sheridan (8 per cent). Contributions however were noted from eleven other commentators. A similar trend was evident in *The Australian’s* 1999 coverage. Greenlees provided 34 per cent of the stories, Walters 14 per cent, Sheridan 8 per cent and Florence Chong 6 per cent. A further twenty contributors were noted. What this data reveals is that for four of the five examined publications, 50 per cent or more of their reporting for 1998 and 1999 can be attributed to a single journalists. *The Australian* relied primarily on two journalists to report on Indonesia. Arguably, the lack of diversity has an impact on public knowledge.

In some cases it may mean that the manner in which Indonesia was reported reflected the values of the particular journalists. Louise Williams, for example, was the main contributor for *The Age* in 1998 (producing 70 per cent of all reports). Williams is a well-credentialed journalist having won a Walkley Award for proving the Indonesian Government has lied about troop withdrawals in East Timor. She also authored *On the Wire: An Australian Journalist on the Frontline in Asia*. Williams though has also disclosed that she was “profoundly affected,” particularly by events that were occurring in East Timor.\(^{165}\) Similarly, Don Greenlees, the main contributor to *The Australian*, has co-authored *Deliverance:*

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The Inside Story of East Timor’s Fight for Freedom.\textsuperscript{166} Again, a well-credentialed and award winning journalist, arguably his views on the Indonesian Government were shaped by his experiences of reporting in Indonesia from 1998 to 2001, and in particular by his experiences of reporting from East Timor. In both cases, their first-hand knowledge and exposure to the tragedy of East Timor would have to have had an effect on how they framed the state and its actors, in particular those associated with the New Order.

Reporting East Timor September 1999: Journalists - Who was reporting from where?

A small number of journalists were reporting from Indonesia during 1998 and 1999, and an even smaller number from East Timor, particularly in the period following the Independence ballot and its violent aftermath. In evaluating who was reporting from what locations in September 1999, data indicate that the most prolific contributor to The Times for that month was David Watts, The Times’ Asia editor between 1998 and 2000.\textsuperscript{167} The majority of his reports were filed from Dili, particularly in the beginning of September, and from Jakarta in the later half of September. In total he filed 23 of The Times’ 91 stories (25 per cent) which appeared in September 1999. Janine di Giovanni began filing reports from Kupang (West Timor) on 10 September and from Dili (East Timor) on 22 September, filing ten stories (11 per cent) mostly focusing on human rights issues.\textsuperscript{168} James Bone, based in New York, contributed six stories, mainly on U.N. announcements on East Timor. Roger Maynard filed six individual stories from Sydney, Darwin and Dili, and three co-authored stories from Darwin.\textsuperscript{169} Mostly he covered Australian and British government responses and military deployments. British filmmaker and journalist Max Stahl, who filmed Indonesian


\textsuperscript{169} Roger Maynard is a journalist for Australia International Media Services (since 1988) as well as being a freelance television producer and broadcaster.
troops firing upon protestors at the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili in November 1991, filed five stories from Dili. Contributions were noted from 11 other journalists, individually or collaboratively.

_The Independent_ printed 106 stories on East Timor in September 1999. Richard Lloyd Parry contributed 35 individual articles (33 per cent) to _The Independent’s_ September coverage on a variety of issues.¹⁷⁰ He filed 13 stories from Dili in early September, six stories from Darwin in the third week of September, and returned to Dili, filing a further 16 stories from Dare and Dili from 22 September to 29 September. He co-authored a further eight articles. David Usborne, _The Independent’s_ New York correspondent, filed three stories from New York in early September, and a further 13 stories from Dili and Jakarta (15 per cent). He co-authored a further eight stories from New York and Jakarta. Most of the focus of Usborne’s articles were the U.N. response to East Timor and reactions from the Habibie Government. Contributions from 15 other individual journalists reporting from East Timor, West Timor, New Zealand, Australia, the U.S. and England were noted.

Seth Mydans was the most prolific contributor to _The New York Times_’ 85 news reports regarding East Timor in September 1999.¹⁷¹ Reporting from various locations in East Timor and Jakarta he filed 31 stories (36 per cent). Veteran _New York Times_ journalist, Barbara Crossette, filed 13 stories (15 per cent) mostly from the U.N.¹⁷² Seven stories were filed by former _New York Times_ Hong Kong

¹⁷⁰ In 1995, Richard Lloyd Parry was the Tokyo correspondent for _The Independent_. In 2002, he moved to _The Times_. He has worked in 24 countries, including Afghanistan, North Korea, Papua New Guinea, Vietnam, Kosovo and Macedonia. In 2005, he was named as British Foreign Correspondent of the Year. He is the author of _In the Time of Madness: Indonesia on the Edge of Chaos_ (London: Grove/Atlantic, 2006).

¹⁷¹ Seth Mydans has been the Asia-based correspondent for _The New York Times_ and _The International Herald Tribune_ since 1996. During the 1980’s he extensively covered events in Burma and the Philippines. In 2009, he won the Shorenstein Prize (America) for outstanding Asian journalism.

Bureau Chief, Mark Landler, from Hong Kong, Kupang, Jakarta and Darwin. Six other individual journalists filed stories from Washington and Sydney.

Lindsay Murdoch, *The Age’s* Indonesia correspondent reported from various locations in East Timor, primarily Dili. Of the 127 stories, he filed 23 individual stories (18 per cent); 14 from 1 to 11 September and nine from 21 September to the end of the month. He co-authored a further five articles. Craig Skehan filed nine reports from West Timor and Jakarta and co-authored a further four articles. Reporting U. S. and U.N. actions and reactions were Gay Alcorn (Washington) with nine articles, and Mark Riley (New York) filing eight articles. Australian reporting, for the most part, came from Paul Daley (six individual articles), Michael Gordon (five), Janinie Macdonald (four), Defence correspondent Paul Daley (three), Economics correspondent Tim Colebatch (three) and Tony Wright (three). A further 16 journalists filed for *The Age* during September 1999.

Of *The Australian’s* 217 articles published in September 1999 on East Timor, four journalists contributed accounts from East Timor, West Timor and Jakarta: Don Greenlees, Sian Powell, Robert Garran and Peter Alford. Greenlees, the Jakarta-based Australian correspondent and analyst with the AGI security, filed 27 stories (12 per cent) from Dili, Dili and Jakarta and co-authored a further 12 stories. Peter Alford filed 14 stories (6 per cent) from Dili and Jakarta and co-authored a further eight stories. Robert Garran wrote 12 stories (6 percent) and co-authored a further 16 stories in September 1999.

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173 Mark Landler was *The New York Times’* Hong Kong Bureau Chief from 1998 to 2002.
174 Lindsay Murdoch is currently *The Age’s* Darwin correspondent. Murdoch is a two-time winner of the Walkley Award and former foreign correspondent based in Singapore and Jakarta. In 2003, he covered the Iraq war while embedded with US Marines. Since 1977, Lindsay has held a number of senior positions on *The Age*, including Chief of Staff.
175 Don Greenlees has worked for newspapers and television in Australia, South America and East Asia since 1981. He covered the emergence of South American countries from decades of dictatorship and economic mismanagement for the British television network ITN, while based in Buenos Aires from 1990 to 1992. He was based in Jakarta from 1998 until 2004. He has been the recipient of a Walkley Award. In 2004, he covered South Korean business and politics for the *Far Eastern Economic Review* and the *Asia Wall Street Journal*. Assessments Group Indonesia is a specialist political, security and business intelligence consultancy based in Jakarta since 1998. It is jointly sponsored by the British Foreign Office and U. S. Department of State and endorsed by major multinational corporations and NGOs. See AGI, “Official Website,” available from: [http://www.agisite.com/public/about.html](http://www.agisite.com/public/about.html).
176 Peter Alford has reported for *The Australian* for over a decade. He was *The Australian’s* Southeast Asia correspondent before being appointed Tokyo correspondent in 2004.
Sian Powell filed ten (5 per cent) stories from Dili and Kupang. In early September 1999 Powell was forced to flee Dili along with a number of other Western journalists. Interviewed by phone from West Timor on 9 September 1999, she was asked about the intimidation of journalists reporting from East Timor. The following is an extract of her response:

To get rid of them, they [the Indonesian Government] didn’t want journalists there at all… They didn’t want journalists there, they didn’t want journalists fuelling public outrage which would then put more pressure on the international community to get really, really tough with-I think we’re just being stopped by police here. Actually we’re being heavied by police. We might have to move on…¹⁷⁸

More than 30 other journalists and commentators filed stories for *The Australian* in September 1999 alone.

**Elite orientation of frames – Sources: Empirical data**

In terms of the sources used by journalists to shape reporting of Indonesia during 1998 and 1999, direct quotes were counted in each of the 478 news articles and allocated to one of five categories: *the New Order elite* (Suharto, Habibie, New Order government and military spokespersons and Golkar officials); *the non-New Order elite* (elites from Indonesian political parties, the media and social and labour organisations); *the foreign elite* (foreign political leaders, foreign government ministers/spokespersons, spokespersons from the international institutions including Amnesty, the IMF, the World Bank, foreign academics, and non-Indonesians named as “experts;” *vox populi*; and Megawati herself. The data reveal trends in the different types of sources relied on for each of the five newspapers examined for this study.

An analysis of *The Age’s* 1998 coverage reveals its tendency to cite sources from the non-New Order Indonesian elites, followed by a reliance on foreign elites. A reliance on New Order elites ranked third. Direct quotes from the *vox populi* were minimal with only eight direct quotes in all of the newspaper’s 41 stories

published for the year. This was higher than the eight direct quotes attributed to Megawati. *The Age’s* 1999 source data reveals similar trends in relation to elite sources with the non-New Order Indonesian elites the most cited source, followed by foreign elites and New Order elites. In 1999, however there was an increase in direct quotes from Megawati, and less direct quotes from the *vox populi*.

