

Media-elite interactions in post-authoritarian Indonesia

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I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research. It contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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Für Oma, Opa & Ibu Yenny

Abstract

This thesis analyses media-elite interactions in post-authoritarian Indonesia. The introduction of legally guaranteed press freedom and democracy following President Suharto's fall in 1998 changed the relationship between the media on the one hand and the political and business elite on the other. But what has been the significance of press freedom for elite politics?

The argument of this thesis is that the politico-business elites have, to differing degrees, harnessed the concept of press freedom by incorporating the media as a political weapon in their power struggles over key positions in political institutions and over political resources. Crucially, the heterogeneous and mostly privately owned media companies positioned themselves as actors in the intra-elite contestations.

Through a set of case studies on intra-elite power struggles that escalated into scandals, this thesis examines the ways in which the elite has integrated the media into those struggles, and analyses the vested interests of the owners and practitioners of the media in those struggles. Ultimately, it establishes two key points. First, the elite has employed scandal as a an opportunity to change the composition of a democratically elected government; and second, during those political scandals the owners or prominent editors of particular media organisations, either consciously or otherwise, have formed temporary coalitions with particular elite factions based on shared interests defined by structural conditions and personal relations.

The dissertation's focus on media-elite interactions is prompted by the lingering dominance of elites within Indonesia's political economy, the domination of the media landscape by a small number of media conglomerates whose owners are either members of the politico-business elite themselves or linked to the latter in various forms, and, further, that the media have become important sites for intra-elite contestation over political power.

By placing its analytical focus explicitly on the nature of the relationship between the commercial mainstream news media and the politico-business elite in times of intra-elite power struggles fought out in the public sphere, this approach moves away from media-centred investigations, normative concerns and liberal concepts as the dominant way of thinking about the media's democratic functions.

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Glossary of Terms, Abbreviations and Acronyms

AJI	Aliansi Jurnalis Independen; Alliance of Independent Journalists
<i>angket</i>	questionnaire
Banser	Barisan Serbaguna; civilian militia linked to Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) mass organisation
BI	Bank Indonesia; Central Bank of the Republic of Indonesia
BKP	Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan; State Audit Board
<i>budaya amplop</i>	'envelope culture', refers to cash payments to journalists to influence media coverage
<i>budaya telepon</i>	'telephone culture', refers to the practice of authorities telephoning editors in order to influence media coverage or prevent the publication of sensitive information
<i>buku putih</i>	White Paper
Bulog	Badan Urusan Logistik; State Logistic Agency
Bulog Yanatera	The State Logistic Agency's Employee's Welfare Foundation
<i>bupati</i>	regent
DPR	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat; House of Representatives or National Parliament
Forum Demokrasi	Democracy Forum, a grouping of critics of the Suharto government in the 1980s and 1990s
Fraksi reformasi	Reform Faction (coalition between PAN and PK in the DPR)

Gerindra	Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya; Greater Indonesia Movement Party
Golkar	orig. Golongan Karya; 'Functional Groups', the state party during the New Order, and one of the major post-New Order political parties
Gus Dur	honorific childhood nickname of Abdurrahman Wahid
<i>hak prerogatif</i>	prerogative right
<i>hak angket</i>	right of inquiry
Hanura	Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat; The People's Conscience Party
ICMI	Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia; the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals
ICW	Indonesia Corruption Watch
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JPSK	Jaring Pengaman Sistem Keuangan; Financial System Safety Net
KADIN	Indonesian Chamber of Commerce
<i>kiai or kiyayi</i>	Islamic scholar, head of <i>pesantren</i>
KKN	<i>korupsi, kolusi dan nepotisme</i> ; a popular term used in the post-Suharto period to denote corruption, collusion and nepotism.
KPK	Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi; Corruption Eradication Commission
KSSK	Komite Stabilitas Sektor Keuangan; Financial System Stability Committee

Laskar Jihad	Holy War Militia
LPS	Lembaga Penjamin Simpanan; Deposit Insurance Corporation
<i>mafia hukum</i>	judicial mafia
Malari	Malapetaka 15 Januari; refers to anti-Suharto and anti-Chinese demonstrations which broke out on 15 January 1974
MPR	Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat; People's Consultative Assembly or Indonesia's supra-parliament
Muhammadiyah	Muslim mass organisation with large following among urban traders and professionals in Java and the Outer Islands
Nasdem	Nasional Demokrat; National Democrats
New Order	The term Suharto coined for his government, from 1965 to 1998
NU	Nahdlatul Ulama; Muslim mass organisation that is predominantly based in rural Java
<i>pesantren</i>	Islamic boarding school
PAN	Partai Amanat Nasional; National Mandate Party
Pancasila	Indonesia's state philosophy (literally 'The Five Principles')
Pansus	Panitia Khusus; Special Committee
PBB	Partai Bulan Bintang; Crescent and Star Party
Perppu	Peraturan Pemerintah Pengganti Undang-Undang; Government Regulation in Lieu of Law
PD	Partai Demokrat; Democratic Party

PDI-P	Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan; Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle
Perpu	Peraturan Pemerintah sebagai Pengganti Undang-undang; Interim Emergency Law (literally 'Government Regulations in lieu of a Statute')
PK	Partai Keadilan; Justice Party
PKB	Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa; National Awakening Party
PKS	Partai Keadilan Sejahtera; Prosperous Justice Party
PPATK	Pusat Pelaporan dan Analisis Transaksi Keuangan; Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre
Polri	Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia; Indonesian National Police
<i>poros tengah</i>	central axis (loose coalition of Islamic parties)
PPP	Partai Persatuan Pembangunan; United Development Party
<i>preman</i>	thug
<i>pribumi</i>	native or indigenous Indonesian
RRI	Radio Republik Indonesia; Radio of the Republic Indonesia
<i>reformasi</i>	reform
SBY	Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono
Setgab	Sekretariat Gabungan; Joint Secretariat
SIUPP	Surat Izin Usaha Penerbitan Pers; press publication enterprise permit

SK	Surat Keputusan, decree
Taperum	Tabungan Perumahan, Housing Savings scheme
Tim Sukses	Support Team
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia; post-Suharto name for the Indonesian Armed Forces
TVRI	Televisi Republik Indonesia; Television of the Republic Indonesia
<i>ulama</i>	Muslim scholar
Yanatera	Yayasan Dana Kesejahteraan Karyawan; Employees Welfare Foundation
<i>yayasan</i>	foundation; organisations intended as charities but often used for political funding and investment

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Explanatory notes

A note on Indonesian names and the translation of Indonesian language sources

The Indonesian language has used various spelling systems, with the remnants of the former systems still reflected in some common names. For common names I have generally used the post-1972 system: for example, 'Suharto' rather than 'Soeharto'. However, where individuals appear to have indicated strong preference for alternative (pre-1972) spellings I have made occasional exceptions: for example, using 'Jakob Oetama' rather than 'Yakob Utama'.

Indonesians may be known by a single name (for example, Boediono) or multiple names (for example, Sri Mulyani Indrawati). In this study those multiple names are shortened according to the particular part of the name by which those individuals are ordinarily known in Indonesia. For example, Megawati Sukarnoputri is shortened to Megawati, whereas Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono is shortened to Yudhoyono. Other contractions that are commonly used in Indonesia, such as 'Gus Dur' for Abdurrahman Wahid or 'SBY' for Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, are avoided in this study. However, in respect to quotations or translations the spelling of Indonesian names follows the one used in the original source.

Translation of Indonesian language sources

All translations of original Indonesian language sources are the author's unless stated otherwise.

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Introduction

Media freedoms are widely regarded as pivotal to the flourishing of democracy. Consequently, much academic literature focuses on cases which deviate from this ideal. However, this thesis posits a more cogent set of questions, namely how, why, and for whose benefit are media freedoms compromised? In order to answer these questions this thesis, taking Indonesia as a case study, looks at the ways in which a particular national politico-business elite has integrated the media in its power struggles, and at the vested interests of the owners and practitioners of the media in those intra-elite power struggles.

By placing its analytical focus explicitly on the relationship between the commercial mainstream news media and the politico-business elite during intra-elite power struggles fought out in the public sphere (conflicts frequently termed 'scandals'), this approach moves away from the media-centred investigations, normative concerns and liberal conceptions, which have dominated thinking about the media's democratic functions. By contrast, this study adopts a different approach to examining the media and their possible socio-political implications in Indonesia, and post-authoritarian regimes in general.

The breakdown of the authoritarian New Order regime in May 1998 opened Indonesia's path to democracy. Since then the Indonesian media have been both mediators and players in a vast web of power and profit. Developments such as the establishment of new print and broadcast media following the simplification of license application procedures and requirements, media diversification, and legally guaranteed press freedom have freed the media from government control. As the

frequency with which the media covers cases of political scandal shows, media organisations now scrutinize institutions and actors to expose corruption, abuse of power and incompetence of the politico-business elite. But, what has been the significance of press freedom in post-Suharto Indonesia for elite politics?

A key argument advanced in this thesis is that instead of fighting against the media, the politico-business elite has, to differing degrees, harnessed the concept of press freedom by incorporating the media (as an arena and weapon) into its power struggles over key positions in political institutions and political resources. The elite has also applied other means, such as legal recourse, concentration of ownership, and violence, to regain control over the media. But as significant as such strategies might be, previous analyses of the Indonesian media have often ignored or neglected the link between the media's power to severely criticise those who try to curtail press freedom and the elite's reliance on a free media. Changes in the political structure and political competition among the elite require a media open to factions within the political elite competing with each other, and presenting their views to the public in order to gain popular support for their cause. This has resulted in the Indonesian media becoming a key strategic element in intra-elite power struggles. Crucially, the media are not only the arena of those power struggles; they are also actors in the struggles (McCargo 1999; 2003; Waisbord 2004: 1078).

The Indonesian media – which are now almost entirely privately owned and highly diversified – cannot be treated as a unified entity because they are fragmented across a range of political, economic, religious, and ideological interests. In the media's role as an actor, the owners of, and practitioners in, the media have

their own strategic objectives. Such objectives might conform with particular elite interests and might lead, at least temporarily, to mutually beneficial coalitions among particular factions within the contesting elite.

As noted in the first chapter, the rationale for a focus on media-elite relations is prompted by the lingering dominance of elites or oligarchs in Indonesia's political economy (Robison and Hadiz 2004; Winters 2011), the dominance in the media landscape of a small number of media conglomerates whose owners are either members of the politico-business elite themselves or linked to the latter in various forms, and the fact that the media have become important sites for intra-elite contestation over political and economic power (for example, Haryanto 2011; Hill 2009; Ida 2011; Sudibyoy and Patria 2013; Winters 2013; Tapsell 2012, 2015). This preponderance of private media ownership in the hand of the politico-business elite along with a high level of conglomeration suggests that the media and the elite are intertwined. By drawing on C. Wright Mills' concept of the power elite (1959) and Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model (1988) the thesis establishes that the commercial mainstream news media and the politico-business elite in Indonesia are intertwined through various forms that go beyond ownership. This is due to the commercial mainstream news media's structural and personal interrelation with the politico-business elite and their shared location within capitalist market structures. Thus the media operates primarily in ways to reinforce the existing power structure rather than to serve the public interest and fulfil the democratic functions assigned to it, according to the liberal ideal.

However, due to political competition the heterogeneous elite is in fierce competition with each other on issues that do not question the system's overall

existence; most notably, on issues that concern the distribution of power among themselves. During those times of intra-elite contestation – increasingly fought out in the public sphere – the free and heterogeneous media, either consciously or otherwise, become promoters of a particular faction of the contesting elite. Consequently, the dichotomy that those in power (the politico-business elite) are the ‘bad guys’ constantly seeking more power, while the media performing their watchdog role are the ‘good guys’, is not applicable. How this plays out exactly is highly contingent on the clash of interests central to any struggle over power fought out in the public sphere (such as those dubbed ‘scandals’).

Through a set of case studies that examine and map out these relationships through the analytical focus of scandal I argue the following. First, that the politico-business elite has integrated the media (as an arena and weapon) into their power struggles over key positions in political institutions and political resources. Second, that the media are active participants in intra-elite power struggles, that can be based on the vested interests of owners and/or chief editors who decide on whether, and how, to report on intra-elite power struggles.

Case study selection and approach

The examination of media-elite interactions (that is, the media’s integration into intra-elite conflicts and their interests in those) in this thesis employs a qualitative methodology that draws upon primary and secondary research materials and is directed towards answering the research questions outlined above. Primary

research material was derived from a range of semi-structured interviews and conversations conducted during two fieldtrips to Jakarta between April and December 2010. Interviewees included media workers, intellectuals, media analysts and politicians. In total, 36 semi-structured interviews were undertaken. Many of the interviewees were identified prior to fieldwork but contacted after my arrival in Indonesia. In this I relied on the help and support of my research counterpart, the national office of the Alliance of Indonesian Journalists (AJI Indonesia) whose members offered their connections to contact potential sources informally. These contacts often referred me on to other interviewees they thought were relevant to my research. Although less than half of these interviews are quoted in this thesis, the interviews were important in directing me to written sources. The same applies to the numerous informal conversations I had with AJI members, media workers and journalists during visits to media organisations and the DPR. Primary sources also include media articles, collected from media organisations' internal databases and archives, Murdoch University library, Factiva, Proquest, the "Apakabar" Database, and the internet. Secondary research materials, full citations for which are provided in the bibliography section, include a wide array of academic, governmental, organisational, and media sources.

The case studies at the core of this thesis were selected because they have in common that those who exploited a political scandal aimed to change the composition of the democratically elected government through the weapon of scandal (the definition of which shall be explored in chapter one). In other words, members of the politico-business elite, whose political parties had limited access to government resources following the post-election political bargaining process,

employed scandal as a means to boost their power, or to do “politics by other means” as suggested by Ginsberg and Shefter (1990) their book of the same name.

The case study selection follows the logic of literal replication (Yin 2009: 54). They demonstrate the central argument twice in a slightly different way. The first case study (examined in chapters two and three) focuses on two scandals allegedly involving President Wahid (1999-2001). In summary, ‘Buloggate’ is about President Wahid’s alleged involvement in the diversion of a Rp 35 billion (US \$3.5 million) fund belonging to the State Logistics Agency’s (Badan Urusan Logistik, Bulog) Employee’s Welfare Foundation (Yayasan Bina Sejahtera Karyawan, Yanatera). ‘Aryantigate’ refers to an alleged extramarital affair between President Wahid and a woman called Aryanti prior to his presidency.¹ Both scandals were “journalistically appealing” (Waisbord 2004: 1087), since they featured President Wahid and provided an opportunity to discredit the president. Yet they triggered different media responses. This is because Buloggate was a public governance issue that dealt with corruption allegations against a president who was widely known to be an opponent of ‘corruption, collusion and nepotism’ (korupsi, kolusi, dan nepotisme, KKN) and, it had been hoped, would eradicate KKN following the demise of Suharto’s corrupt New Order regime. Aryantigate, in contrast, was a personal issue about which the media had a choice to cover or ignore. Thus it was particularly Buloggate that was employed by Wahid’s opponents. The parliamentary inquiry

¹ As pointed out by Thompson (2000: 119-124; 282) sex scandals that occur in the political field are sexual-political scandals and as such a form of political scandal (the definition of which shall be explored in section 1.6 of this thesis. Given that Aryantigate was mainly politically motivated (this will be discussed in detail in section 3.2 of this thesis) Aryantigate is not treated as a sex scandal but a form of political scandal.

into the scandal was accompanied by several verbal clashes between parliament and president. Eventually the scandal triggered impeachment proceedings.

The second case study (discussed in chapters four and five) centres on the Bank Century scandal which occurred during President Yudhoyono's second term (2009-2014), preoccupying the government, the parliament, the press and the public from September 2009 to May 2010. 'Centurygate', as the scandal was dubbed by the Indonesian media, revolves around the Rp 6.7 trillion (US\$ 716 million) government bailout of the insolvent Bank Century. The scandal precipitated several showdowns between the executive and the parliament. It resulted in Finance Minister Sri Mulyani's resignation and move to the World Bank, and a cabinet reshuffle benefiting Golkar.

Case study structure

Each case study consists of two chapters and is structured so as to answer the following questions: What are the contesting elite's opportunities for, and limits upon, utilizing the media to promote their respective interests in the scandals and beyond? And further, what are the interests and contrasting positions of the owners and practitioners of particular media organisations in those struggles?

Thus, the first chapter of each case study focuses on how the political elite has incorporated scandal as 'politics by other means' into their intra-elite power struggles, and the ways in which those elite actors who played a decisive role in the scandal have tried to use the media to their advantage, that is, to attack each other. The second case study chapter focuses on the interests of the owners and

practitioners of particular media organisations in those scandals. Obviously this undertaking requires some elaboration in matters of approach and unit of analysis.

Selection of news publications for analysis: Context and reasons for choice

In order to focus this analysis most effectively, I limit it to the news media, and in particular to the press, thus ignoring other mass communication media genres and the undeniably pivotal role of television. While the broadcast media disseminate the news to the masses, it is those that control the press that determine what is news, which has the potential to 'set the political agenda' (Sen and Hill 2007: 51).² In addition, the Indonesian press is the most elite-oriented media in the country and in terms of content it mostly aims to cater to educated and elite readers, especially those living in urban areas (Siregar 2002: 3-4). In particular, some of the country's national broadsheets, as well as *Tempo* magazine, provide a vibrant forum for intellectual discourse about political, economic and social issues (Tomsa 2007: 79).

Given that this thesis focuses explicitly on media-elite interactions the publications chosen for analysis derive from this type of print media. In the context of Buloggate I selected *Kompas*, *Media Indonesia*, and *Republika*. In the context of Centurygate *Kompas*, *Media Indonesia*, *Koran Tempo*, and *Tempo* were chosen. In the case of Aryantigate the rationale for selecting *Gatra*, *Panji Masyarakat*, and *Forum*

² "This indirect influence of newspapers (and radio) on television reporters is confirmed in a number of other studies and labelled 'intermedia agenda setting'. Daily contact between the journalists and the competitive media environment created a high degree of convergence between different media outlets regarding issues and sources" (Walgrave and Van Aelst 2006: 92).

Keadilan is based on the fact that those publications were the first national quality news magazines that made the alleged affair a cover story.³

As pointed out by Hanitzsch (2004: 184) *Kompas*, *Media Indonesia*, and *Republika*, as well as the weekly *Tempo*, are also 'defining media' or 'key media' that are used extensively by journalists in their professional activity.⁴ By and large, these publications report much the same stories, but there are also some differences. Those differences in media content are related to a range of factors originating from inside and outside of media organisations (Shoemaker and Reese 1997) and are most profoundly expressed in editorials. In contrast to articles that provide factual information on current views, the editorial is opinionated and represents the views of the paper as an organisation, on current and relevant issues of importance.

According to Henry and Tator (2002: 93) editorials

are not merely idle statements of senior writers' opinions; often they express the broader ideological stance of the newspaper's owners and managers. They are evidence of the interlocking power structures of any given society; in fact, they are often addressed not only to the reading public but more narrowly to society's economic and power elites.

Furthermore, as argued by Waisbord (2004: 1080) in his examination on scandals in Argentina,

³ The respective publications characteristics will be discussed in detail in section 3.2 of this thesis.