Source data from *The New York Times* reveals similar trends to *The Age*. In the newspaper’s 1998 coverage, non-New Order elites were the most frequently cited source and the foreign elite the second most cited source. However, unlike *The Age*, *The New York Times* marginally relied more on quotes from the *vox populi* than the New Order elites. Only four direct quotes appeared from Megawati in *The New York Times* of the 24 stories published in 1998. Trends indicate a shift in the American newspapers’ 1999 coverage. The foreign elite were the most cited sources, followed by the non-New Order elite, and then an equal amount of direct quotes from the New Order elite and the *vox populi*. Only two direct quotes were attributed to Megawati in *The New York Times*’ 1999 coverage.

The most cited source in *The Times* in 1998 was the non-New Order elite, followed by the foreign elite and the New Order elites. No quotes were included from the *vox populi* and only four quotes were attributed to Megawati. In 1999, *The Times* similarly cited more non-New Order elites. In 1999, however, there was a significant increase in the use of *vox populi* quotes, increases in quotes from Megawati, and a decrease in direct quotes from the New Order elite. *The Independent’s* 1998 coverage cited *vox populi* quotes more than any other group, followed by quotes from the New Order elite and the non-New Order elite. The foreign elite and Megawati were only attributed two direct quotes in *The Independent’s* 1998 coverage. In 1999, a significant change was evident in *The Independent’s* coverage. New Order elites were the most cited source, although only marginally over the non-New Order elite, the foreign elite and the *vox populi* who were all equally represented in terms of direct quotes. Three direct quotes were attributed to Megawati in *The Independent* in 1999.
Coverage in *The Australian* revealed further differences in the use of sources. The foreign elite were the most sourced group in 1998 with 42 direct quotes, followed by 35 direct quotes from the New Order elite and 34 direct quotes from the non-New Order elite. While only nine direct quotes were attributed to the *vox populi*, Megawati was cited 32 times. In 1999, there were noticeable differences in *The Australian*’s use of sources. The most cited were the non-New Order elite, followed by the foreign elite, the New Order elite, and *vox populi*. Direct quotes from Megawati declined to 21. Source data is presented in the following table.

**Table 5.1: Sources by direct quotes, all newspapers, 1998 and 1999**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper/Year</th>
<th>New Order Elite</th>
<th>Non-New Order Elite</th>
<th>Vox Populi</th>
<th>Foreign Elite</th>
<th>Megawati</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The Age</em> 1998</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Age</em> 1999</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Australian</em> 1998</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Australian</em> 1999</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The New York Times</em> 1999</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Times</em> 1998</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Times</em> 1999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Independent</em> 1998</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Independent</em> 1999</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reporting East Timor September 1999: Sources - Whose ‘voice’ was heard?**

Of the 626 news stories published during September 1999 about East Timor, the same coding of sources was used as for the primary study. The data revealed that in relation to this issue, significantly different trends were noted. While in
relation to Indonesian reporting generally, *The Times* relied on Non-New Order elites, in relation to the issues surrounding East Timor the publication relied more on sources from the foreign elite. Of note was the citing of officials from the British, American and Australian governments’ and spokespersons from international organisations such as the U.N. and the IMF. Megawati was referred to in only one article and was not directly quoted. In 61 of the 91 stories examined, the experiences of the East Timorese were reported, however in the majority of reports their experiences were interpreted by journalists. That is, rather than direct quotes, journalists from *The Times* tended to paraphrase their stories and generalise them as the “truth” of the suffering of the Timorese. A similar trend was noted in *The Independent*.

In this case, East Timorese accounts paraphrased by journalists were used as “witness accounts,” particularly of human rights abuses. This occurred in 76 of the 106 stories examined for September 1999. Similarly, *The Independent* also tended to rely on foreign elites as sources, although there were a number of lead stories that cited East Timorese leaders, including Xanana Gusmão and Bishop Belo, and cited spokespersons from organisations such as Amnesty International. Megawati was cited in only three stories and not quoted directly. While *The Independent* had a tendency to cite both New Order elites and Non-New Order elites in its broader coverage, in the instance of its September coverage it had a propensity to rely on foreign elites.

Like *The Times* and *The Independent*, *The New York Times*’ coverage also tended to rely on foreign elites. In its 1998 coverage it had a tendency to report Non-New Order elites, yet in its 1999 coverage it tended to report foreign elites, hence framing in September was consistent. American reporting in September however tended to rely on a small pool of elites, for the most part academics, authors and those named as “experts” on Indonesia often attached to think-tanks or joint American-Indonesian foundations. A substantial amount of elite coverage relied also on direct quotes attributed to official American spokespersons and U.N. spokespersons. Officials from other governments were mentioned infrequently, and cited only occasionally.
In relation to whom are described as East Timor elites, Xanana Gusmão and Bishop Belo, for example, 26 references were found in The New York Times, although in many cases it was “experts” commenting on them rather than direct quotes from them. Megawati was referenced in only six of The New York Times 85 stories published in September, and only directly cited in one article. As with British reporting, significant space was given to the stories of the Timorese themselves, although most of their stories were paraphrased. While the British newspapers relied on individual stories to narrate the suffering of the East Timorese, the American newspaper tended to write about them as one group of people, generally experiencing the same brutality and fleeing on mass. References to them as refugees were most common in American coverage.

Coverage in The Age tended to also focus on the plight of the East Timorese, in fact 109 of The Age’s 127 stories made reference to them. When compared to the newspapers overall use of vox populi sources, this is a significant increase. While some reports in The Age captured their experiences in their own words, most, as was the case with The New York Times, tended to report their collective plight particularly in terms of their exodus as refugees. In some cases, the plight of the East Timorese was binarised with the plight of young Australian soldiers being confronted with conditions in East Timor. In terms of elite sources, the majority came from Australian government ministers and their official spokespersons. In terms of other elites, direct quotes from the non-government organisations (mainly aid agencies) and international institutions, mostly the U.N. and the American government, were evidenced. “Experts” relied on by The Age tended to be Australian academics. Significant references were noted in relation to East Timorese leaders, and again as with The New York Times it tended to be journalists or elites commenting on their actions and reactions rather than these individuals quoted directly.

The use of sources in The Australian during the entire period of 1998-1999 indicated that the newspaper had a propensity to cite Non-New Order elites and foreign elites. Given the amount of coverage dedicated to this issue by The Australian, and given the diversity of commentators and journalists, a variety of sources were named in the newspaper’s September 1999 coverage. Almost equal
amounts of space were given to New Order elites and foreign elites, although slightly less space was given to Non-New Order elites and East Timorese elites.

Australian and Indonesian government officials tended to be cited more than any other group, although sources from international aid agencies and international institutions such as the IMF and the U.N were noted in significant quantity. Megawati was referenced in 14 of The Australian’s 217 September articles but was not directly quoted in any. In terms of the “voice” of the East Timorese, as with The New York Times and The Age it was paraphrased and reported as a collective “truth” to “name” massacres and brutalities and attribute them to the militias. Significant coverage was also given to the experiences of Australian troops and to the intimidation of Australian journalists, in both cases journalists narrating the drama rather than relying on direct sources.

In terms of the elite orientation of frames, what also became evident in this analysis was the use of headlines to structure meanings about the realities of East Timor. Trends in The Australian were particularly indicative of how headline repetition was used in September 1999 to shape meanings. For example, beginning on 3 September 1999, The Australian used the heading “Anarchy in East Timor” in relation to all eight articles published on that day. The following day, 4 September, the same header was used in seven of the 17 stories published that day. On 6 September, the header “East Timor in flames” was used in 10 of the day’s 12 stories. Two days later, on 8 September, the header used in 10 of the day’s 13 stories was “East Timor betrayed.” This was maintained until 13 September when it shifted to “Hope dawns for East Timor.” This was used on 13 September as part of, or as a sub-heading of, nine out of the day’s 13 stories. It was used again on 14 September before again shifting on 15 September. That day, two headers were used, “East Timor, the diplomatic struggle” and “East Timor, the evacuation.”

On 16 September, versions of “Marshalling the peace force” and “Peace enforcing in East Timor” were used in three of the day’s articles. “Marshalling the forces,” “Diplomatic turmoil” and “The way ahead” were the three headers used on 17 September. On 21 September, three-quarters of the day’s articles were
headed with “East Timor, the troops go in.” The following day, the same margin of stories were headed with “East Timor, enforcing the peace.” By 23 September 1999, the theme was “East Timor, the humanitarian crisis,” used in four of the day’s eight articles. “Enforcing the peace” was used to head two other stories published that day. As seems the trend, the following day (24 September) it was “East Timor, defending the politics.” For the last few days of September, no distinct banner was used in relation to stories on East Timor. This pattern was not evidenced in the other four newspapers examined for this framing analysis.

*The Australian*’s use of headers, even though it was the newspaper that least used episodic framing, arguably capture meanings about events in East Timor during September episodically. That is, in reading the header, the events (and nation) were named as in “anarchy” and in “flames.” There was a “betrayal” and a “struggle.” “Hope” briefly emerged before being consumed again by “struggle,” resulting this time in “evacuation.” In the second half of the month, it was variations of “peace enforcing” and “marshalling the forces,” the precursor to “the troops go in,” positing that their function was ostensibly peacekeeping. “Humanitarian crisis” followed, before a brief return to “enforcing the peace.” Finally, “defending the policies” ended the narration of the drama. While not quite positing resolution, this framing shaped the events with a beginning, middle and somewhat of an ending, complete with struggle and the overcoming of adversity. As outlined in Chapter One, this is indicative of how frame reasoning structures meaning and knowledge.