⁴ Hanitzsch (2004: 184) notes that *Kompas* is by far the most influential daily newspaper amongst media practitioners, being read by 77.5 per cent of journalists. *Republika* is the second-most read daily newspaper among journalists with 39.9 per cent. *Media Indonesia* is with 39.3 per cent the third-most read daily newspaper among journalists. With a readership of 33.7 per cent among journalists, *Tempo* is the most influential news magazine among journalists.

editorials that exonerate or call authorities to resign indicate the position of influential voices. Although their impact might be limited among general readers, editorials, particularly during political crises, are mandatory reading for elites.

Thus, studying editorials is of special significance when attempting to elucidate a particular publication's interest in a scandal. The following section provides an overview of the selected publications and their general characteristics. Particular characteristics and details, that are crucial for an understanding of the publications interest in Buloggate and Centurygate respectively, will be discussed in greater depth in the context of the respective case study.⁵

Characteristics of selected publications

Media Indonesia

Media Indonesia daily newspaper is part of the Media Group owned by politician and businessman Surya Paloh. Paloh, an Acehnese-born entrepreneur and active Golkar member with close connections to the political elite, entered the media business in the mid-1980s.⁶ In 1985 he diversified his successful catering business, PT Indocater, to establish a publishing holding company, PT Surya Persindo, through which he produced the "controversial straight-talking, rather flashy daily *Prioritas*" (Hill 2006: 92) that was banned only two years after its establishment.⁷

⁵ For Buloggate see p. 125-8, for Centurygate see p. 235-238.

⁶ Paloh joined Golkar in 1968 and served as MPR member from 1977 until 1982 and was a founder of the Communication Forum for the Sons and Daughters of Retired Members of the Armed Forces (Forum Komunikasi Putra-Putri Purnawirawan Angkatan Bersenjata Republik *Indonesia*, FKPP ABRI), military-backed 'youth' organisation.

⁷ For details on the license revocation of *Prioritas* see Hill 2006: 40, 92-3.

After unsuccessfully applying for a new publication permit for another paper, he became co-publisher of *Media Indonesia*, established in 1970 by Teuku Syah Yousli. Out of this collaboration *Media Indonesia* developed under the new management of PT Media Citra Nusa Purnama headed by Surya Paloh (Media Indonesia 2014).

Sen and Hill (2006: 90) describe *Media Indonesia* as affiliated with Bimantara, a huge conglomerate with its major interests in manufacturing and primary industries that was owned by President Suharto's son, Bambang Trihatmodjo. However, despite any such affiliation and Surya Paloh's friendship with Bambang Trihatmodjo *Media Indonesia's* license had been revoked once temporarily during the New Order while the license of *Prioritas* had been cancelled permanently. Furthermore, following the banning of *Tempo* in 1994 many *Tempo* journalists migrated to *Media Indonesia*.

Over the years Paloh's Media Group empire expanded through the acquisition of regional newspapers and diversification into non-media sectors, such as energy and natural resources, hospitality and catering (Media Group 2010: 4). In November 2000 Surya Paloh launched *MetroTV*, Indonesia's first news channel.

Meanwhile Paloh's political career advanced. He chaired Golkar's advisory board from 2004 to 2009. Following his failure to gain Golkar chairmanship, he established a mass organisation, the National Democrats, out of which emerged a political party with the same name in mid-2011. Soon afterwards Paloh resigned from Golkar (Antara, 7 September 2011) and eventually became Nasdem Party chairman in 2013.

Media Indonesia cannot be separated from the person of Surya Paloh. According to Nainggolan (2003: 223) “Surya Paloh is *Media Indonesia*”.⁸ Even though Surya Paloh does not have a journalistic background and *Media Indonesia*’s daily news is managed by a chief editor (appointed by Paloh himself), Paloh’s dominance over *Media Indonesia*’s business and editorial affairs penetrates so deeply that it constitutes the dominant factor influencing the character of *Media Indonesia*’s reporting (Nainggolan 2003: 218; Hamad 2004: 131). Surya Paloh also has the prerogative to determine the content and direction of the main articles, to the point of having the right to stop or change that coverage (Keller 2009: 68) and to impose self-censorship upon *Media Indonesia*, if the paper’s coverage might directly conflict with his politico-business interests (Keller 2009: 78). Indeed, as highlighted by Haryanto (2011: 110-12) there are numerous examples where Paloh was using his media empire to promote his political ambitions and business interests. Surya Paloh himself admitted in an interview with *Tempo* (5 April 2004) that he was using his media organisation while campaigning for Golkar’s presidential nomination prior to the 2004 presidential elections. His answer – translated below – is surprisingly candid and direct:

Honestly I have to admit that I am using *Metro TV* and *Media Indonesia*. If I did not, what else could I use? If a journalist is not happy with that, well, it’s their own fault for becoming a journalist at *Metro TV* or *Media Indonesia*. I do not want to be a hypocrite.⁹

⁸ “Surya Paloh adalah *Media Indonesia*”.

⁹ “Surya Paloh: Secara jujur harus saya akui bahwa saya menggunakan *Metro TV* dan *Media Indonesia*. Kalau tidak, apa lagi yang bisa saya gunakan? Kalau ada wartawan yang tak senang, ya, salah sendiri mengapa dia menjadi wartawan di *Metro TV* atau *Media Indonesia*. Saya tak ingin jadi hipokrit” (*Tempo*, 5 April 2004).

As the sole owner of *Media Indonesia*, Surya Paloh also exerts direct influence on *Media Indonesia's* editorial line by appointing the editorial team. The editorial is written alternately by one of the team members. *Media Indonesia's* editorial style is straightforward and free of euphemism (Anwari 2003: 8-9).

Unlike the other newspapers selected, *Media Indonesia's* editorial column has been on the paper's front page since 1990 (Koespradono 2010: viii). Placing the editorial prominently on the front page – on a par with the daily headlines – shows the great importance *Media Indonesia* places on the editorial. It also shows the paper's interest in spreading its opinions on the selected current issue and simultaneously influencing undecided readers. This effect is amplified through broadcasting *Media Indonesia's* editorial on *MetroTV*, the group's own television channel (Koespradono 2010: 7). *Media Indonesia* has a daily circulation of an average of 240,193 and a readership of 323,143 per day.¹⁰

Kompas

As Indonesia's most respected and best-selling daily newspaper *Kompas* holds a very influential position in society, particularly among members of the elite. Its readership consists of educated readers of the middle and upper class (Yani 2002: 12). *Kompas* has a daily circulation of an average of 500,000 copies and a readership of 1,850,000 per day (Kompas Gramedia 2013a). While Hill (2006: 83) noted that "Kompas was established in 1965, by Chinese and Javanese Catholic journalists on the initiative of the Catholic Party in an attempt to present a Catholic voice", the connection with the Catholic Party ceased with the depoliticisation of the

¹⁰ Compiled from various sources. See Appendix A for details.

Indonesian press during the New Order and “[w]ith the growth of Kompas its employees became a mirror of the pluralistic Indonesian society” (Aritonang and Steenbrink 2008: 973).

By the early 1990s *Kompas* had developed into Indonesia’s largest media empire, the Kompas-Gramedia Group (KKG).¹¹ This was achieved through a strategy of reinvestment and diversification during the 1980s (Hill 2006: 84). KKG did not limit itself to the media sector, but also includes hospitality, banking, agribusiness, and supermarkets (Kompas Gramedia 2016). According to Nainggolan (2003: 103) this expansion was to take advantage of surplus capital to increase productivity and to diversify lest there be a sudden press license revocation.

Kompas and its style of journalism are inextricably linked to Jakob Oetama, one of *Kompas*’ two founding editors, who later became head of the Kompas-Gramedia Group. Under the leadership of Jakob Oetama *Kompas* developed a unique style of journalism that is non-confrontational, somewhat cautious but never sensationalist (Magnis-Suseno 2001: 66). As stated by Hill (2006: 84) “Under Utama’s influence as editor-in-chief, *Kompas* became synonymous with a style of subtle indirect and implicit criticism, often dubbed typically ‘Javanese’”. This cautious and circumlocutious style of reporting as well as Oetama’s management style to self-censor or withdraw publications from the market, or to discipline journalists rather “than risking a government or public backlash, which may disadvantage the group as a whole” (Hill 2006: 86) secured *Kompas*’ survival during the socio-political turbulences since its establishment in 1965 (Wulandari 2010: 80-1; Kakaiailatu 2007: 61).

¹¹ For detailed information on the diversification of KKG see Dhakidae 1991: 340.

In 2001 Jakob Oetama stepped down as chief editor (Pontoh, 1 March 2001) but maintained his positions as the head of *Kompas* and as President Director of the Kompas-Gramedia Group (Kompas Gramedia 2013b).¹² He continued to play a *de facto* role in determining news content in *Kompas* (Nainggolan 2003: 110) and influences the selection of editorial staff (Keller 2009: 47). *Kompas'* editorial is usually written by the chief editor, the deputy chief editor, or sometimes still by Jakob Oetama himself (Keller 2009: 53).¹³

According to Jakob Oetama (2001: 221), "the editorial in Kompas is intended not to show a way out, not to preach, but rather merely to hint, suggesting the possibility an alternative might be taken into consideration"¹⁴. Thus, *Kompas* editorials do not take sides or pin blame (Asiasentinel, 25 July 2013). However, based on *Kompas'* heritage of being established by Catholic interests, the paper has been described as inclined towards the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan, PDI-P) (Budianto 2013: 250). Indeed, during the 2004 and 2009 presidential elections *Kompas* indicated editorial preference towards PDI-P chairwoman Megawati Sukarnoputri (EU-EOM 2004: 63; Faisal 2010: 4).

Republika

The daily newspaper *Republika* was conceived by the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia, ICMI) (Hill 2006: 126)

¹² Following the KKG's reorganisation in 2008 the position President Director was renamed President Commissioner (Kompas Gramedia 2013b).

¹³ *Kompas* features two daily editorials: one on domestic issues and one on international affairs.

¹⁴ "Tajuk rencana dalam Kompas dimaksudkan tidak menunjukkan jalan keluar, apalagi menggurui, namun sekadar mengisyaratkan, menunjukkan kemungkinan alternatif dalam pertimbangan."

with the aim “to accommodate the aspirations of the Muslim community in the context of a national discourse that fosters pluralism of information to the public” (PT. Abdi Bangsa.TBk 2008: 20).¹⁵ It was established on 4 January 1993 by ICMI through the Abdi Bangsa Foundation and was “designed to produce a 'quality' paper which was broadly secular in its coverage of events and issues, yet informed ideologically by Islamic values” (Hill 2006: 126). From the beginning, 51 per cent of *Republika's* shares were owned by PT Abdi Bangsa, 20 per cent by *Republika* employees, and 29 per cent was released the public (Article 19 and AJI 2005: 89).

Over the years *Republika* developed into Indonesia's largest Muslim newspaper (PT. Abdi Bangsa.TBk 2008: 21). Nevertheless, in November 2000 *Republika* was on the brink of bankruptcy and underwent a change of ownership with the Mahaka group buying the majority of its shares (PolitikIndonesia.com, 18 September 2006; Tempo Interaktif, 19 June 2003).¹⁶ Since then *Republika* has had a daily circulation of an average of 216,000 and a readership of 264,000 per day.¹⁷ *Republika's* editorial is written alternately by one of the six-person editorial team. It includes representatives selected by the chief editor and senior editor (Keller 2009: 97).

¹⁵ ICMI was established in 1990 under the chairmanship of B.J. Habibie who was at that time Minister of Research and Technology. For further information on ICMI see, for example, Hefner 1993; Ramage 1995: 75-121; Porter 2002.

¹⁶ This means, that after eight years under the domination of Yayasan Abdi Bangsa/ICMI, *Republika's* ownership structure of shares changed. Only 27.5 per cent remained with Yayasan Abdi Bangsa/ICMI, with the largest proportion (39.99 per cent) now owned by the Mahaka group (Nainggolan 2003: 268.)

¹⁷ Compiled from various sources. See Appendix A for details.

Tempo Media Group: Tempo and Koran Tempo

Tempo weekly newsmagazine and *Koran Tempo* daily newspaper are owned by Tempo Media Group (PT Tempo Inti Media Tbk) – a private company, listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange (IDX). The company is owned by several shareholders and partly owned by the individual investors.¹⁸ Thus, in contrast to *Media Indonesia* and *Kompas*, there is no single owner who is in a position to influence the content of *Koran Tempo* or *Tempo* magazine. Although providing other services like printing and distributing paper, research marketing and data as well as journalism training, the Tempo Media Group's primary focus is publishing news in print and digital format (PT Tempo Inti Media Tbk).

Tempo was initially established in 1971 at a time when power was shifting away from political parties to the capitalist bureaucracy.¹⁹ As a corollary, journalism was being depoliticised and commercialised. Thus, unlike previous newspapers,²⁰ *Tempo* was, from its establishment, not affiliated with a political party but was a business. According to Daniel Dhakidae (1991: 255), the foundation of *Tempo* "was the result of a business dealing between a group of capitalists and a group of young professional journalists". When *Tempo* was founded in 1971 the Jaya Raya foundation provided the capital and the journalists recruited brought the professional skills needed to run a periodical. In 1974, due to *Tempo's* success,

¹⁸ Shareholders of PT Tempo Inti Media Tbk are: PT Graffiti Press (21.0169 per cent), PT Jaya Raya Utama (16.28 per cent), Yayasan Jaya Raya (8.54 per cent), Yayasan Karyawan Tempo (12.0865 per cent), Masyarakat (17.24 per cent); Yayasan Tempo 21 Juni (24.83 per cent) (PT Tempo Inti Media Tbk 2009: 42).

¹⁹ The most comprehensive analysis of *Tempo* is provided by Janet Steele 2005.

²⁰ For example, the establishment of *Sinar Harapan* was "politically induced", while the establishment of *Kompas* was "religiously motivated" (Dhakidae 1991: 255). Historically Indonesian newspapers had been affiliated with political parties and became industrialized only in the 1970s (Dhakidae 1991: 255, 272).

capital and journalists agreed to a shareholding split of fifty per cent held by Jaya Raya and fifty per cent divided between the journalists (Dhakidae 1991: 266).

This arrangement – embodied in the establishment of the shareholding company PT Grafiti Pers – was a novelty in journalist-capital relations and strengthened *Tempo's* independence (Dhakidae 1991: 267). However, the fifty per cent belonging to *Tempo* workers is represented by the shareholder PT Pikatan. Since PT Pikatan is owned by five main individual shareholders²¹ holding 70 shares each, *Tempo* is not really a worker-owned company (Dhakidae 1991: 268). Rather those journalists who gained the shares had changed from “journalist-workers to capitalist journalists” (Dhakidae 1991: 268) and thus became part of the capitalist class, or, in C. Wright Mills’ (1959) terms, capitalists who are simultaneously journalists. Christianto Wibisono, one of *Tempo's* founders, emphasizes that a journalist’s world view and interest changes by being promoted into a publisher and results in an imbalance between those journalists who own and those who do not.²² In this context it should also be noted that Fikri Jufri, *Tempo's* co-founder and former editor, is, together with *Kompas's* Jakob Oetama, among Indonesia’s 200 largest individual tax payers (Haryanto, 3 June 2002).

Tempo's philosophy is to “present news as factual, accurate, and balanced”²³ (PT Tempo Inti Media Tbk 2009: 41). Under the leadership of Goenawan Mohammad, co-founder and editor of *Tempo*, the magazine became Indonesia’s most trusted and influential news magazine. It is regarded as independent, credible,

²¹ Harjoko Trisnadi, Goenawan Mohamad, Fikri Jufri, Bur Rasuanto and Lukman Setiawan.

²² Christianto Wibisono, in *Jakarta-Jakarta, Majalah Berita Bergambar*, 29 October 1987, p.92 as quoted in Dhakidae 1991: 404.

²³ “menyajikan berita peristiwa secara faktual, akurat, berimbang”.

critical, investigative and objective. In contrast to *Kompas*, the language style of *Tempo* was “fresh” and “crisp” (Hill 2007: 89). During the authoritarian New Order, *Tempo* was banned twice, namely in 1982 and 1994, for criticising the government (PT Tempo Inti Media Tbk 2009: 41). *Tempo* remained banned until the demise of the New Order but re-established itself in late 1998. Since 2001 *Tempo* magazine has been published by PT Tempo Inti Media and diversified its products, including establishing a daily newspaper, *Koran Tempo*, in 2001 (PT Tempo Inti Media Tbk. 2009: 41-2). *Koran Tempo* has a daily circulation of an average of 203,000 and a readership of 223,666 per day.²⁴ Estimates over *Tempo*’s weekly circulation range from 180,000 (Lim 2012: 7) to 300,000 (Prayudi 2010: 41) with a claimed readership of 640,000 (Silaban 2012: 329).

The editorials of *Koran Tempo* and *Tempo* are determined by a weekly editorial meeting that is attended by representatives of the business divisions, chief editor, managing editor, bureau chief and senior editor of *Tempo* and *Koran Tempo* (Keller 2009: 64). Before discussing and planning the themes of forthcoming editorials, the editorials of the previous week’s edition are evaluated. The editorials are written by chief editors and senior editors.²⁵

Limitations

Since I was unable to obtain transcripts from speeches and statements of individuals involved in the case studies under investigation I rely on information as published

²⁴ Compiled from various sources. See Appendix A for details.

²⁵ I attended some of those meetings during fieldwork (April and May 2010).

in the media. Chapters two and four are thus limited to an analysis of statements made by the participants and commentators as published by the media. Even though a particular statement by the president (for example, that a scandal's investigative committee was illegally constituted) may be printed by all mainstream news media simply because it was deemed newsworthy, each particular newspaper will determine how such news is presented and which part of the statement or comment is chosen for publication or omission. These differences were obvious in the analysis and show that the media are clearly actors in the scandals analysed. Because of this, the second part of each case study (chapters three and five) focuses only on selected publications. Thus the study is limited to particular national print media.

Chapter outlines

This introduction has briefly outlined the major questions at the core of the thesis, together with the focus, the methodology and the outline of this study. Chapter one, which follows next, provides the foundation for the rest of the study. It highlights the lingering dominance of the politico-business elite as well as their compositional continuity within Indonesia's democracy. By drawing on C. Wright Mills' power elite (1959) and Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model (1988) the chapter conceptualises the terms 'elite', 'media' and their various forms of inter-relationship as well as the implications of this interlock for intra-elite power struggles. It

establishes the value of scandal as an analytical focus for the study of media-elite interactions.

Chapter two argues that Buloggate is related to an intra-elite power struggle and rooted in the disaffection over President Wahid's actions to marginalise those political parties that had supported his presidential election, restricting their access to government resources. It demonstrates how opposing legislators utilized the media to implicate President Wahid in Buloggate, and respectively, how President Wahid and his political party PKB, utilized the media for their defence. It establishes that Wahid's ability to engage the media positively during the scandal was thwarted by the parliament's and the media's ability to cover their multiple interests behind the veneer of exercising their commonly-perceived watchdog-function towards the government. This enabled Wahid's opponents successfully to use the jargon of press freedom and democracy against Wahid. By contrast, arguments and actions made by Wahid and his supporters – like questioning the legality and authority of the parliamentary inquiry into Buloggate, the occupation of the *Jawa Pos* offices' by a civilian militia organisation (Barisan Seberguna, Banser) associated with Wahid's religious organisation Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) following Buloggate's disclosure, and Wahid's repeated criticism of the media – resulted in the distortion of Wahid's relationship with the media and raised doubts about his commitment to press freedom and democracy.²⁶

²⁶ For further information on the NU see, for example, Jones 1984; Fealy and Barton 1996; Porter 2002: 105-128; Bush 2009. Abdurrahman Wahid had chaired the NU for 15 years (1984-1999) before becoming President. On Abdurrahman Wahid's relationship with the NU see, for example, Greg Barton's biography of Abdurrahman Wahid (2002) and Douglas Ramage 1995: 45-74.

Chapter three focus on the media's interests. Its first part shows how *Kompas*, *Media Indonesia*, and *Republika* commented on Buloggate, and explains their respective stances in the scandal by disentangling their vested interests. The second part examines Aryantigate and the underlying interests of four weekly magazines in covering the scandal. This chapter demonstrates and explains the different positions of particular media organisations on Buloggate and Aryantigate. The analysis of editorial commentary during Buloggate establishes that *Media Indonesia* was critical while maintaining an aura of neutrality, that *Kompas* showed sympathy for Wahid, and that *Republika* was explicitly opposed to Wahid. The example of Aryantigate illustrates that the media adopt principles of press freedom and journalistic ethics to justify their decision on whether to publish a scandal or not. Although the editors of the magazines that published the Aryantigate story explicitly or implicitly admitted that profit-making played a role, none of them admitted that other factors like ownership or ideology might have influenced their respective coverage of the scandal. However, in the case of Aryantigate, the media's opportunities to promote their interests were limited by the fact that there was not much interest in the case and thus not enough supply of information to keep the scandal in the headlines. Overall, this chapter establishes that a particular media organisation's interest in Buloggate and Aryantigate, and how the scandal was covered, depended on ownership, professional interests, ideology, personal affiliation or a combination thereof.

Chapter four argues that the Bank Century scandal was an intra-elite power struggle over key positions and access to political resources, and analyses how those involved in the scandal and its investigation both skilfully utilized the media to

pursue their causes. It establishes that Centurygate was rooted in the political jockeying before and after the 2009 elections, and that the elite with its various contesting factions incorporated the media in their power struggle through various means.

Chapter five demonstrates and explains the different positions of *Kompas*, *Media Indonesia*, *Koran Tempo*, and *Tempo* magazine in the Bank Century scandal. The analysis of editorial commentary establishes that *Media Indonesia* was opposed to the bailout and to President Yudhoyono, *Kompas* retained a neutral position on the scandal but was supportive of the Yudhoyono-Boediono government, and that *Koran Tempo* and *Tempo* magazine (both owned by the same media group, PT Tempo Inti Media Tbk) supported the bailout, Boediono and Sri Mulyani. In sum, this chapter establishes that the publications' different positions can be best explained through the politico-business interests and ideological affiliations of their respective owners or prominent (former and current) editors.

Finally, the conclusion summarises the empirical findings and addresses the contribution this thesis makes to the role of the media in post-authoritarian Indonesia.

This thesis aims to provide five key contributions. First, it contributes to an understanding of how Indonesia's politico-business elite harnesses the concept of press freedom for their own political and economic interests. It provides insights into how this elite has incorporated the media into their power struggles over key positions in political institutions and political resources, and why scandals have become an opportunity to change the composition of a democratically elected government. Second, it shows that the heterogeneous and mostly privately owned

media companies positioned themselves as actors in the intra-elite contestations. Indeed, the empirical part of this thesis establishes that during those political scandals the owners or prominent editors of particular media organisations, either consciously or otherwise, have formed temporary coalitions with particular elite factions based on shared interests defined by structural conditions and personal relations. Thirdly, this thesis contributes to an understanding of the power relations among the commercial media and the politico-business elite. Fourthly, this dissertation contributes to an understanding of how and why the Indonesian commercial media operate in the way do. Finally, this thesis contributes to the broader literature on the political role of the media in post-authoritarian regimes, and thus has applicability far beyond Indonesia.

1 Democracy and the elite

Introduction

This chapter argues that the commercial mainstream media in Indonesia have primarily served the interests of those with political and economic power, and that press freedom has been exploited by this political and business elite. This is due to the structural and personal interrelation between the politico-business elite and Indonesia's mainstream media, and the location of both this elite and the media within capitalist market structures. Thus, the way the media operate in Indonesia's democracy mirrors the way the media operate in many other democracies, including long established democracies like the United States. However, as pointed out by Herman and Chomsky (1988: xii, 302) the media do have room for a range of different opinions in times of elite dissent as long as the overall system is not endangered. Crucially, the media are not just sites for those intra-elite power struggles but also actors within which an owner's and prominent editor's vested interests may be reflected. Thus, despite their interdependency with the politico-business elite the heterogeneous and mostly privately owned media play a key role in redistributing and mediating power among the elite beyond election times.

This chapter provides the foundation for the rest of the thesis by establishing the analytical framework for the study of media-elite interactions in the context of scandal. Firstly, it clarifies concepts such as democracy, elite and media in the Indonesian context. Secondly, it analyses the terms of the relationship between the media and the elite. Thirdly, it argues for the value of scandal as an analytical focus

for the study of media-elite interactions. This is achieved over seven sections, following this introduction.

Section 1.1 examines the political system, more specifically the kind of democracy, within which the media operate in Indonesia. It establishes that elites or oligarchs from the former New Order regime play a dominant role in Indonesia's electoral democracy. Following the conceptualisation of the Indonesian politico-business elite in terms of Mills' power elite in section 1.2, section 1.3 explains the linkage between the media and the politico-business elite, and the various forms this linkage takes. Section 1.4 conceptualises the commercial mainstream news media and their interests. Section 1.5 establishes the power relationship between the media and the elite as contingent and dynamic. Section 1.6 introduces scandal as an analytical focus and highlights its value for the study of media-elite interactions.

1.1 What kind of democracy?

The views on what has emerged after the New Order's breakdown are diverse and contested (Aspinall and Mietzner 2010: 1; Robison 2002). Even though there have been routine elections since 1999 and legally guaranteed press freedom, Indonesia lacks several other characteristics of liberal democracies. Indeed, elections alone do not guarantee compliance with the 'rule of law', which is crucial for a working liberal democracy (Jayasuriya 2001: 93; Lynn-Jones 1998). Indonesia still has problems with law enforcement and the supremacy of the law (Ikrar Nusa Bhakti 2004: 195). So far, the judiciary as an institution has managed to resist efforts to

impose tighter scrutiny upon it. Due to systematic and institutionalized corruption within the judiciary the Indonesian justice system is often described as a 'mafia hukum' (judicial mafia) (Butt and Lindsey 2011: 189, 212). Consequently, an independent judiciary, legal certainty and equality before the law are not a given (Stockmann 2009: 71).

Parliamentarians are widely perceived as corrupt and neglecting their proper duties while expanding their wealth and privileges (Dick and Mulholland 2011: 79-83).²⁷ Disaffection with the performance of political parties and their representatives in the legislature is a global phenomenon. However, in contrast to long established democracies, Indonesia's political parties are not well-institutionalized and remain unpredictable (Tomsa 2010a: 158).²⁸ Robison and Hadiz (2004: 228) describe political parties as 'tactical alliances', that lack 'aggregating' and 'articulating' functions. Such parties are primarily a vehicle for power (Robison and Hadiz 2004: 228) rather than an expression of shared ideology.²⁹ Since membership

²⁷ For further information on Indonesia's parliament see, for example, Sherlock 2010; Ziegenhain 2008.

²⁸ For further information on political parties see, for example, Tomsa 2008, 2014; Mietzner 2013; Ufen 2006, 2010.

²⁹ This view is supported by the high fluidity of personnel between parties and the formation of political parties by former New Order elites. After being defeated by Aburizal Bakrie in the 2009 Golkar chairmanship elections, Surya Paloh and Yuddy Chrisnandi soon left the party. Golkar's former advisory board chairman Surya Paloh joined Hanura and set up his own mass organization Nasional Demokrat (NASDEM) which subsequently became its own political party. Yuddy Chrisnandi also joined Hanura. In February 2009 he was recruited to Hanura's central board and named party chairman for the election campaign team (Bapilu). Former PKB chairman AS Hikam and former PAN member Samuel Kotto were also appointed to Hanura's leadership board. After Fuad Bawazier, a business tycoon and former finance minister under Suharto, was defeated in the 2005 PAN chairmanship elections, he left PAN and joined Wiranto's Hanura where he soon became deputy chairman. Party switching ahead of local elections has also become common (The Jakarta Post, 12 March 2015). Dede Jusuf, for example, who became West Java deputy governor with the support of PAN, switched to Partai Demokrat in order to increase his chances in the run for West Java's governorship. Bandung mayor Dada Rosada switched from Golkar to Partai Demokrat for the same reason. These "chameleon-like changes in the loyalties of the country's political elite" (The Jakarta Post, 15 April 2011) highlight the politician's blatant and ubiquitous opportunism.

fees and public funding are mostly trifling, political parties rely on external funding and are deeply entrenched in 'money politics'³⁰ in order to cover their expenses (Ufen 2006: 21; Mietzner 2007, 2013).

Regarding the non-state sector, weak labour and workers' organizations as well as a largely disorganized civil society were unable to secure influence within the political process after Suharto's fall. Furthermore, and in contrast to democratisation processes in Western Europe, bonds between organized labour and the middle class never strengthened (Robison and Hadiz 2004: 121).

It is also instructive that in Western European history, reforms guaranteeing such civil rights as freedom of speech and association as well as rule of law, and those dealing with factory acts and labour laws, often preceded the establishment of actual democratic systems (Robison and Hadiz 2004: 135).

To differentiate regimes with such democratic deficits from liberal democracies (Tomsa 2008: 10), Indonesia has been qualified as fluctuating between 'collusive democracy' and 'delegative democracy' (Slater 2004), 'patrimonial democracy' (Webber 2006: 397), 'patronage democracy' (Van Klinken 2006); 'oligarchic democracy' (Törnquist 2006: 247), 'low-quality democracy' (Mietzner 2008: 254) and 'criminal democracy' (Winters 2011: 142). Webber's (2006) description of Indonesia as 'patrimonial democracy' points out that patrimonial practices, most notably in the form of corruption, have survived Indonesia's transition. In short, the political system has changed but patrimonial practices nurtured and protected by powerful

³⁰ That is "a political situation or system in which a politician will promote the interests of a particular interest group in return for financial support (Oxford English Dictionary 2002). In Indonesia, money politics includes receiving illicit funds for political campaigns from wealthy individuals with vested interests and vote buying during elections. For further information see, for example, Aspinall and Sukmajati 2016; Hidayat 2009: 129-32; Mietzner 2007, 2013.

interests during Suharto's New Order persist. Likewise, and following Crouch's (1979) description of the New Order as a patrimonial system, Van Klinken (2009) conceives Indonesia as a 'patronage democracy'.

Yet, regardless of which theoretical approaches or concepts scholars have applied in order to explain Indonesia's democratic transition and what has emerged after 1998, scholars generally acknowledge the lingering dominance of elites or oligarchs as well as their compositional continuity within Indonesia's democracy. They also point out that elections have become a key means by which those individuals compete for power.

This insight is expressed most profoundly by scholars (Robison and Hadiz 2004; Winters 2011) applying the concept of oligarchy as an explanatory framework to post-Suharto Indonesia. Robison and Hadiz (2004), for example, argue that the old politico-business oligarchy survived the decline of the New Order, and managed to reorganise their power. In other words, the reform agenda and the new democratic institutions have been hijacked by those who were already powerful during the New Order. Thus, even though the regime changed from an authoritarian state into a democracy, politics remains dominated by the politico-business oligarchy which has adjusted its political *modus operandi* to "a democracy that is both decentralized and based on electoral politics" (Robison and Hadiz 2013: 55). Winters (2013: 18-9) concurs with this view and points out:

Although oligarchic and elite continuity was nearly 100 per cent, two things had changed. One was that the actors at the top had to adapt to the new democratic game. Not only did they do this with relative ease, but they were better positioned than anyone else to capture and dominate Indonesia's money-driven electoral politics . . . The other thing that changed when the New Order ended, however, is that Indonesia went practically overnight from having Suharto to constrain oligarchs to having to rely on the country's debilitated legal infrastructure to do the job.

Furthermore, Robison and Hadiz (2004, 2013) and Winters (2011, 2013) share the view that the Asian economic crisis of 1997-98 led to growing tensions between Suharto on the one hand and oligarchs and elites on the other, in which the latter group abandoned Suharto in order to guarantee their survival (Robison and Hadiz 2004: 166; Winters 2013: 18). These scholars agree that, as a consequence, the former New Order oligarchy has not been undermined by democracy but rather adjusted itself to the new system of electoral democracy as a means to perpetuate and justify its dominance.

The adoption of democracy

The nature of Indonesia's transition to democracy and the legacy of the New Order have contributed to the elite's ongoing dominance in post-Suharto Indonesia. When the collapse of the authoritarian New Order appeared to be inevitable, former allies turned against Suharto and negotiated a compromise with the moderate opposition leaders. Presidential power was transferred to B.J. Habibie, Suharto's former *protégé*, who announced elections for 1999. However, it is crucial here that the mainstream dissident leaders Megawati Sukarnoputri, Abdurrahman Wahid and Amien Rais

preferred a deal with Suharto's former allies than with the popular student movement or external forces³¹ (Slater 2006: 209; Aspinall 2000: 334).

Thus, power was primarily redistributed among the elite, rather than to the masses. That the informal networks of the New Order regime survived after Suharto became increasingly obvious when the former New Order opponents – most notably Wahid, Megawati and Amien Rais – developed working relationships with the military and Golkar (Slater 2006: 209) and when former New Order military and businessmen turned into politicians.

This does not mean that nothing has changed or improved. Democracy brought elections and has generated some important political and civil rights. Several institutions (elections, political parties) and freedoms (freedom of the press, freedom of speech) that are directly linked to functioning democracies are now in place. However, the elite has proven to be pragmatic and flexible in adapting to new circumstances to maintain their power and the prevailing division of society under the new circumstances (Robison and Hadiz 2004: 166). In contrast to the New Order, the elite's power is now legitimized through democratic means. Thus, as stated by Higley (2010: 89):

Like earlier ideologies, democracy is a device used by elites to justify and mobilize support for their rule or aspirations to rule.

Calls for democracy were voiced from inside and outside Indonesia long before Suharto's fall (Aspinall 2000; Eklöf 1999). But it was the 1997-98 economic crisis that provided the context within which social forces gained the strength to unravel elite

³¹ Those who were not part of the New Order parliament and government, viz. from outside the executive and legislative.

loyalties and when the elite began to respond to the masses rather than to one another. Thus, the adoption of democracy and Suharto's overthrow was primarily a pragmatic choice that corresponded with the interests of the masses (the majority of the Indonesian non-elite) and the international community (represented by such institutions as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank) (Higley 2010: 79). The elite adapted to the new system, because it was the only option available at that time of economic crisis that could ensure their survival (Robsion and Hadiz 2004: 167-82).

The central premises of democratic elitism – “a representative system with limited citizen involvement, the existence of political elites, and elite autonomy in governing” (Borchert 2010: 29) – have been incorporated in post-Suharto Indonesia's political system. Thus, instead of thinking about which type or subtype of democracy might best describe Indonesia's political system, Schumpeter's definition of democracy seems to be a cogent concept to describe post-Suharto Indonesia.

Schumpeter's theory of democracy derives from a critique of the discrepancy between the actual practice of democracy and the classic understanding of democracy.³² In doing so, Schumpeter (1976: 250) establishes an ideal type which he calls ‘the classical doctrine of democracy’:

[T]he democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realizes the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the selection of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will.

³² Schumpeter's definition of democracy derives from dissatisfaction with existing conceptions of democracy that are incapable of describing real world conditions.

He then compares this definition with the ways democracies actually work and finds that, first, there does not, and cannot, exist any common will towards a common good; and second, that the ordinary citizen is not sufficiently competent to fulfil the role stipulated for him or her by 'the classical doctrine of democracy'. Given these 'shortcomings' Schumpeter (1976: 269) outlines another theory of democracy:

[T]he democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote.

Within that definition the emphasis is moved away from the people's function of deciding on issues towards democracy's function of producing a government and competition for power within the elite. In short, the electorate can decide which elite rules, but cannot change the fact that power is always exercised by an elite.

Robison's (2002: 107) argument, from a Marxist perspective, that "the form of democracy that appears most functional for Indonesia's bourgeoisie is that defined by money politics, a parliament and party system that is an auction house for the wealthy and powerful", in effect, describes one such form of elite rule. In a similar vein Winters (2011: 180) describes Indonesia as staggering

in the direction of a poorly functioning ruling oligarchy, organized as an electoral democracy, in which the only actors who can dominate the political stage are oligarchs with massive personal wealth, and elites with a capacity to attract or extract sizeable resources from the state. The result is a criminal democracy in which untamed oligarchs compete politically through elections.

Similar conditions – where (democratic) institutions provide potential means for former authoritarian elites to present themselves to the public as democrats and

reformers – can be found elsewhere. For example, as Milton (2000: 119) argues, in post-communist societies: “The terms have obviously changed – anti-communism now dominates, but the effective control by a small elite remains, and the bulk of the public are isolated from participation in the media and politics”.

Political Competition

Electoral politics provide a vivid example for ongoing elite dominance and the conversion of wealth into political influence. Elections are now held regularly on national and local level. Theoretically, everybody who wishes to compete in the elections has equal opportunity to do so. Yet this opportunity is restricted by structural conditions. There are more political parties and leaders from whom to choose. But who are they? In general, they are those who have funds and connections. Since the New Order’s demise did not change the distribution of power within society at large, not many new faces showed up. In other words, personnel continuities – albeit shifting positions and roles – are obvious. A look on the backgrounds of the candidates who participated in the last four presidential elections – 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014 – supports that view. In the 2004 and 2009 presidential elections there were respectively five and three presidential–vice-presidential pairs from which to choose. All of the candidates were prominent members of the former New Order elite. The 2014 presidential election was an exemption where one of the candidates – Joko Widodo – was not a member of the former New Order elite. However, many people with whom he surrounded himself did have links to the New Order (The Jakarta Globe, 23 July 2014).

Further evidence of the argument that Indonesian politics has remained elitist in nature can be found on the local level. In the context of direct local elections Mietzner (2006a) points out that most of the candidates running for office originate from the former New Order elite. Thus, direct elections at the local level did not result in a displacement of the New Order elite. Before Law No 32/2004 on direct elections of local government heads was passed in 2004, governors, regents and mayors had been elected by their respective legislature. This process happened behind closed doors and the outcome could be determined by 'money politics'. In order to prevent this practice and to make the electoral process more transparent Law No 32/2004 handed the authority to vote over to the people who now directly elect their local government heads. However, contrary to the initial hope that this would decrease money politics, the cost of winning public office exploded dramatically. One of the reasons is that, according to the new law, candidates have to be nominated by a political party prior to taking part in the election. The nomination process resembles an auction: those with the highest bid are nominated. The new laws not only have the effect that candidates have to 'donate' money to local parties and individual politicians, but also additionally they have to raise funds to finance their election campaign (Mietzner 2006a).