In summary, this analysis of the orientation of frames, augmented with a critique of headlines, posits not only that it was a few journalists shaping news frames, but that journalists relied on elite sources. It was the “voices” of elites rather than the East Timorese that contributed to how the issue was understood, and how Indonesian political leaders were evaluated. It is the position held by the news media in the public sphere which denotes them as elites and, as such, as “symbol-handlers” (to use Gitlin’s expression), who regularly organise the news into verbal and visual discourses.  

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As this and previous chapters have shown, how a news story is framed, what aspects are included, excluded, highlighted or trivialised (salience), what linguistic treatments are used, who wrote it, whether it is shaped by industry practices, locale, ideology, values, or experiences, will all shape meanings which point to the news as being a particularised order of discourse. Frames produced in the Western news media arguably functioned to generate and sustain a politically legitimated reality, reflective of the values and norms within which it is produced.

While theorists such as Michel Foucault have argued that framing never produces a totalising and singular story because power within the media is too diverse, it is through the recognition of consistent patterns of representations, as this project has sought to demonstrate, that it is possible to argue that meanings and knowledge are shaped in public discourses by the news media. Agents within the news media, the journalists, in particular those “on the ground,” exercise a degree of autonomy is framing the news. While analysis to date has indicated who was reporting, and from where and from when, this type of statistical analysis fails to insightfully capture what role foreign correspondents play in shaping public knowledge. Some thoughts about their motivations and experiences, particularly in relation to East Timor, draw this project to its conclusion.


Foreign correspondents: hero’s and myth-makers

Journalism histography often regards the foreign correspondent within mythical proportions to their importance to the “fourth estate,” striving for objectivity and truth despite enormous difficulties, in far away lands, often in mystifying societies, trying to make sense of it all to readers “back home.” Philip Knightley describes this as a narrative of the journalist as “hero and myth-maker.”\(^\text{183}\) The imagery of the foreign journalist, particularly in Asia, is evident in documentaries such as *Frontline* (1979), a documentary about Australian Neil Davis who filmed and reported the Vietnam War from 1964 until 1975. Similarly, Christopher Koch’s novel *The Year of Living Dangerously* (and the 1982 film adaptation by Peter Weir) conceptualised Knightley’s mythical narrative of the foreign correspondent.\(^\text{184}\) In Ehrlich’s account of journalists in films, he argues that foreign correspondent films are less about the political conflicts being reported and more about the trauma the journalist protagonist suffers.\(^\text{185}\) This is particularly evident in the Weir version of Kock’s book and in the Robert Connolly account of Australian journalist, Roger East, in his 2009 film *Balibo*. For Indonesian historian Adrian Vickers, portrayals such as these not only shape the narrative of the foreign correspondent as the struggling protagonist seeking to “tell the truth” but reinforces Indonesia (and East Timor) as a place of “living dangerously.” Koch’s text and Weir’s film, argues Vickers, had an enormous effect on popular consciousness about both foreign correspondents and Indonesia.\(^\text{186}\) Arguably, Connolly’s film has a similar impact on how East Timor is viewed by international audiences.

How to evaluate the role of the foreign correspondent is of some interest in this project. The statistical approach of noting what journalists, in what periods, wrote what stories and in what ways depersonalises the journalists and their practices. However, it does demonstrate that in the case of East Timor it was evident that only a small number of journalists were shaping news accounts while an even smaller number were “on the ground” in East Timor. While acknowledging the

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\(^{183}\) Knightley, *The First Casualty*.

\(^{184}\) Christopher Koch is the brother of Phillip Koch, an ABC journalist who was reporting from Jakarta in 1965.


cost and safety concerns to locate journalists in overseas posting, especially in war zones, it nonetheless means that only a few shape the news for the many. Similarly, to methodologically “count” journalistic contributions tends to negate the journalist from analyses. In Tapsell’s insightful assessment, it is to treat journalists as mechanical ciphers rather than as historically situated, politically and culturally aware discursive agents. Journalists, portrayed as either “heroes and myth-makers” or as discursive agents, does however appear to concede the influence journalists in the field have to exercise a degree of agency. The problem, however, is evaluating their contributions in ways that are meaningful to the practice of journalism, acknowledging the conditions of production (be it industry, newsroom or the locale), while retaining a critical sense of the arbitrary and subjective nature of the news product.

Moreover, how is the role of the foreign correspondent understood in relation to an issue such as East Timor? Both Liberal and Labor governments in Australia, for example, had adopted a preference to “expand and deepen ties with the Suharto regime and its military,” according Greenlees and Garran, ostensibly “to avoid confrontation over East Timor.” Successive American governments adopted a similar position, with the same objective. Politicians and academics concede that how Indonesia, and East Timor, have been reported in the Australian media (in particular) contributes to public opinion on Indonesia.

A 2004 Australian government report concluded that Australian broadcasting was the “medium with the most power to enhance mutual understandings both immediately and in the long-term.” In academia, Jamie Mackie claims the news media have “probably played the dominant role in transmitting the information and images involved in shaping popular perceptions about Indonesia.” Similarly, Vickers argues that Indonesia is generally framed in the news media for “political violence,” a view that does no justice to Indonesia.

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188 Greenlees and Garran, *Deliverance*, p. 338.
189 “Near Neighbour - Good Neighbours: An Inquiry into the Australian relationship with Indonesia,” (Canberra: Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence and Trade, Foreign Affairs Sub-committee, 2004).
Balibo Five: “Telling the truth…”

Rod Tiffen claims that the “first serious conflicts” between the Australian media and Indonesia began with the reporting of Indonesia’s annexation of East Timor in 1975. For Tiffen, this issue has “remained a sore point.” Shaping reporting was arguably the deaths of five journalists at Balibo (East Timor) in October 1975. Two of the journalists, Greg Shackleton and Tony Stewart, were Australians, whereas Gary Cunningham was a New Zealander and Brian Peters and Malcolm Rennie were British. A sixth journalist, Roger East a freelance journalist for AAP, was killed in Dili (East Timor) on 8 December 1975. The official view of the Australian government about the deaths of the “Balibo Five” is that there was “sufficient credible evidence to conclude that, it is more likely than not,” that the journalists were killed by “members of an attacking force under Indonesian officers consisting of Indonesian irregular troops and anti-Freti Timorese.” Roger East, in East Timor to investigate the deaths of the “Balibo Five,” according to the Australian government was seized by Indonesian soldiers and shot by a firing squad. It is through East’s story that the story of the “Balibo Five” is captured in Connolly’s film Balibo. In one account of Sherman’s second report into the deaths of the “Balibo Five,” The Australian reported that further inquires into the issue may:

…never yield one that would satisfy those who use the killings as a lightning rod for anti-Indonesian views…The deaths of the five men were tragic. But it remains disturbing that a widespread obsession with the deaths has so dominated Australia’s view of East Timor. It is not that their deaths were a trivial event - quite the contrary. But they exercised a disproportionate influence on the Australian debate about (and, in some quarters, policy towards) East Timor.

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193 Cunningham, Shackleton and Stewart worked for Channel 7 in Melbourne, Rennie (based in Melbourne) and Peters (Sydney) worked for Channel 9. See also D. Watts, “Timor Briton’s were shot in cold blood,” The Times, 16 October 1998, p. 5.
195 “Sherman study is a Balibo reality check,” The Australian, 18 February 1999, p. 16.
Former Fairfax journalist, Louise Williams argues that, since Balibo, “East Timor became a symbol of the Australian media’s determination to tell the Indonesian story as it was.”\cite{L. Williams, “Forward,” in Indonesia in the Australian Press: A Case Study of the Suharto Resignation, 21 May 1998, by Ida Mursyidab Palaloi, (Sydney-Jakarta: Science Research Foundation, 2005), p. 1.}

Damien Kingsbury suggests that because of the Balibo killings, there was a “serious falling out” between the Australian news media and the Indonesian government.\cite{D. Kingsbury, Culture of Politics: Issues in Australian Journalism on Indonesia, 1975-1993, (Melbourne: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1997), p. 17.}

As Ross Tapsell examines in his extensive history of Australian journalism in Indonesia, foreign correspondents covering Indonesia (including East Timor and later the 2002 Bali bombings) acknowledge the difficulty of remaining objective. In his personal interviews with Louise Williams and the ABC’s Indonesia correspondent Geoff Thompson, Tapsell reveals the effect East Timor has had on Australian journalists. Williams discloses, for example, “I was profoundly affected by Timor and what happened there.” For Thompson, “no other cause has affected me as profoundly as Timor.”\cite{Tapsell, Australian Journalism in Indonesia, pp. 42-43.}

While this project has been one seeking to demonstrate how Western news framing functioned in ways that shaped and influenced public knowledge about Megawati Sukarnoputri specifically and Indonesia generally, it has remained mindful of the role of journalists, their values and experiences, and the news room environment within which they work. As stated on several occasions, this project is not an exercise in exposing journalist falsehoods. Rather, its aim has been to interrogate their work product and evaluate its structure and content.