Money politics is so deeply entrenched in the functioning of Indonesia's democracy that Ufen (2010) writes of a commercialisation and commodification of politics. Indonesia's election campaigns are an expensive business. This is, for example, reflected in the PDI-P's electoral expenditure during national elections that rose from Rp 69.1 billion in 1999 (Mietzner 2013: 73) to Rp 720.4 billion in 2014 (Mietzner 2016: 92). Furthermore, spending on advertisements in television and

print media by political parties contesting in the legislature elections increased from Rp 33.66 billion in 1999 (Danial 2009: 175) to Rp 153.66 billion in 2004 (Badoh and Dahlan 2010: 48) and reached Rp 976.71 billion during the 2009 elections (Badoh and Dahlan 2010: 121).

The large amount of money needed in order to take part and succeed in the elections limits the ability to compete for office to an already wealthy and powerful minority. Indeed, Mietzner's (2006a) analysis of the socio-economic background of candidates running for office in 50 local elections that took place in 2005 reveals the following composition: career bureaucrats (36 per cent), businesspeople (28 per cent), party politicians/MPs (22 per cent), police and military officers (8 per cent), civil society figures (6 per cent) (Mietzner 2010: 178-9, 190). On the national level the percentage of legislators owning or managing businesses has increased by 9 per cent in a decade to reach 54 per cent in 2009 (Mietzner 2013: 95).

The opportunity to compete in both national and local elections is further constrained by the educational requirement of having at least a senior high school degree. Thus, the extent to which individuals can participate in local elections is influenced by great inequalities of wealth and education. Thus, what changed are the rules of the selection process but not the composition of the candidates from which to choose. Again, the citizen's role is restricted to the acceptance or rejection of competing political leaders.

Since the political system is monopolized by the elite, they decide on the personnel, interests and issues to be included. This concentration of power and resources within the elite prevents ordinary people from entering politics. As a result, the interests of the vast majority of the population, whether workers, middle

classes, peasants, women or the urban poor, environmental and or human rights activists, are hardly represented (Törnquist 2008) and “[T]he role of the masses is [only] to ratify elite decisions” (McChesney 2008: 371).

Having thus acknowledged the dominance of elites and oligarchs within Indonesia’s electoral democracy, the following discussion focuses on how those terms are understood and used in this thesis.

Elites and oligarchs

Robison and Hadiz (2004) who regard oligarchy “as a system of power relations that enables the concentration of wealth and authority and its collective defense” (2013: 37) do not focus on individual actors.³³ Consequently, they do not define ‘elites’ and ‘oligarchs’ and use both terms more or less interchangeably. Winters (2011: 6) whose concept of oligarchy emphasises individual actors defines oligarchs as “actors who command and control massive concentrations of material resources that can be deployed to defend or enhance their personal wealth and exclusive social position”. It is this possession and control of material power (wealth) that defines and

³³ In *Reorganising Power* (2004) Robison and Hadiz understand oligarchy in terms of the following definition: “Any system of government in which virtually all political power is held by a very small number of wealthy people who shape public policy primarily to benefit themselves financially through direct subsidies to their agricultural estates or business firms, lucrative government contracts, and protectionist measures aimed at damaging their economic competitors—while displaying little or no concern for the broader interests of the rest of the citizenry. “Oligarchy” is also used as a collective term to denote all the individual members of the small corrupt ruling group in such a system. The term always has a negative or derogatory connotation in both contemporary and classical usage.” (The original source is Paul M. Johnson, Dept of Political Science, Auburn University, cited on 9 August 2003. <http://www.auburn.edu/~johnspm/gloss/>).

distinguishes oligarchs from elites who exercise their minority influence based on non-material power resources.³⁴ However, Winters (2011: 9) argues:

Oligarchs can have elite forms of power stacked on top of or blended with their defining material foundation. This would make them simultaneously oligarchs and elites. But no elite can be an oligarch in the absence of holding and personally deploying massive material power.³⁵

In the Indonesian case, as acknowledged by Winters (2013: 16), any distinction between elites and oligarchs is often blurred. For example, oligarchs can be directly engaged in rule by operating within party institutions and competing for office. They can also use their wealth to support individuals to gain political office or lift them to the helm of organisations. Elites holding those positions can become oligarchs through the accumulation of wealth. Taking this observation into account, this study uses the term 'oligarch' to refer to a key member of Indonesia's politically active business elite.³⁶ In short, oligarchs are subsumed under the concept of elite.³⁷ This subordination of oligarchs under the concept of elite allows me to draw on insights of elite theory. As the following section will discuss, C. Wright Mills' power

³⁴ Those are formal political rights, official positions in government or at the helm of organizations, coercive power, and mobilizational power (Winters 2011: 12-3).

³⁵ The categories of oligarch and elite can be layered upon each other, with oligarchic power potentially leading to elite power (and vice versa). But there is no necessary overlap. Many oligarchs have only material power resources at their disposal, and many elites never amass empowering fortunes (Winters 2013: 15).

³⁶ The majority of scholarship on post-Suharto Indonesia using the terms elite(s) and oligarch(s) (either in plural or singular) in their work does not provide a clear cut definition of both terms and tend to conflate the work of Robison and Hadiz (2004; 2013) and Winters (2011; 2013) under the so-called 'oligarchy thesis' without acknowledging their fundamentally different definition of oligarchy.

³⁷ However, it should be noted here that Winters explicitly rejects the formulation of oligarchs being "a special category of economic elites" (Winters 2011: 8). This is rooted in Winters' theoretical conceptualisation of 'oligarchy' as distinctive to 'elite theory' (see Winters 2011: 1-32).

elite thesis does not only resonate in many aspects with the Indonesian elite³⁸ but also enables me to disentangle media-elite linkages beyond issues of media ownership.

1.2 Conceptualising the Indonesian politico-business elite

For C. Wright Mills (1959: 6) the 'power elite' is a minority of individuals that occupy key positions in institutions that hold major national power. He writes:

Within American society, major national power now resides in the economic, the political, and the military domains. Other institutions seem off to the side of modern history, and, on occasion, duly subordinated to these).

It is that position at the apex of economic, military and political institutions that enables them to make decisions of major consequence and ensure that their interests prevail over all others (Mills 1959: 3-4, 6). Members of the power elite – chosen through co-optation and socialization – move within and between these three interlocked institutional structures. This interchangeability of power positions is based on bureaucratic requirements that resulted in the production of an almost uniform world view among them (Mills 1959: 8, 283, 287, 289). With this emphasis on institutional factors Mills highlights that the elite are not simply those who have the most, but those who are in positions that enable them to exercise power. Mills also considers and locates other conceptions of the elite – “the similarity of its personnel, and their personal and official relations with one another, upon their

³⁸ This was brought to my attention by William Case (2003) who in his article *Interlocking Elites in Southeast Asia* pointed out that many aspects of Mills' power elite conform to Southeast Asia's, including Indonesia's, national elite.

social and psychological affinities" – within his definition of the power elite. Thus, "origin, career, and style of life of each of the types of circle whose members compose the power elite" do inform "the personal and social basis of the power elite's unity" (Mills 1959: 278).

Mills, however, insisted that there were divisions and quarrels among the parts of the power elite. Within the power elite, he argued, "factions do exist; there are conflicts of policy; individual ambitions do clash" (Mills 1959: 283). Nevertheless, he believed that the "internal discipline" and the "community of interests" of these factions and individuals were more powerful than the divisions among them (Mills 1959: 283). Thus, Mills did not think of the power elite as a homogenous or coherent group. Rather, there are struggles of dominance among the instituted elite and their over time shifting interests (Mills 1959: 276, 277).

As pointed out by Case (2003) various aspects of Mills' power elite thesis can also be applied to Indonesia's elite. In particular, this applies to the interlocking of positions across institutions as well as Mills' perception of the elite not as a cohesive group but divided by a diversity of interests. Indeed, numerous scholars have highlighted that the Indonesian elite has never been fully unified and that factions within the elite have always existed (Crouch 1979; Robison and Hadiz 2004: 26-7; Winters 2011; Barker 2008; Case 2009: 656; Slater 2006: 212). During the authoritarian New Order, elite fractions frequently plotted against one another, and, at times, also worked to undermine or confront Suharto's power. However, Suharto was very skilful in managing the elite:

Suharto first nurtured factional rivalries between different elites, dividing military generals, top bureaucrats and business tycoons along functional, religious and ethnic lines. However, he then dispensed patronage and sanctions in ways that dampened leadership challenges and inter-elite struggles (Case 2000: 55)

Indonesia's post-authoritarian elite is more heterogenous and dispersed than during the New Order. In particular, decentralisation and elections have enabled more diverse sections of the Indonesian elite to gain powerful positions (Barker 2008: 537). The elite – either fractions or individuals – is in contestation, but within boundaries since all of them fear nothing more than their removal from power. Based on overwhelmingly pragmatic reasons, the Indonesian elite constantly defines and re-defines relations within the elite and between the elite and non-elites. In order to defend their status and interests against each other the elite forms alliances “that range across ruling parties, bureaucracies, military forces, and business entities, they do so in order to counter similar alliances that are arrayed against them, often instigating bitter, even murderous factionalism” (Case 2003: 250).

Moving between the institutions or simultaneously occupying key positions in various institutions as pointed out by Mills is not uncommon for the Indonesian elite. In the case of Indonesia, which transformed from an authoritarian state to a democracy, the elite not only shifted positions between pre-existing institutions but also entered the newly established democratic institutions. In the course of democratisation, power was redistributed among different institutions. Amongst the institutions whose power increased in relation to the government are political parties, the parliament and the media. In contrast, the military's power decreased.

This triggered some former military elites to move to other more powerful institutions. There are various examples of military men who entered politics. The most prominent examples are Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Wiranto and Prabowo Subianto, each of whom established their own political party.³⁹

In addition to moving between institutions, some members of the Indonesian elite are simultaneously businesspeople and politicians. The rise of businesspeople occupying key positions in political parties is no coincidence given the large cost of election campaigns. Indeed, in 2009 politicians with business backgrounds made up 54 per cent of the DPR (Mieztner 2013: 95). A similar situation can be observed in political parties where key positions are held by businesspeople. For example, in 2005 Soetrisno Bachir, a batik entrepreneur from Central Java, was elected as new PAN chairman. In the same year, Pramono Anung, former CEO of Yudistira Group, a mining and energy enterprise, became PDI-P's new secretary general. Arifin Panigoro, founder of the oil company Medco Energi Internasional, and former Lippo Bank executive Laksmana Sukardi are further examples of businesspeople turned politicians who became key figures in the PDI-P.

³⁹ This move enabled these three individuals, after their retirement from the military, to have a say in the parliament and also to run for presidency or vice-presidency. The Democratic Party (Partai Demokrat), Yudhoyono's presidential vehicle, was established in September 2001 (Partai Demokrat, n.d.). Having only ranked fifth in the 2004 legislative elections (7.5 per cent of the vote), it came first in the 2009 legislative elections (26.8 per cent of the vote). Despite its varied success in these legislative elections, Yudhoyono was successful in both presidential elections (Lansford 2014: 643-44). After being Golkar's presidential candidate and Megawati's running mate in the 2004 elections, Wiranto established Hanura in 2006 as his own 'presidential vehicle' (Lansford 2014: 645) after his failed bid in 2004 to win both the Golkar chairmanship and internal support for his presidential candidature (The Jakarta Post, 25 March 2014). Prabowo founded Gerindra in 2008 (Lansford 2014: 645). In the 2009 parliamentary elections Gerindra and Hanura won 4.5 per cent and 3.8 per cent respectively (Sherlock 2009). Although Wiranto and Prabowo had been unsuccessful in the presidential elections, Hanura and Gerindra gained a place in parliament and established themselves as opposition parties (Lübke 2010: 85).

The position of Golkar Chair, for example, has been held since 2004 by indigenous business tycoons, namely Jusuf Kalla and Aburizal Bakrie (Sugiarto 2006). The 2009 Golkar chairmanship elections – within which the price for one vote was estimated at between Rp 500 million and Rp 1 billion (Kompas.com, 6 September 2009) – was contested between two politico-businessmen, Aburizal Bakrie and Surya Paloh, each of whom owned a media company and utilized those to their advantage.

Furthermore, Mills also anticipated the importance of the mass media in the political campaign for office when stating “the politician must rely on the mass media, and access to these media is expensive.” During the 2004 presidential campaign the Yudhoyono-Kalla team, for example, had spent Rp 20.84 billion on advertising in television and print media (Badoh and Djani 2006: 97). This amount increased to Rp 232.58 billion when Yudhoyono paired with Boediono for his re-election in 2009 (Badoh and Dahlan 2010: 150-1). Crucially, however, Mills (1959: 315) links the rise the power elite rise with the transformation of the public into a mass-like society and argues that the mass media, i.e. the elite’s increased power over the media, were among those factors that contributed to this development:

[T]he media, as now organized and operated, are even more than a major cause of the transformation of America into a mass society. They are also among the most important of those increased means of power now at the disposal of elites of wealth and power; moreover, some of the higher agents of these media are themselves either among the elites or very important among their servants.)

This statement not only states that the media are recognized and used by the elite as a means of power. It also implies a linkage between the media and the elite, and is thus questioning the media’s democratic functions. In the Indonesian context, clear

distinctions between the politico-business elite and media organizations are sometimes impossible. This is particularly the case if the media owner holds a political office or has been presidential candidate. The nature of Indonesia's transition to democracy and the legacy of its socio-political history have produced special patterns of relationships between the media and the elite. In many cases the actors involved are the same organisations – and are even the same individuals – as under the New Order. In order to fully explicate this, the following section begins with an overview of the New Order media before elaborating on the various forms of media-elite linkages in post-authoritarian Indonesia.

1.3 The Indonesian mainstream media: Commercialisation and elite linkages

During the authoritarian New Order the media were heavily regulated by the government.⁴⁰ Whereas the broadcast media, *RRI*⁴¹ and *TVRI*⁴² were state-owned, the press belonged to the private sector (Kitley 2001: 260). The 1966 press law introduced a licensing system which was one of the most important means for the government to regulate media. The license (SIUPP⁴³) could be issued and

⁴⁰ The media were regulated by the 1966 and 1982 (revised) press laws that guaranteed the fundamental right of press freedom. However, the press law contained a number of restrictive articles, undermining this statutory right, and allowing the government considerable power over the media (Rüland 1998: 267; Kingsbury 2005: 126, 136).

⁴¹ Radio of the Republic of Indonesia; established in 1945.

⁴² Television of the Republic of Indonesia, established in 1962.

⁴³ With the 1982 revised press law the license's name changed from SIT to SIUPP.

withdrawn by the Ministry of Information, sometimes rather arbitrarily.⁴⁴ Extra-legal means used to intimidate the press included threatening phone calls (*budaya telepon*) from the military, the police or the civil service as well as the payment of 'hush money' (*budaya amplop*) (Romano 2003: 62; Kitley 2001: 258). Such legislation and control mechanisms forced journalists to self-censor. However, the media sometimes did report on politically sensitive news in an effort to increase sales, while avoiding the risk of license withdrawals (Gazali 2005: 25).

During the New Order the Indonesian press was transformed from being primarily a medium of political discourse to a commercially significant industry (Dhakidae 1991) or, alternatively from a 'partisan press' to a 'commercial press' (Sen and Hill 2007: 51-71). The New Order's enforced merger of opposition parties in 1973 and the annulment of a regulation stipulating that all newspapers had to be affiliated with a political party or mass organisation removed the influence of partisan politics from the press and encouraged its commercialisation. Those newspapers that had previously been bound by party connections were encouraged to seek new sponsors. Consequently, most of the media tried to reach a larger readership across all social, cultural and political differences to enhance their circulation and attract more advertisers. As the domestic economy began to expand, the companies increasingly used the press as an advertising medium for their

⁴⁴ In particular, political tensions between government and media led to license revocations. After the Malari riots in 1974, twelve publications were banned. Another conflict arose when the press reported extensively on 1977 student protests, which criticised the Suharto clan even calling for Suharto's resignation. The government responded in January 1978 with the closure of seven daily newspapers and seven student publications (Sen and Hill 2007: 53). In 1994 three leading weekly publications (*Tempo*, *Editor* and *DeTik*) were banned over a story about an internal government split over the purchase of 39 former East German warships by Research and Technology Minister B. J. Habibie (McCargo 1999).

products (Dhakidae 1991: 74; Hidayat 1999: 182). The press industry developed into a profitable business, in which the Suharto family and its cronies invested. In order to protect their business in the event of sudden license revocations, as happened in the mid-1970s, many press companies applied a strategy of diversification and reinvestment (Sen and Hill 2007: 57). This resulted in the development of huge press conglomerates and a decline in the number of media owners. In the mid-1990s the press industry was effectively controlled by 16 major press conglomerates (Haryanto, 23 August 1997),⁴⁵ out of which nine had close links to Golkar and the Palace (Sen and Hill 2007: 59).⁴⁶

The broadcast industry underwent a similar process of commercialization to the press. The government's abolition of the television monopoly in the 1990s and the introduction of private, commercial television channels were mainly based on economic considerations, aligned with the government's policies of economic liberalization and deregulation. In the late 1980s television had become the principal medium of information dissemination. It followed that manufacturers and distributors of products saw television as the most effective medium for reaching mass audiences. However, commercial advertising on the state television *TVRI* was prohibited. As the national economy grew there was pressure to permit advertising on TV, to expand the consumer market. Eventually, the government gave in to the interests of business and removed *TVRI*'s monopoly, opening television

⁴⁵ These were: Kompas Gramedia Grup, Grafiti Grup, Media Indonesia Grup, Jawa Pos Grup, Femina Grup, Sinar Kasih Grup, Bakrie Grup, Cipta Lamtoro Gung Grup, Bimantara Grup, A Latief Corporation Grup, Agung Laksono Grup, Gatra Grup, Subentra Grup, Suara Merdeka Grup, Pos Kota Grup, dan Republika Grup (Haryanto, 23 August 1997).

⁴⁶ Between June 1994 and May 1998 only individuals or firms with close ties to the political establishment received TV licenses, with all five licenses going to Suharto's family and friends (Sen and Hill 2000: 60-1).

broadcasting to private investment. In 1989, *RCTI*, the first commercially funded channel went on the air. Others followed soon: *SCTV* (1989), *TPI* (1990), *ANTeve* (1993) and *Indosiar* (1995) (Sen and Hill 2007: 111-16; Kitley 2000: 224-6). The private stations were independent only in financial terms. They were closely monitored by the Information Ministry and owned by individual members of the Suharto family and their cronies as part of their business empires (Sen and Hill 2007: 111-13). Due to this “pattern of vertical integration between the private media and the ruling elite” (Gazali 2004: 23) as well as the state’s control measures the majority of the commercial mainstream media supported the New Order regime until the months leading up to May 1998 when Suharto’s power structure collapsed after 32 years (Harsono 2000: 85).