This project remains mindful that journalists, particularly those who have covered Indonesia and East Timor “from the inside,” were themselves influenced by what they witnessed and what they experienced as correspondents in a “mystic” land. In the case of East Timor, the murder of the “Balibo Five,” Roger East, and Sander Thoenes, had a profound effect on the need to “tell the truth.”\cite{On September 21, 1999, Sander Thoenes, the Financial Times’ Indonesia correspondent since September 1997 was murder on the outskirts of Dili. The Indonesian National Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights Violations in East Timor investigated his death finding that he was murdered by officers of the Indonesian military.}

How their “truth” about Indonesia, East Timor, Suharto, Habibie, and Megawati shaped public knowledge has been the objective of this framing analysis.
Conclusion

In reviewing how the Western news media framed the issue of East Timor in ways which were evaluative of the issue, its causes, Indonesian governance and the merits of Habibie and Megawati to the post-Suharto Indonesia, British reporting was sceptical of Habibie and cynical about the likelihood of the ABRI’s acquiescence. *The Times* framed this shift on East Timor within material frames positing the likely economic consequences of the policy. This was different to *The Independent*, which framed the policy in terms of a strategy designed to gain both Indonesia and Habibie legitimacy. While *The Independent* used narratives of the “celebration of the ballot box” to posit that democracy would trump authoritarianism and oppression, *The Times* maintained its material frames, positing the likelihood of Indonesian disintegration and its cost to Indonesia and the region. British reporting clearly framed who they thought were responsible, attributing blame and accountability to the New Order.

Imagining the unimaginable for its audiences distant from the events occurring in East Timor, frames compared events to those of Vietnam and Kosovo. In relation to Megawati, *The Times* did not maintain privileged meanings about her, rather positing that she was unlikely to “save” East Timor and offered little value to the post-Suharto period. *The Independent* did maintain privileged meanings about Megawati, but more so by highlighting Habibie and ABRI’s accountability, rather than focusing on Megawati’s nationalism. That is, salience functioned to highlight New Order failures and, in doing so, focused attention on that, rather than on Megawati.

Australian reporting similarly negated Habibie’s commitment to reform generally and to East Timor specifically. Both newspapers framed Habibie within strategic frames, with the policy designed to achieve international legitimacy rather than performed out of a moral concern for the plight of the East Timorese. *The Australian* “named” this issue as the “truth” of the need for reform, unlikely to occur under Habibie, while *The Age* similarly named it as the “truth” of the need for reform, likely only to occur at the ballot box. In the case of the latter, this functioned in frames to posit that intervention from the U.N., Washington or
Canberra was not the likely solution. The central discourse shaping news frames in *The Australian* was the need to protect the Canberra-Jakarta relationship. For *The Age*, this was of secondary concern. While acknowledging the likely economic cost of East Timorese Independence, *The Age* adopted moral frames to posit the need for Independence. Framing of Megawati in *The Australian* was more privileged than that of *The Age*. For *The Australian*, Megawati was framed as liberal on the issue of East Timor, juxtaposing that Habibie was not. Reporting, while acknowledging Megawati’s nationalism, tended to focus on her benign statements of national unity. In its more critical assessments of Megawati, her nationalism and her opposition to succession and independence, *The Age* denied privileged meanings to Megawati. As such, she was not positioned, at least in reporting of this issue, as the likely remedy.

Whereas, British and Australian reporting dualised Habibie in a struggle with the international community, American reporting positioned Habibie in a struggle with ABRI. Initial reporting appeared to celebrate Habibie’s announcement as indicative of the shift away from New Order authoritarianism. However as events developed, a more critical approach to Habibie emerged. Reporting, as with Australian and British accounts, questioned his motivations and framed them as strategic and material. Seeking international legitimacy and with the hope of avoiding sanctions, *The New York Times* framed the final decision on independence as Habibie benignly “giving away” East Timor.

Of note in American coverage was that while framing the issue of East Timor as a moral crisis and a tragedy, as with *The Australian*, national interests, particularly the need to protect America’s relationship with Indonesia, were the overriding discourse. This discourse contributed to how Habibie and the issue were framed. American framing of East Timor, as with *The Age*, devolved privileged meanings about Megawati. Linguistic attachments to her father (particularly his nationalism) and her apparent acquiescence to the military (to attract military support in the upcoming presidential ballot) posited that Megawati’s motivations were strategic and material. As such, *The New York Times* hypothesised that Megawati would be a disappointment, and therefore offered little value to post-Suharto Indonesia.
Supplementing this framing analysis of how issue framing of East Timor posited meanings about Habibie and Megawati was empirical data which demonstrated that the elite orientation of frames contributed to how public knowledge was shaped in news reports. Analyses of the 478 news articles examined for the primary study confirm that a relatively small number of journalists were shaping news accounts of Indonesia during 1998 and 1999. Data indicate that two journalists, Louise Williams and Lindsay Murdoch, were the main contributors for *The Age*, accounting for 70 per cent of all news stories in 1998 (Williams) and over 50 per cent of all news stories in 1999 (Murdoch). Similarly, Seth Mydans produced almost 50 per cent of all news stories for *The New York Times* in 1998 and almost 60 per cent of the newspaper’s 1999 stories. Two journalists, David Watts and Tom Rhodes shaped *The Times* 1998 coverage, with Watts producing almost 70 per cent of their 1999 coverage. Richard Lloyd Parry wrote over 80 per cent of *The Independent’s* 1998 stories and almost 70 per cent of its 1999 stories. *The Australian*, the most diverse in its use of journalists and commentators, in 1998 relied mainly on Don Greenlees (27 per cent) and Patrick Walters (19 per cent). Similarly, in 1999, Greenlees provided 34 per cent of the stories and Walters (14 per cent). What this data revealed was that for four of the five examined publications, 50 per cent or more of the reporting on Indonesia for 1998 and 1999 can be attributed to single journalists. The lack of diversity has an impact on public understanding and knowledge of events, issues and actors.

When this data was compared to the number of journalists reporting on the issue of East Timor in September 1999, it showed that there was more diversity in the use of journalists and commentators. For example, whereas Murdoch wrote over 50 per cent of *The Age’s* 1999 coverage, on this issue and in this period he produced 18 per cent of the stories (the most by any one *Age* journalist), mainly from the East Timor capital Dili. Similarly, Mydans the primary contributor to *The New York Times* in 1999 (60 per cent), while still the primary contributor in September 1999, wrote 36 per cent of the stories, in this case from Dili and Jakarta. *The Times’* David Watts, also reporting from Dili and Jakarta, was the newspaper’s most prolific reporter in September, writing 25 per cent of the paper’s stories, although this was lower than his yearly contributions of almost 70 per cent. Richard Lloyd Parry (reporting from East Timor and Australia), who
produced almost 70 per cent of The Independent’s 1999 stories, was the most prolific writer in September, writing 33 per cent of the stories. Like Watts and Mydans, Lloyd Parry filed from Dili and Jakarta, but also from Dare (East Timor). Lastly, Greenlees filed for The Australian from Dare, Dili and Jakarta, filing 12 per cent of the newspaper’s September coverage. This compares with his yearly contributions of 34 per cent. What this data tell us is that in the month of September, more journalists were reporting, and all filed at least some stories from inside East Timor. In this case, there was a broader pool of journalists reporting, arguably positing that a broader range of views were available.

In terms of sources used, empirical data indicated that in all reporting for 1998 and 1999 the most common sources used were those from the Non-New Order elite. These were identified as Indonesian political and civilian elites who were not members of Golkar or the New Order, but were members of other political parties or official political organisations, including the PDI and PDI-P. They also included Indonesian social and political commentators. This was the most commonly sourced view for The Age and The Times in both 1998 and 1999, for The Australian in 1999, and for The New York Times in 1998. In 1998 The Australian and in 1999 The New York Times relied more on foreign elites. This included foreign political leaders, foreign government ministers and their spokespersons, diplomats, spokespersons from the international institutions such as Amnesty, the IMF, the World Bank, foreign “experts,” and foreign academics. In 1998, The Independent cited sources from the vox populi more than any other source. In 1999, The Independent cited sources from the New Order elite, Suharto and Habibie, New Order ministers, official spokespersons (both government and military) and Golkar officials.

When it came to reporting the issue of East Timor in September 1999, all of the five newspapers examined had a propensity to rely on sources from the foreign elite. Only The Australian maintained a tendency to rely on Non-New Order elite. Vox populi accounts, in this case the accounts of East Timorese, all increased significantly. However, with exception of The Age and in some cases The Australian, the British and American publications tended to paraphrase their stories and collective experiences of the “truth” of the East Timorese people’s
suffering and its attribution to the Indonesian military/government. *The Age* however did tend to collectivise East Timorese experiences in terms of their status as refugees, as did *The New York Times*. This analysis also indicated the use of East Timorese elites as sources, for the most part Xanana Gusmão and Bishop Belo. While not always directly cited, they were sourced, and as with the East Timorese, gave a human face to the issues. Megawati, as with the broader evidence compiled in relation to whose “voice” appeared in Western news accounts, was silent in September 1999. As previous chapters have demonstrated, it was foreign correspondents who gave voice to who they thought Megawati was and what she represented for the people of Indonesia and East Timor.

This chapter has demonstrated that in terms of the technical and structural aspects of issue framing, it functioned similarly to episodic and crisis framing in that it shaped social realities and privileged meanings. It similarly relied on frame reasoning and frame devices, in particular the use of emotion and affect to shape meanings that were evaluative of who was responsible and who or what the remedy was. This was most noted in the use of binaries denoting East Timorese suffering with New Order/ABRI oppression. Salience was also evident, especially when it came to reporting Megawati’s position on East Timorese independence. In this case, salience was most evident in *The Australian*. In this instance, while reporting Megawati’s nationalism, it expressed it in terms of “national unity,” and more so focused on Habibie’s strategic and material motives. In doing so, it was evident that framing highlighted some aspects and trivialised others.

This chapter has also demonstrated that certain “truths” were named about East Timor, and performed in some cases to posit poor Indonesian governance. In each newspaper, examined “truths” were named, which posited the tragedy of East Timor as the responsibility of the New Order and ABRI. Hence they were attributed blame for the tragedy. Habibie in particular was denied privileged meanings. His policy on East Timor was framed as strategic (seeking international legitimacy) or as material (wanting to rid Jakarta of the cost of East Timor). Finally, this chapter has demonstrated that three of the five newspapers did not maintain privileged meanings about Megawati when contextualised in
relation to this issue. *The Age, The Times* and *The New York Times* framed Megawati as not being the solution to the question of East Timor. In particular, *The New York Times* and *The Times* further devolved privileged meanings about Megawati by framing her as having no substantive role to play in post-New Order Indonesia. As such, evidence suggests that this issue did disrupt the privileged meanings that had been previously assigned to her as the “saviour” of Indonesia.
CONCLUSION

This project has examined how selected Western newspapers framed Indonesia generally, and Megawati, specifically during the period from 1 December 1998 to 31 December 1999. The primary case study evaluated 478 inductively selected news reports from five Western publications: *The Age* and *The Australian* (Australia); *The New York Times* (United States); and *The Independent* and *The Times* (Britain). The secondary study examined 626 news reports of the aftermath of the East Timorese Independence ballot in September 1999. The primary study focused on evaluating frame content. The secondary study focused on evaluating frame structure. Three central frame schemas were adopted in this project: “episodic frames” (Chapter Three), “crises frames” (Chapter Four) and “issue frames” (Chapter Five).

The objective of this project was to show how political and emotional meaning-making result from the way the news is framed, thus demonstrating that the Western news media actively engage in practices that influence political knowledge.\(^1\) In the tradition of Robert Entman, this framing analysis sought to evaluate the arbitrary and subjective power of the news media in shaping public knowledge about political leadership. Public knowledge was conceptualised as the way audiences broadly think about and structure their ideas, feelings, fears, and beliefs about political actors. The objective was to demonstrate that framing is universal and inescapable, often to the determinant of the public sphere.

This thesis demonstrated that the Western news media broadly framed Indonesia in the late stages of the 1990s as in “crisis,” arguably reflecting a propensity by the Western media to report the Third world as in perpetual political disorder, bordering at times on anarchy. The result was the development and maintenance of social realities. Embedded in these realities the New Order (firstly Suharto and later Habibie) were framed as responsible for the state of “crisis” (social, political and economic) and were deemed as morally and politically unable to solve the problems being experienced in Indonesia. Captured within this “social reality”

was a set of privileged meanings that imagined a Megawati presidency as the remedy and solution. In the case of episodic framing and crisis framing, it demonstrated that privileged meanings about Megawati were maintained throughout 1998 and 1999. However, in the case of issue framing it demonstrated that there was some disruption to the privileged meanings previously evidenced.

Intellectually this project was grounded in a view that news frames reflected Western values, assumptions, and stereotypes held by news practitioners about post-colonial female leadership in Asia. Returning to the claims of Fahmy and Powers as outlined in Chapter One, analysis confirms that in the case of reporting political developments in Indonesia during 1998 and 1999, including reporting of Megawati, the news media generally relied on stereotypical, oversimplified, and decontextualised narratives to report events to domestic audiences. These practices functioned in conjunction with the juxtapositioning of actors in binaries of “good” and “evil” and were reflective of mediatised rituals of drama, tragedy and emotion. The result was the production and maintenance of public knowledge that was limited and contained. The complexity of Indonesia, its history, religion, culture, policies and human tragedy were stylised into narratives and frames positing how its leadership was to be evaluated via binaries of “legitimate” or “illegitimate,” and “worth” or “unworthy.” This arguably had consequences for how the nation was reported in the foreign press, as well as for how domestic audiences understood and engaged with Indonesia and its political leaders.

Theoretically, this project has demonstrated how framing shapes news accounts with meaning and knowledge that limit and contain audience understandings of events, issues and actors. It has shown framing to be the processes that organise a news story, thematically and stylistically, to convey meaning and shape social realities and privileged meanings. In a detailed examination of key issue and central political actors it have illustrated how framing shapes the news in ways that crystallises problems, predicts effects, makes moral judgments, and suggests

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likely outcomes. It has demonstrated that framing is most effective when it favours simplicity over complexity, persons over institutional processes and emotion over facts. It has also shown with quantitative data how frame reasoning defines, evaluates, and posits remedies in ways that shape social realities and how frames devices, sometimes referred to as packaging (keywords, catchphrases, metaphors, similes, and dramatic characterisations) “linguistically and actively produce” meanings and bolster “particular interpretations.”

As acknowledged extensively in Chapter One, there are several theoretical, methodological and empirical issues associated with media-framing studies. This study has remained mindful that the news media cannot be treated as a homogenous whole that acts uniformly. Similarly, it is aware of arguments that the news media, because of the disbursement of power within it, cannot produce a totalising and singular story. However, through the recognition of consistent patterns of representations (as demonstrated in the project) it posits that it is possible to see that meanings and knowledge are shaped in and by news frames.

It also acknowledges that audiences shaped by sociological, economic, political and geographic differences determine that their “reading” of any text, including the news, will produce different meanings. As Newman et al have argued, audiences “pay attention to whatever catches their interest and actively ignore, reorganise, and interpret the news.” Furthermore, as Ang has argued, news audiences are themselves a construct, an “object of study,” a reality “out there,” “constitutive and reserved for the discipline which claims ownership of it.” It also accepts that language, words, concepts, and themes are polysemic. While

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acknowledging that the media is not monolithic, that audiences actively interpret the news, and that language/texts have multiple meaning, extensive analysis of the selected news frames used in this study indicates that the Western news media did actively package meaning about Megawati and, arguably, such practices influenced how meaning/knowledge were developed and sustained.

While my primary objective was to demonstrate that if the news media can discursively frame Megawati, then it is possible for any political actor to be framed accordingly, it is further acknowledged that foreign audiences may have been more susceptible to media frames given their lack of political knowledge about Megawati. However, it is reasonable to suggest that the news media’s use of framing to influence meaning/knowledge remains a constant and, as such, the public remains exposed to what must be seen as contestable versions of reality.

In terms of the methodological approach adopted in this framing study, it has made every effort to overcome criticisms that textual analysis often fails to capture the socio-political processes inherent in framing practices. To overcome this methodological and intellectual concern, media frames were approached systematically. Methods were employed to ensure that a reliability of measurement could be determined and that the data could be replicated. Every effort was made to retain an objective approach to the process.

In reviewing the findings of this study, in the first of the three analytical chapters Chapter Three examined how episodic framing functioned to shape social realities about the state of Indonesian governance during 1998 and 1999. Using Shanto Iyengar’s “episodic-thematic” framing schema, it considered how episodic framing shaped public knowledge in ways which privileged meanings about Megawati. It demonstrated that embedded in news discourses was the construction and maintenance of a “social reality” within which Suharto and the New Order were framed as responsible for the state of economic and political

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crisis, and were judged as morally and politically unable to solve the problems being experienced in Indonesia. Captured within this “social reality” was a set of privileged meanings that imagined a Megawati presidency as the remedy.

This project demonstrated that in the case of episodic framing, Megawati was framed for the most part in an apolitical and ahistorical context that arguably limited meanings for audiences to assess her value to the post-Suharto period. It also highlighted that indicative of how privileged meanings were attached to Megawati was the use of “alleviating framing.” These were identified as frames that shaped a set of conditions and the machinations of others as likely to explain Megawati’s failures to win the presidential vote in October 1999. Arguably, in both cases (episodic and alleviating frames), privileged meanings were ascribed to Megawati, and these privileged meanings were not available to other political actors, notably Amien Rais and Abdurrahman Wahid.

This was not to suggest that there was not negative framing of Megawati during 1998 and 1999. Rather it was argued that episodic framing functioned to shape a social reality within which Suharto and Habibie were framed as responsible for the drama and tragedy occurring in Indonesia and, as such, a Megawati presidency was framed as the imagined solution. Within this context, negative reporting did question her political acumen. However, given the broader discourse was one of regime change, and given it was Megawati (rather the Rais or Wahid) who was privileged, framing functioned to downplay whatever shortcomings she may have had. Similarly, aspects of salience (the highlighting, inclusion, or exclusion of some aspects of the perceived reality) functioned to highlight the shortcomings of the New Order and to trivialise the potential leadership of Rais and Wahid. The use of juxtapositioning and binaries, in this instance, dualised Megawati in a struggle with the regime (and later with Rais and Wahid) in ways that focused on her victimhood, rather than her lack of political acumen or value to post-Suharto politics.

One explanation for the use of episodic and alleviating frames and the use of salience was that Western journalists needed to make the events, issues and central actors meaningful to audiences removed from the daily political affairs
occurring in Indonesia. Framing not only interpreted and framed the daily events within culturally and politically resonating concepts, but it embedded those interpretations with binaries, juxtapositioning, and signifying language. In this way, journalists positioned the central actors, Suharto, Habibie, Rais, Wahid and Megawati, in positions of blame/remedy, legitimate/illegitimate or worthy/unworthy. Performed in these ways, for these reasons, framing privileged meanings about Megawati, trivialised meanings about Rais and Wahid, and discursively framed meanings about Suharto and Habibie.

Theoretically, Chapter Three evaluated Robert Entman’s claim that to frame the news is to interpret it in ways that crystallises problems, predicts effects, suggests likely outcomes and makes moral judgements about political leadership. It illustrated how framing interpreted Indonesian politics in ways which defined problems, assigned responsibility, passed moral judgments, and offered solutions and, via frame devices and frame reasoning, including the use of salience. It argued that framing functioned in this manner to make complex and distant events meaningful to Western audiences in ways that resonated with their assumed cultural and political values and knowledge.