After the fall of Suharto, the media were freed from government control (Kitley 2001: 256). Developments such as legally guaranteed press freedom, media liberalization and the simplification of the licence application procedure have resulted in a highly diversified media landscape. Yet recent studies (Armando 2014; Ida 2011; Haryanto 2011; Sudibyو and Patria 2013) have shown that media liberalisation since the Suharto period did not change the inherited concentration of media ownership in the hands of a small number of old players from the New Order era. Indeed, although the number of print media exploded from 289 by the end of the New Order to 1,881 (of which only 556 published regularly) in 2001 (Piper 2009: 3),⁴⁷ the print media industry remained dominated by huge media conglomerates⁴⁸ which had been established during the New Order. Regarding the

⁴⁷ By 2010 the number had dropped back to 1,076 (Wikan 2011: 2).

⁴⁸ Namely, Kompas Gramedia Group, Tempo Inti media, Jawa Pos Group, and Media Group.

television sector, five new national commercial television stations⁴⁹ entered the market, joining the six pre-existing TV stations (including the state channel *TVRI*). Most television stations, however, remained under the control of the Suharto family or cronies of the New Order regime (Ida 2011: 14). Over time, between 2007 and 2011, mergers and acquisitions have resulted in the concentration of ownership into five conglomerates that control all ten commercial television stations (Sudibyo and Patria 2013: 266; Nugroho et al. 2012: 58, Table 5.2.).⁵⁰ As Table 1.1 below shows, in 2011 the majority of Indonesia's media were controlled by twelve major media groups (Nugroho et al. 2012: 4). Thus, political and economic liberalisation has enabled the elite to retain control over the commercial mainstream news media.

⁴⁹ Global TV, Lativi (TVOne), TV7 (Trans 7), TransTV, MetroTV.

⁵⁰ Those conglomerates and their respective television stations are: MNC Group (RCTI, MNCTV (previously named TPI), Global TV); EMTEK (SCTV, Indosiar Visual Mandiri), CT Group (TransTV, Trans7), Visi Media Asia (ANTV, TVOne), and Media Group (MetroTV) (Nugroho et al. 2012: 58, Table 5.2.).

Table 1.1: Major media groups in Indonesia: 2011⁵¹

Group	TV	Radio	Print Media	Online Media	Other businesses ⁵²	Principal Owner
Global Mediacomm (MNC)	20 national: <i>RCTI, GlobalTV, MNCTV</i> (formerly <i>TPI</i>)	22	7 e.g. <i>Seputar Indonesia</i>	1	Content production, Content Distribution, Talent Management	Hary Tanoesoedibjo
Jawa Pos Group	20	n/a	171 e.g. <i>Jawa Pos, Rakyat Merdeka</i>	1	Paper Mills, Printing Plants, Power Plant	Dahlan Iskan, Azrul Ananda
Kelompok Kompas Gramedia	10	12	89 e.g. <i>Kompas</i>	2	Property, Bookstore chain, Manufacturing, Event Organiser, University	Jakob Oetama
Mahaka Media Group	2	19	19 e.g. <i>Republika</i>	n/a	Event Organiser, PR Consultant	Abdul Gani, Erick Thohir
Elang Mahkota Teknologi (EMTEK)	3 national: <i>SCTV, Indosiar Visual Mandiri</i> (formerly <i>Indosiar</i>)	n/a	n/a	1	Telecommunications and IT solutions	Sariatmaadja Family
CT Corp	2 national: <i>TransTV, Trans7</i>	n/a	n/a	1	Financial Services, Lifestyle and Entertainment, Natural resources, Property	Chairul Tanjung
Visi Media Asia	2 national: <i>ANTV, TVOne</i> (formerly <i>Lativi</i>)	n/a	n/a	1	Natural resources, network provider, Property	Bakrie & Brothers
Media Group	1 national: <i>MetroTV</i>	n/a	3 e.g. <i>Media Indonesia</i>	n/a	Property (Hotel)	Surya Paloh
MRA Media	n/a	11	16	n/a	Retail, Property, Food & Beverage, Automotive	Adiguna Soetowo & Soetikno Soedarjo
Femina Group	n/a	2	14	n/a	Talent, Agency, Publishing	Pia Alisjahbana
Tempo Inti Media	1	1	3 e.g. <i>Tempo, Koran Tempo</i>	1	Service sector	PT Grafiti Pers, PT Jaya Raya Utama, Yayasan Jaya Raya, Yayasan Tempo 21 Juni 1994, Yayasan Karyawan Tempo ⁵³
Beritasatu Media Holding	2	n/a	10 e.g. <i>Jakarta Globe, Suara Pembaruan</i>	1	Property, health services, cable TV, Internet service provider, University	Lippo Group

⁵¹ Source: Compiled from various sources: Nugroho et al. 2012: 39 (Table 4.1.), 58 (Table 5.2.); Haryanto 2011: 106-7 (Table 6.1.); Sudibyo and Patria 2013: 267-70 (Table 1.)

⁵² These are businesses run by the same owner/group owner.

⁵³ PT Tempo Inti Media Tbk 2009: 42.

Media-elite linkages through ownership

Some of those owning these media groups or holding key positions within them simultaneously hold key positions in political institutions or are affiliated with political parties or politicians. The most prominent examples of senior politicians, who simultaneously own media companies, are Aburizal Bakrie (Golkar Party chairman, *TVOne*, *ANTV*, *vivanews.com*) and Surya Paloh (Nasdem Party chairman and former Golkar politician, *MetroTV*, *Media Indonesia*).⁵⁴ As shown in numerous cases, both politico-businessmen have frequently used their media organizations for their own interests (Anwari 2013; Saragih 2009). Surya Paloh, for example, used his media organisation to campaign for his nomination as Golkar's presidential candidate in 2004 (Tempo, 5 April 2004). Bakrie, for example, uses his media empire to promote the view that the mud flow in Sidoarjo was a natural disaster and not caused by the Bakrie-owned company Lapindo Brantas while drilling for natural gas (Tapsell 2010: 8). For example, Bakrie-group owned TV-stations prefer to use the term 'Sidoarjo mud flow' (Lumpur Sidoarjo) when covering the disaster whereas, other stations (for example, *MetroTV*) use the term 'Lapindo mud flow' (Lumpur Lapindo) (Cahyadi and Uliyah 2011). However, that Bakrie and Paloh were using their respective media companies to their own advantage became most obvious when both were running for Golkar chairmanship in 2009 (Tapsell 2010: 5-6). Following the failure of his own presidential aspirations in 2014 Bakrie used his

⁵⁴ After Paloh lost the Golkar chairmanship elections against Aburizal Bakrie in October 2009, he co-founded the mass organization Nasional Demokrat (Nasdem) in early 2010. In 2011 a new political party called the Nasdem Party was established. Surya Paloh, who preferred to focus on the apolitical Nasdem organisation was not a board member of the political party at that time. However, Paloh funded the Nasdem party (The Jakarta Post, 25 July 2011) and eventually became Nasdem Party chairman in 2013.

media empire to support the Prabowo-Rajasa candidates while Paloh's media group supported the Jokowi-Kalla team (Tapsell 2014).

Hary Tanoesoedibjo, the president of MNC Group, also used his media empire to promote his interests in business and politics (Dhyatmika, 11 December 2014). His political ambitions started in 2011 when he took up the role as chairman or the board of experts in Nasdem Party. After a disagreement with party founder Surya Paloh, he joined Wiranto's Hanura in 2013 (The Jakarta Post, 19 February 2013). Simultaneously his media empire MNC switched allegiance from Nasdem to Hanura. When Tanoesoedibjo became Hanura's vice-presidential candidate he began to appear on various programs broadcast by his television stations promoting his candidacy and political party (Dhyatmika, 11 December 2014). However, when Hanura's poor showing in the legislative election did not allow its candidate pair to compete in the 2014 presidential elections, Tanoesoedibjo threw his support behind Prabowo's (Gerindra) candidacy.⁵⁵

Following the fall of the New Order Dahlan Iskan, owner of the Jawa Pos Group, became increasingly involved in politics. His involvement in provincial government businesses started in 1999 when he was appointed CEO of the Wira Group at the request of the East Java governor. In the June 2005 Surabaya mayoral election he reportedly sponsored (and financed) the candidature of Arif Afandi, former *Jawa Pos* chief editor (Ida 2011: 19- 20). On the national level he established

⁵⁵ See for example: The Jakarta Post, 25 March 2014; The Jakarta Globe, 21 February 2014; The Financial Times, 5 June 2014. Meanwhile, in February 2015, Tanoesoedibjo founded his own political party United Indonesia Party (Perindo, Partai Persatuan Indonesia) which draws on the MNC group to gain popularity and to support its interests (Tempo.co, 12 June 2015). Before the launch, Perindo was a mass organization founded by Tanoesoedibjo following his departure from the NasDem party in 2013 (Kompas.com, 7 February 2015).

links with Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and backed his presidency. In 2009 President Yudhoyono selected him as new president director of the state power utility PT PLN. Then, from October 2011 to October 2014 he was Indonesia's minister for State-owned enterprises. Encouraged by the Democratic Party and its chairman President Yudhoyono, Dahlan Iskan joined the Democratic Party's presidential convention as an independent candidate to battle for his nomination as the party's presidential candidate for the 2014 elections (The Jakarta Globe, 26 August 2013).⁵⁶ Even though Dahlan Iskan won the convention he was not named as the Democratic Party's presidential candidate. This was related to his low personal popularity compared to other leading presidential candidates and the Democratic Party's decision to not field its own presidential candidate following its low voter turnout during the 2014 legislative elections (The Jakarta Post, 17 May 2014; Aspinall and Mietzner 2014: 350).⁵⁷ Being out of the race for the presidency himself Dahlan Iskan rallied his media empire behind Jokowi-Kalla (Tapsell 2014; The Financial Times, 5 June 2014), opposing Prabowo-Rajasa whose candidacy was supported by the Democratic Party (Kompas.com, 31 May 2014).⁵⁸

⁵⁶ The Democratic Party's decision to select its candidate for the 2014 presidential election through an eight month convention (from September 2013 until April 2014) – similar to an US-style presidential primary election but open to non-party members to compete – was strategy to determine the most publicly appealing figure as its presidential candidate while simultaneously raising the Democratic Party's electability, popularity and acceptability. For further information on the Democratic Party's convention see, for example, RSIS, 20 March 2014; Fionna 2013; Syofyan, 4 September 2013.

⁵⁷ According to opinion polls announced by the Democratic Party Dahlan Iskan would get only 2 to 2.9 per cent of the vote if he were to stand in the presidential race, whereas PDI-P's Jokowi and Gerindra's Prabowo would get 29 to 45 per cent and 29 to 35 per cent of the vote, respectively (The Jakarta Post, 17 May 2014).

⁵⁸ Ultimately, following considerations to form a coalition with Golkar to field Pramono Edhie Wibowo, who came second in the in the Democratic Party's presidential convention (The Jakarta Post, 17 May 2014), as vice-presidential running mate to Golkar's Aburizal Bakrie (The Jakarta Post, 18 May 2014), the Democratic Party decided to support the candidacy of Prabowo-Rajasa.

Chairul Tanjung, whose company CT Corporation owns the popular online platform *Detik.com* and two national television stations (*TransTV* and *Trans7*), is reportedly close to Yudhoyono and the Democratic Party (Winters 2013: 28). Chairul Tanjung's closeness to Yudhoyono crystallised in 2014 when he became the Democratic Party's spokesperson and was appointed coordinating minister for economics (Tapsell 2015: 33).⁵⁹ Following this appointment in May 2014 he officially stepped down from his position in CT Corp in order to prevent a conflict of interest and to maintain the appearance of good governance (The Jakarta Post, 16 May 2014).

Since the different media groups protect the interests of their owners and shareholders, media ownership is considered to be the primary means to control media institutions and content. Ownership also provides unlimited media access and attention (Shoemaker and Reese 1996: 232). Thus, there are also a number of politicians who went into the media business. In 2006, for example, then President Yudhoyono established *Jurnal Nasional*, a daily broadsheet paper closely linked to the Democratic Party (Tapsell 2012: 235; The Jakarta Post, 26 February 2009).

Besides highlighting such media-elite linkages, this short overview has shown the shifting interests and alliances of media conglomerates, and, as in the example of the 2014 presidential elections, that media ownership does not automatically translate into political success. However, as the following section will show, examples of media-elite linkages take various forms and go beyond ownership.

⁵⁹ President Yudhoyono appointed Tanjung to replace Hatta Rajasa, who had resigned to take part in Indonesia's 2014 presidential election.

Media-elite linkages beyond ownership

Some journalists and editors supported particular candidates during elections or became candidates themselves. August Parengkuan, senior editor of *Kompas*, for example, joined the team Mega Center, a think tank to support the official campaign team for the President/Vice-President candidate pair of Megawati Sukarnoputri (PDI-P) – Hasyim Muzadi during the 2004 presidential elections (Tempo, 5 July 2004; Tempo, 13 September 2004). Goenawan Mohamad, former *Tempo* chief editor and founding member of PAN, was a member of the official Amien Rais (PAN) – Siswono Yudo Husodo campaign team during the 2004 presidential elections (Harsono, 7 June 2004). During the 2009 presidential elections Goenawan Mohamad supported Boediono (Kompas.com, 15 May 2009; Mohamad, 18 May 2009).

However, in those cases it is difficult to establish whether these figures made use of their respective media organization or whether the support was individual and private. Certainly more obvious is the case of Alwi Hamu, co-owner of *Fajar*, a regional daily that operates under the Jawa Pos Group (Wangkar 2001; Hamad 2004: 160-1), who had been campaign coordinator for Jusuf Kalla during the 2004 presidential elections. During the campaign Alwi Hamu used *Fajar* as well as the Jawa Pos News Network (JPPN) to support the Yudhoyono-Kalla candidature (Harsono, 7 June 2004). He applied various strategies, for example, displaying news of Kalla on the front page, inside pages or tucked in the middle of the news. *Fajar's* editorial board did not oppose Hamu's move. According to *Fajar's* then chief editor, Aidir Amir Daud, there was no reason not to back one of its shareholders and co-founders, Jusuf Kalla, in his election campaign. When Kalla won the vice-

presidential seat, Alwi Hamu became part of the vice-president's special staff (Tempo, 24 October 2005).

According to Tri Agus Susanto Siswowiharjo (27 December 2008) during the 2004-2009 government term 23 out of 550 legislators had a journalistic background. Whereas some had long ceased to practice journalism, others were still journalists when they entered politics. During the 2009 general election, there were about 120 journalists or former journalists throughout Indonesia competing as candidates for the legislature (Siswowiharjo, 27 December 2008). Among the successful candidates were Hanura's Akbar Faizal and Golkar's Bambang Soesatyo who later utilized their media experience to promote a parliamentary inquiry into the Bank Century scandal.

In a study on the media's impact on local elections David Hill (2009: 248) highlights the success of the then *Jawa Pos* chief editor Arif Afandi in the 2005 Surabaya mayoral election as an example of how the media can be utilized not only by its owner but also by an experienced media professional with first-hand experience in the media business:

What Arif Afandi was able to bring to the political equation was not *control* of the media (though his connections would have proved beneficial) nor a media-generated popular image such as may be enjoyed by "celebrities" or "artistes" in the Indonesian context. Rather, he brought a keen understanding of how the media operates. He was a "media savvy". His knowledge and understanding of the industry and how it operates, and how an aspiring politician may maximize positive images in the media, would have been invaluable.

However, Afandi's candidature for the position of Surabaya's deputy mayor was also supported financially and personally by Dahlan Iskan, CEO of the Jawa Pos Group (Ida 2011: 20).

There are also numerous prominent media professionals who temporarily ceased working as journalists to take their experience into the upper echelons of government. For example, Wahyu Muryadi, who took a break from his position as *Tempo* editor in order to become Head of the Protocol Bureau at the Presidential Palace during the Wahid Presidency.⁶⁰ Yopie Hidayat, was chief editor of the business tabloid *Kontan*, before he took up the position as Vice-President Boediono's spokesman following the 2009 presidential elections. PR consultant and prominent talk-show host Wimar Witoelar was recruited to become chief Presidential Spokesman for President Wahid in early October 2000 to manage the president's relations with the media (The Jakarta Post, 9 October 2000).⁶¹

A journalistic background is no guarantee of being immune to corruption. For example, Panda Nababan, PDI-P legislator and former chairman of the party's North Sumatra branch (The Jakarta Post, 11 March 2010), had worked as journalist for various publications before joining politics in 1993.⁶² Once being famous for his investigative reports,⁶³ Nababan himself became embroiled in a bribery scandal. In January 2011 he was sentenced for receiving bribes worth Rp 1.45 billion to back the

⁶⁰ Interview with Wahyu Muryadi, chief editor, *Tempo*, Jakarta, 29 April 2010.

⁶¹ For further details see Witoelar 2002.

⁶² For the daily *Warta Harian* (1969-70), editor for *Sinar Harapan* (1970-87), deputy general editor for the daily *Prioritas* (1987-88) and head of research and development for *Media Indonesia* (1988-89) (Tokoh Indonesia, 2 February 2003).

⁶³ In the late 1970s he received the Adinegoro price (Hadiah Adinegoro) for investigative reporting (Tokoh Indonesia, 2 February 2003).

election of Miranda Goeltom as Bank Indonesia senior deputy governor in 2004 (The Jakarta Globe, 31 January 2011).

As this section has shown, the media and the elite are often intertwined; whether through means of media ownership, first-hand experience in the media business or personal relationships. Indeed, what becomes significant here is that even if the media organisations are structurally differentiated from political institutions, this structural gap is bridged through ownership, overlap in personal and informal criteria like friendship, common objectives and ideology (Blumler and Gurevitch 1995: 65-6).

1.4 The commercial mainstream media: Conceptualisation and interests

Following the above discussion of the various forms of media-elite linkages as well as the commercial mainstream media's high level of conglomeration, the assumption that the news media serve the public interest and fulfil the democratic functions assigned to it according to the liberal ideal is unsustainable. Indeed, empirical evidence has shown that "the media industry is becoming increasingly important as a business as well as a political tool within Indonesia's democracy" (Sudiby and Patria 2013: 274) and that media owners, regardless of their professional backgrounds, "regard news as a commodity with which to secure their

economic and political interests" (Haryanto 2011: 108).⁶⁴ Nezar Patria, former chairperson of AJI Indonesia and political activist during the New Order, explained his move from *Tempo* to *vivanews.com*, a Bakrie-owned news portal, in a similar vein. That is, it was a decision based on professional considerations and the way that the media work in a capitalist environment (The Jakarta Post, 4 May 2009):

It is an uncontested fact in the media industry that we will always work with businesspeople. Wherever you go, you will always come across the problem of ownership . . . I realize that there is no total independence and the owners always want to intervene.

Being emdedded in the free market capitalist structures the privately owned media organizations are primarily business companies and, as such, have economic interests. In Indonesia, as well as in other democratic societies, the commercial mainstream media are, essentially, business groups. For profit-orientated media, the primary goal is economic. Other goals, such as serving the public, producing a quality product, and achieving professional recognition, are built into this overarching objective (Shoemaker and Reese 2004: 34).