Empirically, Chapter Three showed that episodic framing was more common than thematic framing in all of the five newspapers examined for this study. These results reflected similar trends found by Iyengar in its use in broadcast news. Differences however were noted in how often the schema was used in each of the five publications. In 1998, for example, The Age was the most prolific user of episodic frames, accounting for 78 per cent of all articles examined for this study. This was followed by The Independent (73 per cent), The New York Times and The Times (both 71 per cent). It was least used in The Australian (64 per cent). In 1999, it increased in all publications except The Australia where it marginally decreased to 62 per cent. The most prolific use of episodic framing in 1999 was The Independent (88 per cent) followed by The Age (83 per cent), The New York Times (81 per cent) and The Times (79 per cent).

Episodic framing, it was argued is considered detrimental to news audiences because it lacks aspects of social, political, cultural, or historical context required by audiences to cognitively understand the broader relationships between issues, causes and remedies. By framing news accounts within immediately occurring, event-oriented frames, the events and actors being reported are contained within a limited frame of reference. Given this position, it was further argued, that readers of *The Australian* were exposed to less episodic accounts and conversely more thematic accounts (36 per cent in 1998 and 38 per cent in 1999), meaning frames contained a broader historical and political context within which cognitive meanings and knowledge could be determined. This is opposed to audiences of *The Age* (only 22 per cent of thematic accounts in 1998) and *The Independent* (27 per cent in 1998) who were exposed to a narrower political and historical context within which to evaluate the events and issues, as well as the central political leaders. Trends however indicated a decline in thematic framing in 1999. Again, with the exception of *The Australian*, all papers decreased thematic accounts, ranging from 12 per cent in *The Independent*, 17 per cent in *The Age*, 19 per cent in *The New York Times* and 21 per cent in *The Times*. Arguably, readers of *The Independent* were more disadvantaged than those of *The Australian*.

In order to further examine the nexus between meaning-making and episodic framing, Chapter Three also evaluated the schema in the periods of highest frequency of reporting. In this case, data revealed that episodic framing decreased in periods of high frequency. For example, in 1998 episodic accounts decreased in *The Age* (to 64 per cent), *The New York Times* (to 67 per cent) and *The Australian* (to 42 per cent). For *The Independent* in its two highest months of production, January and May 1998, episodic frames were used in 50 per cent of its January coverage and 100 per cent in its May coverage.

Similarly, coverage in *The Times* in January 1998 (its highest month of frequency for 1998) episodically framed all of its news stories. This trend in mainly decreasing accounts of episodic frames in high months of frequency reversed in 1999. All newspapers increased their use of episodic frames in the high frequency

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period of October 1999. Episodic accounts in this month ranged from 63 per cent in *The Australian* (the lowest) to 93 per cent in *The New York Times* (the highest). While periods of high frequency in 1998 indicated a decrease in episodic framing, high frequency periods in 1999 indicated an increase.

Further investigation of episodic framing and its relationship to meaning and knowledge-making indicated that episodic framing was more prevalent in relation to some events and issues than others. In order to demonstrate this, episodic accounts were evaluated in relation to the context of the story. The data revealed that in 215 of the 478 news stories examined, Megawati was contextualised in relation to the New Order and elections. Given that a general election was held in June 1999 and a presidential and vice-presidential ballot was held in October 1999, this accounted for the increase in frequency in these months, and indicated the use of more episodic than thematic frames to shape reports of these events.

In this critique of the context of episodic frames, it argued that meanings about Megawati were framed for the most part by the electoral process, normatively positioned as a contestation between two competing forces in a zero-sum approach. Given that the hypothesis was that the broader discourse evident in Western news reporting during 1998 and 1999 was the end of the New Order and a Megawati presidency, it was surmised that Megawati was framed as in a binary with the New Order. In this sense, episodic and context analysis confirmed how framing functioned to posit a social reality within which the New Order’s demise and Megawati’s ascendency were framed in Western news discourses.

Completing the examination of episodic framing and its function in shaping social realities about Indonesian governance and privileged meanings about Megawati, was a keyword analysis. Data indicated a reliance on keywords, concepts and themes to shape meanings about Megawati. Particularly, it argued that lineage, gender and religious narratives functioned to shape privileged meanings about Megawati, while simultaneously shaping discursive meanings about Suharto and Habibie in particular, and Rais and Wahid in general. Analyses revealed that occurrences of Megawati’s lineage to Sukarno were evident in each of the five newspapers examined for the primary study. While there were
variations in how Megawati’s lineage to Sukarno shaped meanings, textual references generally suggested that while Megawati was a Sukarno she was drawing on Sukarnoist imagery rather than an adjunct of Sukarnoist ideology. That is, frames posited that while she was a Sukarno she was unlikely to adopt Sukarnoist policies once in high office.

In some other instances, textual references to Sukarno functioned to affirm Megawati as a political victim. In this case, the treatment of Megawati at the hands of the New Order (often referenced to the events of 1996 specifically her ousting from the Chair of the PDI and the subsequent raid on the PDI’s Jakarta office resulting in fatalities) was juxtaposed with Sukarno’s treatment, dying a political prisoner in “free” Indonesia, similarly at the hands of the New Order. In even other instances, lineage was framed to monarchical references, for the most part gendered, to posit that her future leadership of Indonesia was destined.

The use of gendered references also indicated ways in which privileged meanings were attached to Megawati. In this analysis, data indicated increased uses of gendered narratives in 1999. While some of the gendered references, as noted, were monarchical, positing Megawati was destined to lead Indonesia other gendered references were those of “motherhood,” positing Megawati’s role in protecting and saving the nation. Arguably, the latter frame was particularly discursive, shaping Megawati’s campaign for the presidency as in the interests of “saving the nation,” as opposed to being driven for revenge against Suharto. Shaping reports of the debates regarding a woman leading an Islamic nation also functioned to privilege meanings about Megawati, in this case to alleviate her inability to win the presidential vote. Framing generally posited that because of her gender Megawati was denied the presidency. As such, it functioned as an alleviating frame. More so, it also reinforced Megawati as a political victim, betrayed by Islamic politicians and, in particular, betrayed by Wahid.

In summary, Chapter Three demonstrated that a social reality was constructed and maintained in ways that privileged meanings about Megawati, her character, values, and motivations. While the construction and maintenance of social realities is an inescapable consequence of framing, the consequences were that
public knowledge about Megawati and her value to the post-Suharto period was contained and limited. Episodic frames functioned to deflect blame on others, and obscured Megawati’s failings and lack of political acumen.

Chapter Four evaluated in what ways “crisis” functioned to strengthen the social reality being constructed about Indonesian politics during 1998 and 1999, and to assess if the framework similarly privileged meanings about Megawati. In order to evaluate crisis framing, three events/issues were examined: the reporting of the state of the Indonesian economy in January 1998; the reporting of the student fatalities at Trisakti University (Jakarta) in May 1998; and the reporting of events prior to and immediately following the presidential vote in October 1999.

While not disputing that Indonesia was facing serious economic, social and political problems during 1998 and 1999, the aim of this chapter was to interrogate how by “naming” occurrences as “crises” Western news reporting interpreted events in ways which shaped meanings about who was responsible and who was the solution. Crisis framing in this chapter sought to examine how economic, social and political problems were “named” as “crises” to posit a particular version of reality.13 By evaluating the use of crisis framing, the objective was not to expose journalist falsehoods, but to demonstrate how aspects of reality are selected and interpreted, shaped with their own facts, values, judgments and emotions, to name certain events and issues as evidence of a crisis, and ultimately a remedy. When reinforced with frame devices and frame reasoning, it surmised that crisis framing influenced audience understandings about Indonesia and its leaders, in particular, the New Order and Megawati.

Demonstrating the Western media’s propensity to frame Indonesian politics and governance in “crisis” content analysis revealed that of the 478 articles examined for the primary study, 780 references to “crisis” were noted in the two-year period. This was determined by measuring occurrences of keywords to denote crisis. As outlined in the methodology in Chapter One, these included the words crisis, panic, riots, chaos, violence, turmoil, looting, unrest, conflict, clashes,

killings, coup and revolution. On average, every article examined had at least one reference to crisis. The most prolific user of “crisis” was *The New York Times* in 1998 and *The Times* in 1999. In both years *The Australian*, least used this term. How crisis framing functioned in each publication however varied significantly. In an evaluation of three distinct occurrences, the state of the Indonesian economy in January 1998, the student demonstrations and subsequent fatalities in May 1999, and the vice-presidential and presidential elections and their aftermath in October 1999, the differences were apparent.

In reporting the Indonesian economy in January 1998, for example, crisis framing was used to posit accountability and remedy in varied ways. In both *The New York Times* and *The Times*, framing positioned Suharto as responsible for the “crisis.” *The New York Times* did so by framing Suharto as a recalcitrant. *The Times* did so by framing Suharto as an authoritarian. In both cases however, they both framed Suharto as the “solution,” ostensibly by capitulating to the IMF. In doing this, both newspapers posited the crisis would be resolved. Given this framework, both papers trivialised Megawati’s challenge to Suharto.

*The Age* and *The Independent* more directly named Suharto as the cause of the crisis, and only with his resignation would the crisis be resolved. Framing conceived that Suharto was losing both international and domestic support. In this case, Megawati’s challenge to Suharto in the upcoming presidential ballot was not trivialised. Privileged meanings, in both *The Age* and *The Independent*, were evident in how Megawati was positioned in a binary with Suharto. *The Australian*, in a unique approach, relied less on journalistic editorialising and more on Megawati’s own statements to narrate the sense of drama and crisis.

In each of the five newspapers’ reporting of the Indonesian economy, the use of “affect” was also evident. Affect is the use of narratives to arouse an emotional state, the clustering of feelings to elicit emotional responses, or the generation of a state of pleasant or unpleasant feelings about the issue, event or actor in how they are framed. In relation to the Indonesian economy, the fear of economic

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contagion was used in The New York Times. For The Age, affective framing was evident in reports of a collision between Megawati and Suharto. The Independent used affective framing to highlight the intensification of social and political implosion. For The Times it was the potential for anarchy. In The Australian, affect was enabled via Megawati herself. That is, her claims of social and political unrest shaped news frames.

In an analysis of the events surrounding the Trisakti demonstrations and fatalities in May 1999, Chapter Four also demonstrated how crisis and affect framing shaped understandings of who was culpable in ways, which posited who, and what, were the remedy. As with reporting of the economy in January 1999, significant differences were noted. “Naming” of who was responsible, in some instances, was more confined to the participants, either the protestors or the security forces. In other cases, it was enlarged to suggest New Order responsibility and used to “name” the “truth” of the need for regime change. Of the three issues examined in this chapter, this proved the most insightful in exploring the use of “crisis” and “affect” to shape meanings. At its broadest level, analyses of reporting of this event suggested this issue clearly posited that Indonesia was on the brink of anarchy in ways that would have arguably confirmed Western stereotypes about Third World politics.

In evaluating reporting of vice-presidential and presidential ballots in October 1999, analyses confirmed the permanent use of crisis framing to shape reporting in the Western news media. Differences however were again noted in how the framing functioned. The Independent, for example, relied on the spectre of violence to shape news accounts. Within this frame, Megawati’s electoral popularity (as evidenced in the June election result) was positioned against Habibie’s illegitimacy (as he was not a popularly elected president). Crisis framing was further noted in editorials that posited that should Habibie win the presidential vote over Megawati the crisis would be inflamed. In reporting of Wahid’s election victory, The Independent, while trivialising his election, did welcome it, given it at least meant the end of the New Order. It was however in

Megawati’s election as Vice-President that *The Independent* framed the crisis as being over. Similar themes were noted in *The Times*, however Wahid’s election was trivialised even further. A sense of the multiple struggles that Megawati needed to overcome was noted in *The Times*, suggestive of its maintenance of alleviating framing.

A significantly different use of crisis framing was evidenced in *The New York Times*. Analysis of these newspapers’ reports of the presidential and vice-presidential election revealed that the American publication “named” Indonesian-style democracy as deficient, and therefore the cause of the crisis. However, in the election of Wahid as President the “crisis of democracy” was overcome. While appearing to ignore the fact that it was the same electoral system that had elected Suharto *The New York Times* nonetheless “celebrated” Wahid’s victory. Of some interest was the lengths the newspaper went to reassure its audience of Wahid’s secular and democratic credentials. Explanations of this were arguably that *The New York Times* had devolved its privileged meanings about Megawati (as argued in Chapter Five) and hence was supportive of anyone who was not a member of the New Order.

As with *The Age* and *The Times*, *The New York Times* signalled the resolution of the crisis, reliant on narratives of the “dawning of democracy.” *The Australian*, while the most critical of Megawati and her value to post-Suharto Indonesia, similarly framed the period as one of crisis, resolved not so much by the election of the Wahid-Megawati government but as with the American newspaper, by the end of the New Order. What appeared to concern *The Australian* however was the Islamic credentials of Wahid, and what consequences this may have for Australian national interests.

In this analysis of three key issues/events, the state of the Indonesian economy (January 1998), the events surrounding the Trisakti demonstrations and fatalities (May 1998) and the vice-presidential and presidential elections (October 1999), Chapter Four demonstrated that crisis and affective framing did shape and sustain social realities about the state of Indonesian politics and its political leaders during 1998 and 1999. For the most part, Suharto and Habibie were framed as the
cause of the drama/crisis, either via their own actions or via their establishment and maintenance of an ineffective economic and political system. Megawati, for the most part, was framed with privileged meanings, particularly when juxtaposed with Habibie. This was particularly evidenced in “naming” the “truth” of her moral mandate following the June general election. When juxtaposed with Wahid, arguably the privilege was less effective. As reporting had to adjust to an overwhelming amount of discrepant information, namely, a view that Megawati had failed to build the alliances required to deliver her the presidency, alleviating frames that had been evidenced in 1998 were consolidated. Framing in this instance, reaffirmed her as a political victim.

Chapter Five examined how “issue framing” of East Timor (assessed in the secondary case study examining 626 news articles that appeared in October 1999) shaped meanings about two post-Suharto leaders, Megawati and Habibie. Its aim was to evaluate how issue framing shaped public policies that were evaluative of the political leadership of Habibie and Megawati in the post-Suharto period. This issue was selected specifically to evaluate if issue framing (the juxtapositioning of public policy into dualistic relationships of competing strategic, material and values frames) similarly structured social realities and privileged meanings.

Given Megawati’s opposition to provincial independence or succession, and given that the Western news media adopted a pro-independence narrative on East Timor, how this issue was framed proved insightful. The objective was to determine if this issue had the potential to disrupt privileged meanings about Megawati (given her opposition to any form of succession or independence) and to assess how journalists adjusted frames to respond to this potential disruption.

This issue was also selected to evaluate the structural aspects of news frames. In terms of the technical nature of frames, it sought to examine if issue framing functioned in a similar way to episodic framing and crisis framing to shape social realities and privileged meanings. It also sought to examine if issue framing (as with episodic and crisis frames) relied on similar frame reasoning and frame devices to shape meaning and knowledge, and to determine if issue framing similarly relied on salience. In evaluating the cognitive nature of frames, this chapter also sort to interrogate how “truths” were named about East Timor in
ways that shaped emotional and political reactions, which ultimately attributed blame and responsibility, as well as framed solutions and remedies.

It considered how strategy, value and material frames functioned to shape meanings about Habibie’s motivations for the policy shift in ways that were evaluative of his agency, authority or legitimacy. It also evaluated how issue framing strengthened of weakened privilege meanings about Megawati. Theoretically, as with the previous chapters, it also sought to evaluate Entman’s claim that framing shapes meanings and knowledge by framing some aspects of the perceived reality in ways that promote particular problems and shape casual interpretations, moral evaluations and/or treatment recommendations.  

As with other aspects of this project, the aim of this chapter was not to evaluate the policy prescriptions of Habibie or Megawati, nor was it to expose the falsehoods of journalists. Rather, the objective of this chapter and the overall thesis has been to use the concepts and practices of framing to demonstrate how a social reality was constructed and maintained in the news media about the state of Indonesian politics and, a result of this, how a privileged set of meanings about Megawati emerged in news discourses. In doing so, it aimed to demonstrate the arbitrary and subjective power the news media had in shaping public knowledge about Megawati, her values, character and motivations. Its broader objective was to posit that no political leader is immune from framing.

However, in concluding the assessment of how the news media framed East Timor in ways that posited meanings about Habibie and Megawati, it remained mindful of the human experiences of foreign correspondents, especially in war zones. To that end, Chapter Five, while evaluating which journalists were reporting from where and reliant on what sources to shape news frames, it also considered that reporting, particular of East Timor, was arguably shaped by the experiences of Western journalists who were “in country” and by the memory of foreign correspondents (the “Balibo Five” and Roger East in 1975, and Sander Thoenes in 1999), who were murdered in East Timor by the Indonesian military.

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Again, this project is not a critique of the journalists and their motivations. Rather, it is a critique of how they framed Indonesia generally, and Megawati specifically. However, throughout this analysis, it was mindful that journalists are discursive agents shaped by their experiences, locale, newsroom and industry practices, morals and ideologies.

In terms of how issue framing of East Timor shaped evaluative judgments of the issues, its causes, Indonesian governance and the merits of Habibie and Megawati to the post-Suharto Indonesia, analysis in Chapter Five revealed that *The Times* framed Habibie within material frames, positing the need to devolve responsibility for East Timor for economic reasons. Conversely, *The Independent* framed the policy in terms of a strategy designed to gain Indonesia and Habibie legitimacy. *The Independent* used narratives of the “celebration of the ballot box” to posit that democracy would trump authoritarianism and oppression, whereas *The Times* maintained material framing, positing the likelihood of Indonesian disintegration and its cost to Indonesia and the region. Noted in British coverage was the use of comparatives to Kosovo and Vietnam to imagine for its audiences the unimaginable. *The Times* did not maintain privileged meanings about Megawati. It framed her as unlikely to “save” East Timor hence she offered little value to the post-Suharto period. *The Independent* maintained privileged meanings about Megawati, but more so by highlighting Habibie and ABRI’s accountability, rather than focusing on Megawati’s nationalism. In this instance, salience functioned to highlight New Order failures and, in doing so, focused attention on these failures, rather than on Megawati.

Reporting in the Australian news media similarly negated Habibie’s commitment to reform generally and East Timor specifically. Both newspapers framed Habibie within strategic frames, with the policy designed to achieve international legitimacy. In doing so, it posited Habibie was not acting out of moral concern for the plight of the East Timorese. As with British reporting Habibie’s motives were framed as questionable. More so, *The Australian* posited that the shift was designed to win international legitimacy. Conversely, *The Age* posited it was designed to win domestic legitimacy. *The Australian* “named” this issue as the “truth” of the need for reform, unlikely to occur under Habibie, while *The Age*
similarly named it as the “truth” of the need for reform. Frames in *The Age* suggested reform would not come via intervention, but rather at the ballot box.