This assumption is supported by the following examples. First, during the inter-religious conflict in the Moluccas, Indonesia's largest print media conglomerate, the Jawa Pos Group, funded two separate local newspapers in the conflict zone, with one directed at Christians (*Suara Maluku*) and the other newer venture (*Ambon Ekspres*) serving the Muslim community. The reason for the establishment of the second paper was that the established Ambonese newspaper

⁶⁴ Since Haryanto's sample is small and the informants remain anonymous his claim is not particularly strong. However, it records what is commonly known and accepted: commercial media organizations are not a playground for idealists, they are business companies.

became increasingly biased in favour for the Christian community. Eriyanto (2002) argues that the Jawa Pos Group launched this Muslim newspaper mainly out of economic interest. Since the population of Ambon consisted of nearly equal numbers of Christian and Muslim residents there was an incentive to serve both markets to maximise profit. However, the establishment of *Ambon Ekspres* was also a result of the city of Ambon being divided across religious lines. It had become impossible for *Suara Maluku's* Muslim journalists to enter Christian-dominated areas for fact-checking to ensure the accuracy of their stories without putting themselves at personal risk, and Christian journalists faced similar risks entering Muslim-dominated areas (Widya Laksmi Soerjoatmodjo 2010: 183-5). Thus, one could argue that, in establishing the second paper, the Jawa Pos Group was not only upholding the ideal of press freedom by providing a means of mass communication for the Muslim community but also taking into account concerns relating to staff safety and survival.

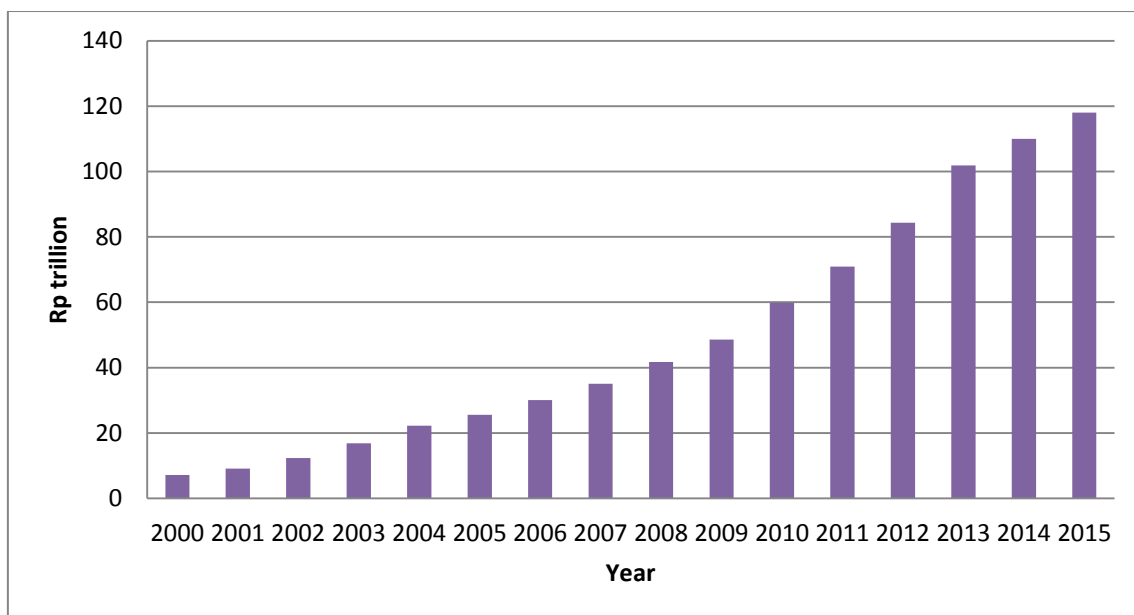
As a second example, the Jawa Pos Group facilitated the publishing of media associated with newly established political parties⁶⁵ in the run-up to the 1999 national elections. Namely, the daily *Duta Masyarakat Baru* (PKB), and the three weekly tabloids *Amanat* (PAN), *Abadi* (PBB), and *Demokrat* (PDI-P). Whereas the Jawa Pos Group provided funding and was in charge of management and marketing, the respective political parties were in charge of editorial policy and content (Hamad 2004: 152; Luwarso, 31 August 2000). By March 1999, less than half

⁶⁵ In the Reform era, after the fall of Suharto in May 1998, more than 200 political parties emerged. Eventually, 48 of them were allowed to participate in the June 1999 elections, the first free elections since 1955 (Crouch 2010: 51). In order to promote those newly established political parties and their program to the public numerous 'partisan media' emerged (Karim et al. 2004: 193).

a year after the establishment of *Duta Masyarakat Baru* and *Amanat* in late 1998, the Jawa Pos Group sold shares of these publications at substantial profit (SiaR, 10 March 1999).⁶⁶ Both examples show that concentration of ownership does not necessarily result in less product or content diversity. More likely it shows the superiority of economic interests compared to ideological interest (McChesney 2000).

For commercial media, advertising is the crucial source of income. As shown in Graph 1.1 advertising revenue in the media business has increased steadily and exemplifies the media industry's ongoing profitability.

Graph 1.1: Advertising revenue television and print media⁶⁷



⁶⁶ The shares of *Duta Masyarakat Baru* and *Amanat* were sold for an estimated Rp 2 billion respectively (SiaR, 10 March 1999).

⁶⁷ All data are from Nielsen but compiled from various sources: 2000 to 2008: Jatmikasari, 5 November 2009: 20; 2009 and 2010: SWA (2 February 2011); 2011 to 2015 (Kompas, 11 February 2016).

The annual advertising expenditure on television and print media has grown from Rp 7,12 trillion in 2000 to Rp 118 trillion in 2015.⁶⁸ The government and political organisations are among the top media advertising spenders. This is because of the mass media's pivotal role as the central medium for political communication and marketing in post-Suharto Indonesia (Qodari 2010: 123).

Political parties and politicians have become more media-consciousness, and invest heavily in political advertisement in the run-up to the elections. Since the 1999 elections, the mass media have been the main information source for the electorate and the arena for competing political parties and candidates.⁶⁹ Whereas political parties and politicians place advertisements in order to compete for votes, the government uses advertisements as a means to inform and educate the voter. Their advertisement spending during elections has increased significantly over the years: Whereas government and political organisations spent Rp 97,24 billion⁷⁰ in 1999 and Rp 494 billion⁷¹ in 2004, they spent Rp 2,15 trillion⁷² and Rp 4,58 trillion⁷³ in 2009 and 2014 respectively.

Following the discussion above, it is argued that the mainstream media, due to their structural and personal linkages with the politico-business elite and their

⁶⁸ Over the period from 2000 to 2009 there was little variance in the annual advertising expenditure by media type. On average 66.4 per cent went to television, 28.1 per cent to newspapers, and 4 per cent to magazines and tabloids (Jatmikasari, 5 November 2009: 22). In 2012, 64 per cent went to television, 33 per cent to newspapers and 3 per cent to magazines and tabloids (Kontan, 6 March 2013).

⁶⁹ Under Suharto's New Order, the campaign activities were described as *pesta demokrasi* and held in the form of convoys and public meetings. The campaigning activities were subjected to strict restrictions and opposition parties had only limited access to mass media. They were neither allowed to place political ads in the media nor to hold a dialogue with the electorate through electronic media. (Hamad 2001: 56, Voionmaa 2004: 159).

⁷⁰ Randini, 11 August 2008: 14.

⁷¹ Hicks, 14 July 2009.

⁷² Tempo Interaktif, 14 July 2009.

⁷³ The Jakarta Post, 24 November 2015.

location within capitalist market structures, form coalitions of interest with the elite. Evidence that the mainstream news media are linked with the elite and primarily serve the latter's interests can be found across a range of scholarly work (Bennett 1990; Blumler and Gurevitch 1995; Castells 2010; Gans 1979; Hallin 1986; Herman and Chomsky 1989; McChesney 2008; Mills 1959; Schudson 2002).

Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model (1988) is particularly useful for an understanding of how and why the mainstream media propagate elite interests in capitalist democracies. The model's strength lies in its focus on real world conditions and the straight forward identification of five mutually interacting 'filters' that shape and constrain media content in the interest of the economic and political elite. The 'filters' are first, the media's ownership and profit orientation; second, the commercial media's dependence on advertising as a major source of income; third, the media's reliance on information provided by government, corporate and associated 'expert' sources; fourth, 'flak' as a means of disciplining the media; and fifth, the ideology of free market fundamentalism.⁷⁴ Only those news items or information that can pass through these filters is going to be published. The filters, or forces, then cause the media to play a propaganda role. Since these filters are structural and derive from the dominant media's place in the free market system, it is largely self-censorship rather than state-imposed censorship that causes the mass media to propagate elite interests. In other words:

⁷⁴ In the original propaganda model the fifth filter was the ideology of anti-communism. In later work, written in the post-Cold War era, anti-communism was replaced with free market fundamentalism as an ideology (Herman 1996: 125, 2000: 109).

[T]he mass media are drawn into a symbiotic relationship with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interest (Herman and Chomsky 1989: 18).

By stressing the major media's structural enmeshment with the interests of the political and economic elite Herman and Chomsky encourage an engagement with those forces that do have the power to influence media performance according to their interests. Indeed, several scholars – including those who did not utilize the propaganda model – have presented evidence for the mass media's tendency “to manufacture consent for elite preferences, both in terms of domestic and foreign policy issues” (Mullen 2010: 678). Of course, there are different explanations and opinions of how the media serve elite interests and avoid democratic control by the public (Herring and Robinson 2002: 2).⁷⁵ Nevertheless, the model explains how and why a free press in a democratic regime can and does perform a propaganda function or, in other words, it explains the media's involvement in processes of ‘manufacturing consent’.

The propaganda model has been applied to case studies that focus on the role of the news media in manufacturing public consent for US foreign policy. Within such a context, contestations within the elite are not important or not as fundamental as the common interest. However, Herman and Chomsky (1988: xii) do acknowledge that the media are not unified on all issues and that elite disagreements (which do not question the system's overall existence) are reflected in media content. More specifically:

⁷⁵ The authors argue further that “Herman and Chomsky's analysis of the relationship view of US media-elite relations is marginalized despite the fact that it is fundamentally mainstream”(Herring and Robinson 2002: 2).

[T]he U.S. media do not function in the manner of the propaganda system of a totalitarian state. Rather, they permit – indeed encourage – spirited debate, criticism, and dissent, as long as these remain faithfully within the system of presuppositions and principles that constitute an elite consensus, a system so powerful as to be internalized largely without awareness (Herman and Chomsky 1988: 302).

Paletz and Entman's (1981: 21) observation that only "few elites disagree about the essential desirability and perfectibility of the system they control" also applies to Indonesia's politico-business elite. But, as outlined before, there is fierce competition within the system, and members of the heterogenous elite compete with each other within the system's boundaries. It is exactly here where the news media play a pivotal role. More specifically,

when elite sources conflict, the press will contain a diversity of views about issues, problems, events. . . . Elite conflict is a prime cause of the nature of the news reports of any event or problem: the more conflict, the more coverage, the more varied the views stories contain (Paletz and Entman 1981: 21).

With the Indonesian politico-business elite having realized the importance of the media in the new democratic circumstances, the competition over the news media has become a central element in intra-elite contestations. Indeed, as argued by Sudibyo and Patria (2013: 258), "the media industry has become an important site of political contestation in the context of a highly competitive electoral democracy". In other words, the elite has, to differing degrees, harnessed the concept of press freedom by incorporating the media into intra-elite power struggles. Based on the fact that press freedom is guaranteed and that the mostly privately owned media companies "do not constitute a monolithic entity" (Van Belle 2000: 97), it is the

media that provide the means and the arena for intra-elite contestation. Crucially, the media are not only the arena for those power struggles but also an actor (McCargo 1999, 2003; Waisbord 2004: 1078). In their roles as actors the owners and practitioners of the media have their own strategic objectives that might reinforce or contradict the objectives of particular members of the contesting elite. But precisely, how can we conceptualise the relationship between the media and the elite at times of intra-elite contestation?

1.5 Conceptualisation of media-elite interactions

Essentially, the nature of the relationship between the media and the elite is defined through power. Conceptions of power are manifold and contested. Their respective pros and cons are examined and discussed elsewhere.⁷⁶ The focus here is on finding a conceptualization of power that is suitable for analysing the phenomenon under study: the way in which social relations (power relations) between the media and the elite are patterned within times of intra-elite power struggles fought out in the public sphere. I adopt Weber's definition of power⁷⁷ "as the opportunity [*Chance*] to have one's will prevail [*durchsetzen*] within a social relationship, also against resistance, no matter what this opportunity is based on".⁷⁸

⁷⁶ See, for example, Lukes 2005a, 2005b; Haugaard 1997; Hay 1997, 2002; Berenskoetter 2007; Wrong 1995.

⁷⁷ As found in 'Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft', „Macht bedeutet jede Chance, innerhalb einer sozialen Beziehung den eigenen Willen auch gegen Widerstreben durchzusetzen, gleichviel worauf diese Chance beruht" (Weber 1976: 28) as cited in Berenskoetter (2007).

⁷⁸ The translation of Weber's definition of power is problematic as different academics approach the word differently. Therefore in my thesis I have opted to follow Berenskoetter (2007: 3) whose translation seems most accurate to me as a German speaker. For an overview and discussion of the

This definition and how it is used in this thesis requires further clarification. First, power is a phenomenon among identifiable actors.⁷⁹ Second, Weber only speaks of an opportunity [*Chance*] that does not have to be exercised, and because of that power is potential, a capacity, which has to be translated into actual influence. Therefore, “identifying power has much to do with identifying the position someone is placed in vis-à-vis others” (Berenskoetter 2007: 3). Third, since overcoming resistance is not a necessity, one can accomplish one’s will not only against others but also in cooperation with others (Berenskoetter 2007: 3). In all its dimensions, power is relational.

In addition to Weber’s definition – which is agency-based and focuses on the direct relationship between the actors involved – power can also work more indirectly through both actors being positioned in an institutional setting and the ability of one actor to shape this setting in their favour (Hay 2002: 185-7, Berenskoetter 2007: 8). In other words, indirect power (*context-shaping power*) refers to the ability of actors to shape structures, institutions and organizations in such a way as to alter the parameter of subsequent action (Hay 2002: 185-6). Members of the elite, if they are politicians or the head of state, have direct access to law-making. As such they are able – through passing legislation, e.g. the press law – to affect and shape the context which defines the range of possibilities of others.

With respect to this research project, and its underlying assumption that the elite and the people who run the media are neither natural enemies nor inevitably of

translations of Weber’s definition of power as found in prominent academic publications, see Wallimann et al. (1977).

⁷⁹ “Actors may be individuals, groups, roles, offices, governments, nation states, or other human aggregates”(Dahl 1957: 203).

identical interests (Sparks 2000: 47), this definition of power allows us to see the media and the elite not necessarily as opponents and does not rule out some common interests. In short, their relationships are contingent and can be dynamic.

As pointed out by Jenkins (2009: 141), “Weber acknowledged that people can ‘get things done’ in a range of ways, drawing on varied resources”. Therefore, the utilization of resources (rather than ownership) is a precondition for the exercise of power.⁸⁰

Listings of resources are endless (Clegg 2006: 127), since virtually anything can become a resource under the appropriate circumstances:

To the extent that specific resources are related to power in a general way, without regard for context, they are not very helpful. Anything can be a resource in the right context but it is the context that it is important (Clegg 2006: 128).

Often, resources are interrelated and multiple: a combination of various resources needs to be utilized to achieve a particular goal. Phenomena which might become resources of power in media-elite interactions include: common ideological ground, capital, patronage networks, access and contacts with higher-echelon members, information, position, assets, ownership of or shares in media companies, an understanding of how the media work, and so on. However, as mentioned before, the context is important for media-elite interactions.

⁸⁰ “In short, observing the exercise of power can give evidence of its possession and counting power resources can be a clue to its distribution, but power is a capacity [opportunity], and neither the exercise nor the vehicle of this capacity [opportunity]” (Lukes 2005a: 479).

1.6 Scandal

One illuminating way to study media-elite interactions is in the context of scandal.⁸¹

‘Scandal’ is commonly perceived as misconduct revealed. Activities or events involving some sort of transgression must be disclosed or made visible through mediated forms of communication in order to elicit a public reaction and develop into a scandal. Since "a scandal by definition is not a scandal until knowledge of it becomes public" (King 1984: 174), media publicity is essential.⁸²

In post-authoritarian Indonesia, the now-free media are extremely eager to investigate and publicize alleged misconduct. The prominence of scandal news headlines, particularly concerning corruption, shows that the politico-business elite is subjected to intense scrutiny and media exposure (AJI Indonesia, 19 April 2011; Astraatmadja, 2010; Robison and Hadiz 2004: 208). By exposing secret official wrongdoing and corruption allegations, the media fulfils a ‘watchdog’ role. However, scandals are also commodities (Lowi 2004: 70) – for both political actors and the media. As the following discussion will show, this is related to the very character of scandal.

Several definitions of (political) scandal exist. For instance, Thompson (2000: 245) argues that “scandals are struggles over symbolic power in which reputation

⁸¹ I should mention in this context that Markovits and Silverstein (1988: 6) see media scandals as a phenomenon that can only take place in liberal democracies. But, while Indonesia may not fully satisfy the established understanding of a liberal democracy, it does have sufficient institutionalized political competition and media freedom for scandals to be a real and important phenomenon.

⁸² Indeed, as argued by Waisbord (2004: 1079) “[m]edia coverage is the barometer that indicates the existence (or absence) of a scandal”.

and trust are at stake.”⁸³ For Markovits and Silverstein (1988: 6) “the critical feature of any political scandal is . . . the presence of any activity that seeks to increase political power at the expense of process and procedure”. Balán (2011: 460) sees “scandals as a byproduct of political competition.” Citing the title of Ginsberg’s and Shefter’s (1990) work Waisbord (2004: 1072) argues that “scandals offer opportunities for doing ‘politics by other means’”. In a similar vein, Castells (2009: 242) observes “the politics of scandal is a more rooted and typical form of power struggle than the conduct of orderly political competition as per the rules of the state”. Highlighting the close relation between scandal and corruption, Tiffen (1999: 10) argues that both terms are “weapons which different groups have opposing interests in attaching to particular situations”. Thus, political scandals are not coincidence: they are embedded in a particular context and brought into existence purposely to discredit political opponents (Thompson 2000: 77; Nyhan 2015: 436). What makes a scandal a political scandal, is according to Thompson (2000: 96) the fact that “a political scandal is a scandal involving individuals or actions which are situated within a *political field* and which have an impact on relations within the field”. Following this definition, sex scandals in the political field are sexual-political scandals and as such a form of political scandal (Thompson 2000: 119-24, 282).

The relentless succession of reports and counter-reports of scandals in the Indonesian media suggests that the politico-business elite is revealing information on others’ wrongdoing – real or alleged – as a “political commodity” (Djani 2008) and out of self-interest to gain political advantage (The Jakarta Post, 21 July 2000;

⁸³ Thompson (1995: 17) defines ‘symbolic power’ as the “capacity to intervene in the course of events, to influence the actions of others and indeed to create events, by means of the production and transmission of symbolic forms”.

Deny JA, 9 May 2005; Aditjondro, 10 January 2001; Witoelar, 3 February 2010). Recent research (Kramer 2013, 2014; RSIS, 28 February 2014) has confirmed that scandal politics, particularly revelations and allegations of corruption, often directly aimed at specific political leaders, have become the weapon of choice for intra-elite power struggles in contemporary Indonesia. Here, similar to elections, the general public's role is limited to choosing between the standpoints offered by the conflicting elite through the media. In other words:

Political scandal is an elites' game in which public opinion plays a major but mainly passive role . . . Therefore, the game, in the beginning and in the turns it can go through, basically depends on the stands adopted by the elites, particularly those of the elites in politics and the media (Jiménez 2004: 112).

Widespread corruption increases the opportunity to use scandal as 'politics by other means' (Tumber and Waisbord 2004: 1034). Thus, it is common knowledge among media personnel and the politico-business elite that almost everyone who holds a powerful position is most likely (either directly or indirectly) involved in some sort of wrongdoing that, if revealed, has the potential to turn into a scandal.

In this way, the hunt begins; advisors prepare ammunition to attack or defend, and journalists attempt to fill their roles as investigative reporters finding stories to increase both audience and sales" (Tumber and Waisbord 2004: 1034).

However, a scandal's market value and thus its potential to become an effective weapon within intra-elite contestations is shaped by the political environment: if neither the media nor members of the politico-business elite show an interest, there are no 'buyers', and the scandal fades away or makes room for another one (Lowi 2004: 70-1). Thus, a coincidence of interest between both actors to pursue the same

topic is a decisive point to sustain a scandal (Tiffen 1999: 48). Arguing that the press and the opposition party have a symbiotic relationship and do face similar professional incentives in investigating and publicizing alleged misconduct by the president and his administration, Nyhan (2015) sees the creation of presidential and executive branch scandals as a 'co-production' of both institutions.

Thompson (2000: 78) identifies some general aspects of media organisations in order to explain the inclination of media personnel towards scandal. That is, first, financial gain. Since most media organisations are commercial enterprises that operate in free market conditions they have to generate profit, and it is commonly known that 'scandal sells' (Thompson 2000: 78-9). Indeed, scandal news in the Indonesian media receives high ratings from media audiences (Astraatmadja, 2010). Since audience ratings verify a publication's and a program's selling power, commercial media organizations, in particular TV stations, are concerned about ratings. High ratings determine considerations of advertisement placing (The Jakarta Globe, 23 June 2009), and in turn influence the media organization's decision on what news to cover. Second, Thompson (2000: 79-81) identifies political objectives. Even though the media – due a process of commercialisation and depolitisation – do not depend on political parties for their financial support they nevertheless take a political position. This is particularly the case in Indonesia where the media and the political elite are – as discussed earlier – intertwined. The last two aspects conducive to the media's interest in scandal stem from competitive rivalries among media organisations; and good journalistic practice that tends to emphasize factuality and entertainment, or a combination of both (Thompson 2000: 81-4).

Emphasizing the media's active role in scandal Thompson (1997: 49) introduces the term 'mediated scandal' and elaborates

that the very nature of these scandals – their emergence, their developmental logic, their prominence, the ways within which they are experienced by both participants and non-participants, their consequences – are shaped by the media. Most “mediated scandals” are not simply scandals which are reported by the media and exist independently of them: they are in varying ways and to some extent, constituted by mediated forms of communication.

Consequently, the media wields significant power, as they affect how the matters unfold, what is promoted and what is neglected. Hereby the owners and practitioners of the media have their own strategic objectives and vested interests which overlap with the news media's ideal socio-political role to fulfil a 'watchdog' role successfully (Thompson 2000: 77-84; Tiffen 1999: 206-39). Thus, the media's motivation in the creation and development of political scandal is tainted by opportunism and their relationship with those actors who play a decisive role in the scandal. How this exactly plays out will be investigated in the following case study chapters.

In summary, scandal as an analytical focus allows us to examine: (1) the ways in which individual members of the politico-business elite and political parties exploited scandal as a means to discredit their opponents; (2) the ways in which individual elites whose alleged actions lie at the centre of the scandal encounter the allegations; (3) the vested interests of the owners and practitioners of the media. Whereas points (1) and (2) focus on the protagonists' strategies and claims in their struggle within and over the media, point (3) concerns the interests and priorities of media organisations beyond their professional incentives to scrutinize the powerful.

Conclusion

This first chapter of the thesis has discussed the predominant role of the politico-business elite within Indonesia's democracy and has shown that the media and the elite are often intertwined. Even though the nature of Indonesia's transition to democracy and the legacy of the New Order have produced specific characteristics, the way the media work and their relationship with the elite is not much different from the realities prevailing in established liberal democracies. The literature examined in this chapter has shown that liberal democracies also have issues in managing the media and the elite. Significant here is not whether the United States, for example, are more democratic than Indonesia but how Indonesia's elite has managed to adapt to media scrutiny and the media's role as both actor and battlefield for intra-elite contestations. Instead of fighting against the media, the elite forms coalitions with the media based on shared interests defined by structural conditions and personal interrelations. By going beyond normative concerns about the democratic character of mass media and its focus on the elite this study provides a different approach to examining the media and its possible socio-political implications in Indonesia, and post-authoritarian regimes in general.

The chapter has also shown that using scandal as an analytical tool sheds light on the dynamics of media-elite interactions in intra-elite struggles. In sum, the first chapter has established the conceptual and contextual basis for this investigation of media-elite interactions in the following case study chapters. Having laid out the theoretical focus that informs this thesis, the following chapters move on to the case studies.

2 Elite-media interaction during the Bulog scandal

Introduction

This chapter interrogates media-elite interactions in the context of the Bulog scandal. 'Buloggate' is about President Wahid's alleged involvement in the embezzlement of Rp 35 billion belonging to the State Logistic Agency's (Badan Urusan Logistik, Bulog) Employee Welfare Foundation (Yayasan Bina Sejahtera Karyawan, Yanatera). It is argued that Buloggate is an expression of intra-elite power struggles and rooted in the disaffection over Wahid's actions to marginalise those political parties that had supported his presidential election. This chapter examines how those members of the political elite who had been deprived of their access to political resources exploited this scandal, utilizing the media in conjunction with the parliament, to deplete President Wahid's legitimacy through corruption allegations over his involvement in Buloggate; and reciprocally, how President Wahid and his political party PKB, utilized the media for their defence.

This chapter establishes that Wahid's ability to engage the media positively during the scandal was thwarted by the parliament's and the media's ability to cover their multiple interests behind the veneer of exercising their commonly perceived watchdog-function towards the government. This enabled Wahid's opponents to use the jargon of press freedom and democracy successfully against Wahid. In contrast, arguments and actions made by Wahid and his supporters – like questioning the legality and authority of the parliamentary inquiry into Buloggate, NU-Banser's occupation of the *Jawa Pos* offices following Buloggate's disclosure, and Wahid's repeated criticism of the media – resulted in the distortion of Wahid's

relationship with the media and overshadowed his reputation as a democrat and proponent of press freedom.

This chapter consists of four parts. Following this introduction, section 2.1 explains Buloggate as an expression of intra-elite power struggles rooted in the disaffection over Wahid's actions to deprive those political parties that had 'made' him president from access to political resources. Section 2.2 focuses on how Wahid's opponents utilized the media to turn the misappropriation of Bulog Yanatera funds into a fully-fledged scandal shifting from allegations of Wahid's involvement in the scandal to questioning his legitimacy. The establishment of a parliamentary inquiry was crucial in this process because it guaranteed continuing news supply and extended the scandal to a power struggle between President and parliament. Section 2.3 examines how Wahid and his political vehicle, the PKB, utilized the media to defend and attack those exploiting the scandal against him. Section 2.4 closes with a discussion of the impact of Buloggate on President Wahid's relationship with the media.

2.1 Buloggate: Development and background

Scandal overview

The Bulog scandal surfaced in May 2000 when it was disclosed that Rp 35 billion belonging to Bulog Yanatera had been diverted. Apparently Bulog deputy chief Sapuan had disbursed the money to Wahid's personal masseur Suwondo whom he believed was acting on the president's orders to finance humanitarian programs in

Aceh.⁸⁴ According to media reports, the money was then partly distributed to people close to the president.⁸⁵

Suspicious of Wahid's involvement in the case hardened following Sapuan's claim that he had confirmed the issue with Wahid (*Kompas*, 30 May 2000), at a meeting between Bulog officials and the President in January 2000 (*Tempo*, 29 May 2000). On that occasion Wahid had allegedly requested that the allocation half of Bulog's tactical funds to finance an Aceh reconciliation project (*Tempo*, 29 October 2000a). During an interview with *Kompas* (31 May 2000) Wahid admitted that he had considered doing so, but ultimately decided against it.⁸⁶ Instead he admitted to using a US\$ 2 million donation from the Sultan of Brunei towards this end. The disclosure of this information prompted criticisms of Wahid for accepting the Sultan's donation without following government accounting procedures (*The Jakarta Post*, 13 July 2000a; *The Jakarta Post*, 20 September 2000) and of having used it for personal or political purposes (*Witoelar* 2002: 97; *The Jakarta Post*, 13 July 2000a).

Meanwhile, it turned out that the Rp 35 billion from Bulog Yanatera ended up in the accounts of close associates of Suwondo (*Tempo*, 29 May 2000b; *The*

⁸⁴ Suwondo was fugitive when the scandal broke and thus could not be asked to clarify the matter. He was only captured and arrested by the police in October 2000 (*The Jakarta Post*, 16 October 2000).

⁸⁵ Besides the president's brother, Hasyim Wahid, media reports mentioned Bondan Goenawan (State Secretary), Alwi Shihab (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Djoko Mulyono (Presidential secretary) and PDI-P legislator Suko Sudarso as beneficiaries of the Bulog money. See, for example, *Tempo*, 22 May 2000b; *The Jakarta Post*, 16 June 2000; *The Jakarta Post*, 26 May 2000; *The Jakarta Post*, 30 May 2000; *Republika*, 7 May 2000a; *BBC*, 25 May 2000; *Barton* 2002: 304-5; *Kompas*, 26 May 2000.

⁸⁶ More specifically, Wahid denied Sapuan's allegations that he had approved the disbursement of the funds and claimed that he had only enquired whether there was some money available from Bulog which could be used for Aceh. But once he learnt that a presidential decree (SK, Surat Keputusan) was required – which meant that it had to put into the national budget and then to parliament – he abandoned the idea anticipating bureaucratic and parliamentary delays.

Jakarta Post, 16 June 2000).⁸⁷ Since some of the beneficiaries had connections to the president, rumours of Wahid's involvement continued. However, on 14 June 2000 the police declared President Wahid free of all charges involving Buloggate, though shortly afterwards they questioned him seeking a clarification (The Jakarta Post, 16 June 2000).

Suspensions that the police were not transparent in examining Wahid's role in the scandal and distrust in the legal system triggered the People's Representative Council (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, DPR) to conduct its own investigations through the Bulog-Bruneigate committee (Panitia Khusus Dana Yanatera Bulog dan Dana Bantuan Sultan Brunei Darussalam, Pansus Bulog-Bruneigate) in addition to investigations by the police and the attorney general.⁸⁸

Following a four month inquiry (from October 2000 to January 2001) the committee reached the overall conclusion that, in both scandals, the president abused his powers, lied to the public and created a new form of corruption, collusion and nepotism (korupsi, kolusi, dan nepotisme, KKN) (Pansus Bulog-Bruneigate 2001: 35).⁸⁹ On 1 February 2001 the DPR accepted the committee's report by a vote of 393 to 4 and issued a memorandum to censure Wahid for having violated the state guidelines (Garis-garis Besar Haluan Negara, GBHN), namely

⁸⁷ After having received the money from Bulog Yanatera, Suwondo transferred it to four individuals: Rp 10 billion to Teti Sunarti, Suwondo's wife; Rp 15 billion to Suko Sudarso, an executive of PDI-P; Rp 5 billion to businessman Leo Purnomo; and Rp 5 billion to Siti Farika, a Central Java-based businesswoman who is known to be close to the President (Tempo, 29 May 2000; The Jakarta Post, 16 June 2000). The police questioned the suspects and recovered some of the money soon afterwards (The Jakarta Post, 20 June 2000).

⁸⁸ See, for example, Republika, 30 June 2000; Republika, 22 July 2000; Republika, 25 June 2000; Republika, 26 June 2000; Media Indonesia, 1 February 2001.

⁸⁹ The committee's conclusions were made based on the explanations of 40 witnesses including President Wahid (Tempo, 5 February 2001a).

Article 9 of the 1945 Constitution on the oath of office, and the People's Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat, MPR) Decree No XI/ 1998 on the implementation of clean government free of KKN (Kompas, 2 February 2001).

The issuance of a memorandum over Bulog- and Bruneigate meant that Wahid's opponents had been successful in using the scandals as grounds to start an impeachment process which ended on 23 July 2001 with President Wahid's dismissal (Lindsey 2008: 17).⁹⁰

A coincidence of media and elite interests

There were numerous factors that boosted Buloggate's prominence in the media after its initial disclosure. First of all was the involvement of high profile people: namely, the president and people close to him.⁹¹ The corruption allegations against people close to President Wahid over the Bulog embezzlement went beyond the usual criticism of the government since it had the potential to implicate the president directly with KKN (The Jakarta Post, 9 May 2000). Furthermore, news of Wahid being involved in corruption contradicted the widely held perception of him as an opponent of KKN and promoter of democracy. This was reinforced by the fact that the media, due to the introduction of press freedom and the new democratic environment, could now report freely on corruption allegations involving the

⁹⁰ For further information on President Wahid's impeachment see, for example, NDI (2001); Butt and Lindsey (2012: 40-6). In respect to the legal process the Attorney General had cleared Wahid of any involvement in Bulog- and Bruneigate on 28 May 2001 (The Jakarta Post, 29 May 2001). Sapuan and Soewondo were sentenced to a jail sentence of two and 3.5 years respectively over their involvement in Buloggate (The Jakarta Post, 7 August 2001; The Jakarta Post, 21 March 2001).

⁹¹ Besides the President's brother, Hasyim Wahid, media reports mentioned Alwi Shihab (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Bondan Gunawan (Wahid's state secretary), Djoko Mulyono (the president's secretary) and PDI-P legislator Suko Sudarso as beneficiaries of the Bulog fund (The Jakarta Post, 16 June 2000; The Jakarta Post, 26 May 2000; The Jakarta Post, 30 May 2000; Republika, 7 May 2000a).

president, and that the media were eager to scrutinize the government in their role as watchdog. Another factor that contributed to the scandal's prominence was the actions of a militia organisation (Banser) associated with Wahid's religious organisation (NU) to limit press coverage of the issue, thereby endangering press freedom following Buloggate's disclosure.

Conducive to the scandal's ongoing currency was that in addition to the media's willingness to engage with it, political parties had an interest in pursuing the scandal (Tiffen 1999: 48) in order to discredit President Wahid. This interest went beyond professional incentives to control the president and was rather based on disaffection over Wahid's actions to marginalise those political parties that had supported his election, restricting their access to government resources.

Alienating the press

The Bulog scandal was disclosed in *Tempo's* 1 May 2000 cover story on the dismissal of Jusuf Kalla (Minister of Industry and Trade, from the Golkar party) and Laksmana Sukardi (Minister of Investment and State Enterprises, from the PDI-P) from the cabinet (Tempo, 1 May 2000a; Republika, 7 May 2000a). It was this article 'Behind those dismissals'⁹² that first mentioned the names of Abdurrahman Wahid and his brother Hasyim Wahid in connection to the disappearance of Rp 35 billion from Bulog Yanatera. Even though other publications⁹³ picked up this news (Detikcom, 7 May 2000a) the Bulog embezzlement only became a popular media

⁹² 'Di Balik Pencopotan itu'.

⁹³ For example *Tabloid DeTak* and *MBM Gamma* (Detikcom, 7 May 2000a).

topic due to the events following the publication of a *Jawa Pos* (6 May 2000) article on the issue that explicitly focused on KKN surrounding the NU and Wahid.

The Jawa Pos-NU Banser incident

On 6 May 2000 members of Banser, an NU-affiliated civilian militia group, 'visited' the Surabaya office of the *Jawa Pos*. They were protesting against the article 'Reigning six month, corruption begins to hit Gus Dur?'⁹⁴ (*Jawa Pos*, 6 May 2000) that had alleged the president and NU-leaders were involved in KKN at Bulog. The article was accompanied by an infographic with the headline 'Indications of corruption that put Gus Dur under pressure'⁹⁵. Besides a photo of Rozy Munir (Minister of Investment and State Enterprises), Abdurrahman Wahid and Hasyim Muzadi, the infographic included the caption that NU-leader Hasyim Muzadi had allegedly received Rp 35 billion of Bulog funds.⁹⁶ As the source of this information the *Jawa Pos* quoted the *Tempo* edition of 1 May 2000. However, *Jawa Pos* journalists overlooked an error in *Tempo's* original coverage; *Tempo* had incorrectly reported that NU-leader 'Hasyim Muzadi' was alleged to have received Rp 35 billion from the State Logistics Agency's (Bulog) employee pension fund when in fact the allegations referred to the president's brother 'Hasyim Wahid' (*Tempo*, 1 May 2000a).

Over following days several national media reported that Banser's protest had involved occupying the Jawa Pos office, even physical assault and material

⁹⁴ 'Enam bulan memerintah, KKN mulai menerpa Gus Dur?'

⁹⁵ 'Indikasi KKN yang Menyudutkan Gus Dur'.

⁹⁶ PW GP Ansor Jawa Timur, 2000; Republika Online, 8 May 2000; Tempo, 8 May 2000a.

damage, and caused the *Jawa Pos* to cancel its Sunday edition.⁹⁷ The media, journalist organisations and media watchdog organisations both national and international were outraged over Banser's action and described it as a threat against press freedom.⁹⁸ This outrage was enforced by Wahid's reluctance to condemn Banser's action. Instead, he accused the *Jawa Pos* of having violated the journalistic code of ethics and of publishing the article as "part of a conspiracy to topple and discredit the government" (The Jakarta Post, 9 May 2000). He further emphasised that he could sue the *Jawa Pos* over the report on the grounds that it had violated the journalistic code of ethics by repeating incorrect information from *Tempo* magazine without prior cross-checking (Kompas, 9 May 2000; Republika, 9 May 2000).⁹⁹

Indeed, it was in the context of the NU-Banser occupation of the *Jawa Pos* offices and Wahid's comments on the incident that major national newspapers, like *Kompas*, *Republika* and *The Jakarta Post*, picked up corruption allegations against the president.¹⁰⁰ Wahid's reaction to the incident and the incident itself had a long term impact on the dynamics of Wahid's relationship with the media and the way he and his supporters were subsequently viewed by the media – in general and in the

⁹⁷ See, for example, Republika, 7 May 2000b; Detikcom, 7 May 2000c; The Jakarta Post, 8 May 2000; The Jakarta Post, 9 May 2000; Kompas, 7 May 2000; Kompas, 9 May 2000; Tempo Interaktif, 6 May 2000.

⁹⁸ See, for example, Republika Online, 8 May 2000; Kompas, 8 May 2000; Antara, 8 May 2000; Antara, 9 May 2000; CPJ, 19 March 2001; IFEX, 10 May 2000; Luwarso and Solahudin 2001: 13.