This approach fits the broader condemnation noted in *The Age* of the U.N, the Indonesian government, the Australian government and the American government. This was a significantly different discourse to that evident in *The Australian*. In this case, the dominant discourse was the need to protect the Australian-Indonesian relationship. Given these frames, *The Age* denied privileged meanings about Megawati and her future value to Indonesia, whereas *The Australian* maintained its privileged meanings about Megawati. For *The Australian*, Megawati was framed as liberal on the issue of East Timor, juxtaposing that Habibie was not. Reporting, while acknowledging Megawati’s nationalism tended to focus on her benign statements of national unity.

Analyses showed that while British and Australian reporting dualised Habibie in a struggle with the international community, American reporting positioned Habibie in a struggle with ABRI. Initial reporting celebrated Habibie’s announcement as indicative of the shift away from New Order authoritarianism. However, this frame rapidly dissolved and, as with as Australian and British accounts, framing functioned to shape Habibie’s motivations as strategic and material. Seeking international legitimacy and with the hope of avoiding sanctions, *The New York Times* framed the final decision on independence as Habibie benignly “giving away” East Timor.

As with reporting in *The Australian*, dominating American reporting was the discourse of the need to protect the American-Indonesian relationship. Arguably, this discourse contributed to how Habibie and the issue of East Timor was framed. American framing of East Timor, as with *The Age*, devolved privileged meanings about Megawati. Linguistic attachments to her father (particularly his nationalism) and her apparent acquiescence to the military (to attract military support in the upcoming presidential ballot) posited that Megawati’s motivations were strategic and material. As such, *The New York Times* hypothesised that Megawati would be a disappointment and, therefore, offered little value to post-Suharto Indonesia.
Supplementing this framing analysis of how issue framing of East Timor posited meanings about Habibie and Megawati, was empirical data which demonstrated that the elite orientation of frames contributed to how public knowledge was shaped in news reports. Analyses of the 478 news articles examined for the primary study confirm that a relatively small number of journalists were shaping news accounts of Indonesia during 1998 and 1999. A handful of journalists shaped the majority of news accounts about Megawati during this period. Louise Williams and Lindsay Murdoch (The Age), Don Greenlees and Patrick Walters (The Australian), Seth Mydans (The New York Times), David Watts and Tom Rhodes (The Times) and Richard Lloyd Parry (The Independent) provided the majority of the 478 news accounts examined for this study.

Data in Chapter Five extensively outline their contributions to reporting in the larger period of 1998 and 1999, and in the specific period of September 1999. What this data revealed was that for four of the five examined publications, 50 per cent or more of their reporting on Indonesia for 1998 and 1999 can be attributed to single journalists. It argued that the lack of diversity had an impact on framing; therefore, it had consequences for how public understandings and knowledge of events, issues and actors developed. When journalist frequency was measured in relation to the specific period of September 1999 (the period of highest coverage of East Timor in the two-year period), it found that the pool of journalists reporting was much larger, although these journalists remained the primary framers of news accounts about East Timor, Habibie and Megawati. Of some interest, it was noted that in each case, the majority of news accounts published in September 1999 did originate from journalists reporting primarily from Dili or Jakarta.

In terms of the sources used, analyses of news reports during 1998 and 1999 revealed a propensity for the Western media to use sources from the Non-New Order elite (identified as the Indonesian political and civilian elites who were not members of Golkar or the New Order, but were members of other political parties or official political organisations, including the PDI and PDI-P and Indonesian social and political commentators. This was the most commonly sourced view for The Age and The Times in 1998 and 1999, for The Australian in 1999, and for
The New York Times in 1998. In 1998 The Australian, and in 1999 The New York Times relied more on foreign elites (identified as foreign political leaders, foreign government ministers and their spokespersons, diplomats, spokespersons from the international institutions such as Amnesty, the IMF, the World Bank, foreign “experts,” and foreign academics). In 1998, The Independent cited sources from the vox populi more than any other source, and in 1999, cited sources from the New Order elite, Suharto and Habibie, New Order ministers, official spokespersons (both government and military) and Golkar officials.

However, source analysis of reporting of East Timor in September 1999 found different patterns of source usage. Each of the five newspapers relied less on sources from the Non-New Order elite and more on sources identified as the foreign elite. Vox populi accounts (in this case the accounts of East Timorese) all increased significantly in September 1999. With the exception of The Age and, in some cases, The Australian, the British and American publications tended to paraphrase their stories and collective experiences of the “truth” of their suffering and its attribution to the Indonesian military/government. The Age however did tend to collectivise East Timorese experiences in terms of their status as refugees, as did The New York Times. Of significant interest was the inclusion of East Timorese elites as sources, mainly Xanana Gusmão and Bishop Belo. In some cases though, they were not always quoted directly. Megawati, as with the broader evidence compiled in relation to whose “voice” appeared in Western news accounts, was silent in September 1999. In the 626 accounts examined from September 1999, she was directly quoted in only one story. As previous chapters have demonstrated, it was foreign correspondents who gave voice to what they thought Megawati was, and what she represented for the people of Indonesia.

Chapter Five also demonstrated that in terms of issue framing, it functioned as episodic-crisis framing did to shape social realities and privileged meanings. It also relied on frame reasoning and devices and the use of emotion and affect to shape meanings that were evaluative of who was responsible and who or what the remedy was. This was most noted in the use of binaries denoting East Timorese suffering with New Order/ABRI oppression. Salience was also evident, especially in reporting Megawati’s position on East Timorese independence.
Finally, the last of the analytical chapters demonstrated that certain “truths” were named about East Timor and performed in some cases to posit poor Indonesian governance. In each newspaper, certain “truths” were named which evaluated the tragedy of East Timor at the hands of the New Order and ABRI. Hence, these parties were named as responsible and attributed blame. Habibie in particular was discursively framed, especially in 1999. As already argued, his policy on East Timor was framed as strategic (seeking international legitimacy) or as material (wanting to rid Jakarta of the cost of East Timor).

This chapter also demonstrated that three of the five newspapers did not maintain privileged meanings about Megawati when contextualised in relation to this issue. *The Age*, *The Times* and *The New York Times* framed Megawati as not being the solution to the question of East Timor. In particular, *The New York Times* and *The Times* further devolved privileged meanings about Megawati by framing her as have no substantive role to play in post-New Order Indonesia. As such, evidence suggests that this issue did disrupt the privileged meanings that had been previously assigned to her as the “saviour” of Indonesia.

Given that this study was limited to five examples of the Western news media, future research which analyses and compares bilingual frames of Megawati in the English-language press to the Indonesian Bahasa-language press would prove to be invaluable in interrogating the methodological and theoretical strength of framing analysis and its influence on, and application in, non-Western press reporting. Similarly, a comparison of English-language with European-language frames would also prove valuable in understanding how non-English media outlets framed Megawati in the period under revision.

Similarly, given that this study did not seek to quantitatively measure the impact of media framing on domestic or international news audiences, field work studies using surveys or open ended interviews may seek to measure how framing influenced Indonesian voters, particularly in relation to the 1999 general election. In relation to international actors, interviews with key policy makers outside of Indonesia, for example officials in regional governments, international economic institutions and international development and aid organisations, may unearth
how discursive media framing of Megawati had an influence on how external organisations perceived her vice-presidency/presidency, and hence may have had an impact on policy development and aid funding in the post-Suharto era.

At an institutional level, interviews with key media practitioners exploring how Megawati was framed would also prove invaluable. As this case study unearthed, it was only a small number of journalists reporting for the selected Western new media in the years 1998 and 1999. Given that fact, interviews with them about how they approached reporting Megawati, given the perplexity surrounding her, would add further insight into how the media frames political candidates and how journalists negotiate the competing norms and values of the news room with their experiences “in country.” Interviews with foreign journalists would prove illuminating in relation to key themes discussed in this project.

Finally, interviews with Megawati and her advisors would complete what could be a four-stage study of media framing of Megawati, specifically the impact on Indonesian voters, the impact on regional and foreign institutions, a personalised view from the media’s meaning-makers, and the actors themselves. Specifically of interest for further research would not only be how one political actor understood and navigated the news media frame, but to explore how politicians in general understand the influence of framing on winning and sustaining consensus and legitimacy, as well as the influence of international framing on domestic electoral contests.

Whether a future Megawati presidency was an advantage or disadvantage to Indonesia, and what value her policy prescriptions may have had to post-New Order politics was not the scope of this study. Rather, it sought to demonstrate how Western news framing functioned to assemble emotional and political meaning about Megawati and her values, character and motivations during 1998 and 1999. In evaluating how the Western news media shaped perceptions, opinions, meaning, and knowledge about Indonesia generally and Megawati specifically, it has demonstrated that the Western news media are powerful agents in how audiences view and engage with the social and political world and its actors.
Moreover, it has demonstrated that the news media can insulate political leaders from more critical public scrutiny, in ways that preserve the legitimacy of political, economic and social systems. Their influence has been shown in how they can establish and sustain reference points from which society and audiences makes moral, political, emotional and ideological judgments about nations and their political leaders. As such, it concludes that the news media are among the “most influential knowledge-producing institutions of our time.”

In a critique of over 1,000 news articles that appeared in the Western news media between 1998 and 1999, qualitative and quantitative data has exposed how frame devices, frame reasoning, salience and the elite orientation of frames shaped privileged accounts of Megawati in ways not available to other actors in Indonesia. In doing so, regardless of her political acumen, Megawati was generally positioned in Western news accounts as the likely “saviour” of post-Suharto Indonesia. In this indicative study, it has demonstrated the structural links between how political leaders are framed, how framing can function to assemble and maintain meaning, and how that meaning can shape public knowledge. In exploring how the Western news media framed Megawati during 1998 and 1999 this thesis contributes to a school of critical communication scholarship that posits that no political actor is immune from framing, that framing is universal, influential, potentially inescapable and detrimental to the public sphere.

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