⁹⁹ His allegations of the *Jawa Pos* being involved in a conspiracy to topple and discredit his government should be understood in the context of widely publicised attempts to change the forthcoming Annual MPR session in August 2000 into a MPR special session to impeach him, and as a reaction on the constant critique on his administration (Media Indonesia, 28 May 2000). There were indeed indications of a conspiracy by the political elite to impeach President Wahid at the Annual MPR session in August (Media Indonesia, 21 July 2000). Those derived from indications that PDI-P and Golkar, which achieved highest votes in the 1999 election, were disappointed by the Wahid government's performance, and would form a political alliance as a 'show of force' in the Annual MPR session (Media Indonesia, 28 May 2000; Media Indonesia, 3 August 2000).

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, Republika, 7 May 2000a; Republika, 7 May 2000b; Republika Online, 8 May 2000; Republika, 9 May 2000; The Jakarta Post, 8 May 2000; The Jakarta Post, 9 May 2000; Kompas, 8 May 2000; Kompas, 9 May 2000; Detikcom, 7 May 2000b.

context of the Bulog-Bruneigate investigation. This will be discussed in detail in section 2.4 of this chapter that focuses on Wahid's relationship with the media. For now, I proceed with a discussion on further factors that contributed to the scandal's prominence.

Buloggate: an intra-elite power struggle

The Bulog scandal did not emerge spontaneously but was related to intra-elite power struggles in the political environment; in particular to tensions between the parliament and the president. Indeed, as argued by Robison and Hadiz (2004: 215), the corruption allegations against Wahid were interwoven with, or must be seen in the larger context of, intra-elite power struggles and political interests. Those are rooted in the outcome of the 1999 legislative elections and the subsequent election of Wahid as Indonesia's fourth president by the MPR.¹⁰¹ Wahid gained the presidency through "clever behind-the-scenes horse-trading" (Potter 2011: 228) and "an intricate process of bargaining among political elites" (Robison and Hadiz 2003: 241) that took place in the period leading up to the presidential election in October 1999 and resulted in the establishment of a heterogeneous government prone to conflict.

The 1999 election and the establishment of the Wahid government

The June 1999 general election was the first free election in Indonesia since 1955. Forty-eight parties competed, with 21 winning at least one of the 462 seats in the

¹⁰¹ At that time, the MPR consisted of 500 DPR members plus 200 appointed members (135 representatives from regional legislatures and 65 appointed members from various social groups).

DPR.¹⁰² The election outcome had different implications for its major players. Based on the PDI-P's victory Megawati saw herself as the natural candidate to succeed President Habibie. Although the PDI-P had won the largest number of votes, this only translated into 153 seats in the DPR and 185 seats in the MPR, only marginally higher than Golkar's 181 MPR seats. This meant that Megawati would have to enter political negotiations with other political parties or factions to secure support for her presidential candidacy. However, she failed to consolidate her advantage by neglecting to forge coalitions and taking Wahid's support for granted. Particularly the latter was a serious miscalculation. Disappointed by the PKB's low turnout in the elections and filled with indignation by Megawati's decision to give the PKB only one cabinet position as well as numerous other incidents within which she made him feel that she now held the upper hand in their relationship, Wahid "concluded that Megawati had no intention to give him a major role in her political plans" (Mietzner 2000: 42). Megawati had also alienated Amien Rais, whose National Mandate Party (PAN) had only received 34 seats in the DPR.

Initially acknowledging her right to lead, Rais became affronted by Megawati's disinterest in forming a coalition with him and started to assemble a coalition among those who feared being sidelined by a Megawati presidency. He found allies in the Islamic political parties whose leaders rejected the idea of a female president and feared that under a secular-nationalist Megawati presidency political Islam might be sidelined. Amien Rais promoted this alliance – dubbed the 'central axis' (*poros tengah*) – as an alternative to the growing tension between the Megawati and Habibie camps. By floating the idea of nominating Wahid as its

¹⁰² The 500 member DPR consists of 462 elected and 38 appointed from the military and the police.

presidential candidate Amien Rais convinced Wahid and the PKB to join *poros tengah*. Wahid's decision to join *poros tengah* meant that he turned his back on Megawati and joined forces with modernist Islamic parties, "a group that he had so often branded as a threat to the unity of the state" (Mietzner 2000: 49) and "once denounced as Islamist sectarians" (Mietzner 2000: 40).

Following the rejection of incumbent President Habibie's accountability speech and his subsequent decision to pull out of the presidential race, the majority of the Golkar faction threw support behind Wahid. General Wiranto, who had been officially nominated by Habibie as his vice president, instructed the faction that represented Indonesian military and police forces (TNI/Polri) to vote for Wahid in the MPR general session since Wahid had offered him "'protection' and high office" (McIntyre 2001: 94). Eventually Wahid defeated Megawati with 373 votes to 313 (Crouch 2010: 28).

The bargaining and compromise that resulted in Wahid's victory were reflected in the structure of governance and the cabinet: PDI-P's Megawati became vice president, *poros tengah* leader Amien Rais MPR speaker, Golkar chairman Akbar Tanjung DPR speaker, and members of the leading parties as well as military officers were awarded with key cabinet posts (Cleary et al. 2000: 5; ICG 2001: 6) that allowed them access to economic assets (Mietzner 2001: 41). However, this power sharing deal crumbled when Wahid started to change the formation of the coalition cabinet and ignored the interests of key political parties.

Cabinet dismissals and the disclosure of Buloggate

When Wahid started systemically to replace key cabinet ministers with those loyal to him, his relationship to the political parties that had backed his election deteriorated. This narrowed Wahid's base in parliament (Siddell 2001: 3) and led to growing opposition from those parties that had been cut off from controlling resourceful institutions (Horowitz 2013: 103). As pointed out by Mietzner (2009: 265), "[a]s a result, key political groups alienated by Wahid forged a coalition against him, with parliament serving as its major institutional base".

In November 1999, only one month after the formation of the cabinet, Wahid soured the relationship with *poros tengah* by making Coordinating Minister for People's Welfare Hamzah Haz, who was also PPP chairman, resign from cabinet. General Wiranto (Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs) was also forced to resign in February 2000 by Wahid "for his alleged involvement in atrocities committed in East Timor and Aceh" (Miller 2009: 62). Wahid's subsequent dismissals of Jusuf Kalla (Minister of Trade and Industry) from Golkar and Laksmana Sukardi (Minister of Investment and State Enterprises) from PDI-P-angered their respective political parties (Haris 2002: 14-5).¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Furthermore, the replacement of Sukardi with PBNU deputy chair Rozy Munir raised speculations that Wahid was allocating key ministries to loyalists in an attempt to gain control over "financially lucrative state industries" (Liddle 2001: 209-10). What made matters worse was that Wahid did not clarify KKN allegations that had been raised against Rozy Munir before appointing him to the ministerial post (Tempo, 1 May 2000a; Tempo, 22 May 2000a) from which he had previously fired Laksmana Sukardi because of unsustained corruption allegations. Additionally, the dismissal of the two economic ministers on grounds of corruption allegations raised concerns Wahid was using such allegations as a pretext for firing ministers (Ziegenhain 2008: 141). Reportedly corruption allegations had also played a role in the replacement of former Welfare Minister and chair of PPP, Hamzah Haz (Liddle 2001: 209; Gorjão 2003: 30-1, Barton 2002: 290). Previously Wahid had mentioned that three ministers of his government were involved in KKN, but refused to say specifically who they were. Soon afterwards, in November 1999, Hamzah Haz, suddenly resigned (Gorjão 2003: 30-1) ostensibly to focus on leading and managing his party (Kompas, 27 November 1999). "Haz denied that there was

This anger intensified when in addition to Wahid's official explanation that Sukardi and Kalla had been dismissed due a lack of cohesion among the economic team, another explanation, namely that both had been dismissed because of their alleged involvement in KKN cases in their respective sectors, surfaced in the media. This confidential explanation that had been made by Wahid during a closed consultation meeting with DPR members was immediately leaked to the media which reported the president as saying that both ministers were afflicted with KKN.¹⁰⁴

Kompas (28 April 2000),¹⁰⁵ for example, came up with the headline 'Two former ministers mentioned as involved in KKN'¹⁰⁶. Sukardi and Kalla – who was also sacked from his simultaneously held position as Bulog chairman – reacted to the media reports and dismissed the President's allegations as slander (*Kompas*, 28 April 2000). Kalla even threatened that:

A session of the DPR's special committee will prove whether it is me or him (Abdurrahman) who is involved in corruption, collusion, and nepotism.¹⁰⁷

any link between his resignation and Wahid's statement; but most observers were convinced that there was a connection" (Barton 2002: 290).

¹⁰⁴ This meeting, on 27 April 2000, which was initially scheduled to be broadcasted live by *TVRI*, was closed at the President's request (*Kompas*, 28 April 2000; *The Jakarta Post*, 28 April 2000). Reportedly the president also asked that nothing of what was said in connection with the dismissals should be released to journalists. Apparently, the president's request for confidentiality was based on the consideration that he wanted to address the reasons for the ministerial replacements openly within parliament while simultaneously avoiding negative consequences for the two ministers (*The Jakarta Post*, 21 July 2000a; Wahid, S. 2000).

¹⁰⁵ *Kompas* (28 April 2000) named Golkar Party faction chairman Eki Syachrudin as having disclosed the information to reporters after attending the consultation meeting.

¹⁰⁶ 'Dua mantan menteri disebut terlibat KKN'.

¹⁰⁷ "Di sidang Panitia Khusus DPR nanti, akan terbukti saya atau dia (Abdurrahman) yang berlaku korupsi, kolusi, dan nepotisme" (*Tempo*, 1 May 2000a).

I'm waiting for the formation of a special committee in the DPR. I'll tell everything. Later it will be proven, whether it's me or Gus Dur who is lying, me or him who is involved in corruption, collusion, and nepotism.¹⁰⁸

Interestingly, the above threats were published in the very *Tempo* cover story that first mentioned the names of Abdurrahman Wahid and his brother Hasyim Wahid in connection to the disappearance of Rp 35 billion from Bulog Yanatera.¹⁰⁹ The fact that a corruption case within Bulog allegedly involving the president and members of his inner circle was exposed shortly after the sacking of Jusuf Kalla from his position as Bulog chairman prompted speculations by the media that the exposure was related to Kalla's dismissal (The Straits Times, 10 June 2000; DJI, 25 May 2000). However, *Tempo* itself did not name the sources and only wrote that the scandal was revealed by a high ranking MPR member and confirmed by a Bulog senior official. Thus, it is impossible to know whether Kalla deliberately revealed a corruption case within the agency from which he was just fired, as a weapon against the president or whether it was a random sequence of events.

By mid-2000 the discontent among the key political parties over Wahid's actions was so palpable that they called for the transformation of the August 2000 MPR Annual Session into a Special Session that could impeach the president. Additionally, they began to attack Wahid by exercising their parliamentary rights through an interpellation motion over the cabinet dismissals of Kalla and Sukardi,

¹⁰⁸ "Saya menunggu pembentukan Panitia Khusus di DPR. Akan saya ceritakan semuanya. Nanti akan terbukti, saya atau Gus Dur yang bohong, saya atau dia yang ber-KKN" (Tempo, 1 May 2000b).

¹⁰⁹ In the article 'Behind those dismissals' ('Di Balik Pencopotan itu'), Tempo, 1 May 2000a.

which was approved by the DPR with large majority, and the right of inquiry (*hak angket*) into Bulog-Bruneigate.¹¹⁰

Initially suggested by the PPP faction, the proposal for an inquiry into Buloggate (Republika, 25 June 2000; Republika, 26 June 2000) gained support from several other parliamentary factions.¹¹¹ The Reform faction suggested expanding the proposed inquiry to investigate also the confusion surrounding the US\$2 million donation from the Sultan of Brunei (Republika, 29 June 2000). Ultimately, the proposal to form a parliamentary inquiry into both scandals received the support of 237 legislators and was submitted to parliament in mid-July 2000 (Republika, 13 July 2000). However, the DPR's consultative body (Badan Musyawarah, Bamus) agreed to propose the inquiry not immediately but at the DPR's forthcoming plenary session on 28 August 2000 (Republika, 19 July 2000). This provided antagonistic parliamentarians with a bargaining card to sustain political pressure against Wahid until after the Annual MPR session (Liddle, 3 August 2000). Meanwhile, in an attempt to ease tension, Wahid sent a conciliatory letter to the DPR which resulted in the DPR's decision to let the matter rest until after the annual MPR session in August 2000 (Barton 2002: 314-5; Mietzner 2001: 42).

At the annual session of the MPR on 7-18 August 2000, within which the President had to account for his performance, Wahid "faced criticism for his erratic

¹¹⁰ In June 2000 the DPR approved the interpellation motion with large majority (Gorjão 2003: 31-2). Meanwhile, tensions between Wahid and the DPR intensified (Fealy 2001: 107) when the latter in the interpellation session on 20 July 2000 refused to explain the dismissals on constitutional grounds (Horowitz 2013: 103; Kompas, 21 July 2000) and claimed that the appointment and dismissal of ministers was a presidential prerogative (Ziegenhain 2008: 141; Van Dijk 2002: 521).

¹¹¹ In this context it should be mentioned that Wahid had previously alienated the PPP (which was associated with PAN, one of the main elements in the Central Axis in the DPR) by replacing the Welfare Minister and chair of PPP Hamzah Haz with a non-PPP figure (Garjao 2003: 31).

political style, reputed cronyism, failure to repair the economy and inability to control escalating communal violence and separatism” (Huxley 2002: 20). Political tension only subsided when Wahid closed a power sharing agreement with Megawati and promised a cabinet reshuffle (Mietzner 2001: 42).

However, the announcement of the new cabinet on 23 August 2000 made it obvious that Wahid “intended to keep power in his own hands” (ICG 2001: 6). Instead of enforcing the coalition relationship with those political parties that had supported his presidency Wahid marginalised them and entrusted the management of state assets to those loyal to him.¹¹² The new cabinet did not include any Golkar representatives, none of the key cabinet posts went to PDI-P (ICG 2001: 6) and PAN lost the Ministry of Finance. Additionally, legislators were angry that, from shortly after his election, Wahid had “displayed contempt for the coalition that had brought him to power and for parliament itself” (McIntyre 2005: 223). Wahid’s stance was based on his conviction that Indonesia’s presidential system “guaranteed him an undisturbed five-year term, with or without the support of the legislature” (Mietzner 2009: 262).

On 28 August 2000, only a week after the announcement of the new cabinet, the DPR retaliated against Wahid when it voted for a special inquiry into Bulog and Bruneigate. Of the 356 legislators who participated in the vote, 307 voted for,

¹¹² The announcement of the new cabinet on 23 August 2000 was accompanied by criticism from observers and politicians who remarked that the cabinet was almost wholly comprised of people deemed loyal to President Wahid. *Tempo* (3 September 2000a), for example, commented “this cabinet is a pure cabinet Abdurrahman Wahid” (“kabinet ini adalah murni kabinet Abdurrahman Wahid”). This of course, gave the impression that the new cabinet was not free from KKN and raised questions about the government’s commitment to clean government and good governance. On the other hand Wahid strengthened the Cabinet’s unity by removing ministers with dual-loyalties (*Tempo*, 28 August 2000a; *Tempo*, 28 August 2000b; *The Jakarta Post*, 24 August 2000).

four voted against and 45 abstained. An overwhelming majority had turned against Wahid (Media Indonesia, 29 August 2000).¹¹³ Greg Barton (2002: 345), author of Wahid's official biography, commented on the establishment of the committee as follows:

Although the grievances of individual parliamentarians against the president were multifarious, in the end they decided on the single best mechanism to achieve his downfall: to push ahead with the investigations of the special parliamentary committee (pansus) examining the Bulogate and Bruneigate scandals. It was felt that this would provide a suitable trigger for an impeachment, on the grounds that proof of corruption constituted gross violation of the constitution. This was the constitutional requirement for impeaching a sitting president.

The inquiry committee – Pansus Bulog and Brunei – consisted of 50 legislators¹¹⁴ across political parties and was split into two sub-committees to investigate one scandal each. The composition of the committee reflected the composition of parliament. Thus, the committee was dominated by legislators from Golkar, the Central Axis and PDI-P, with legislators representing Wahid's political vehicle PKB in the minority. Furthermore, the committee included some outspoken legislators, such as Ade Komaruddin (Golkar) and Alvin Lie (PAN) who had strongly criticised Wahid and spearheaded the DPR's attacks against the president (The Straits Times, 8 November 2000; Reuters, 5 September 2000).

¹¹³ "In fact, in retrospect, the impeachment process of President Wahid began with this vote" (Indrayana 2008: 229).

¹¹⁴ Party of Struggle (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan, PDI-P) 15, Golkar Party (Partai Golongan Karya, Golkar) 12, United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, PPP) 6, National Awakening Party (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa, PKB) 5, Reform Faction (coalition between National Mandate Party (Partai Amanat Nasional, PAN) and Justice Party (Partai Keadilan, PK) 4, TNI/Polri 4, Crescent Star Party (Partai Bulan Bintang, PBB) 1, (Kesatuan Kebangsaan Indonesia, KKI) 1, (Partai Demokrasi Kasih Bangsa, PDKB) 1, (Perserikatan Daulatul Ummah, PDU) 1 (Pansus Bulog-Bruneigate 2001: 7).

2.2 The DPR's strategies

The establishment of a parliamentary inquiry into Bulog-Bruneigate was crucial. It demonstrated the DPR's emancipation from its New Order legacy of being largely a rubber stamp for the executive and sustained prolonged news coverage.¹¹⁵ Prolonged news coverage is secured by continuous news supply through routine reporting (Tiffen 1999). Most legislators denied that the inquiry was meant to attack the president or was a conspiracy to topple him, but was rather an effort to cease the slanderous allegations against the president and to restore his good name (Republika, 1 November 2000; DJI, 28 August 2000; The Straits Times, 29 August 2000). By carefully phrasing the inquiry's aim in this way and emphasising that the DPR was merely carrying out its control function to guarantee a clean government (Reuters, 5 September 2000), legislators denied political motives behind the investigation (The Jakarta Post, 25 August 2000; The Financial Times, 5 September 2000). Simultaneously, legislators made it quite clear from the beginning – even before the establishment of the parliamentary inquiry – that if Wahid was found to have abused his power they would push for impeachment proceedings. In so doing they linked the outcome of the investigation with Wahid's legitimacy.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ For example, MPR speaker and PAN chairman Amien Rais, one of Wahid's most outspoken critics who had previously publicly regretted having proposed Wahid for presidency and suggested he resign over his failure to resolve the country's multiple problems (BBC, 26 October 2000; BBC, 27 October 2000), hailed the DPR's vote to launch an inquiry into Bulog-Bruneigate as further proof of the greater power that the legislative branch enjoyed. He argued that "It shows that the House is no longer subordinate to the wishes of the executive branch, as in the past" (The Jakarta Post, 29 August 2000a).

¹¹⁶ DPR speaker Akbar Tanjung, for example, had already raised the possibility of calling a MPR Special Session when he received the signatures for an inquiry into Bulog- and Bruneigate (Kompas, 13 July 2000). MPR speaker Amien Rais confirmed that if Wahid's involvement in both scandals was proven a special session would be a certainty and that this would be the end of the Wahid government (Republika, 17 October 2000a). Legislators, including Alvin Lie and members of the Golkar faction, stated they would press for a special parliamentary session to impeach Wahid if it turned out that he

During its working period (from October 2000 to January 2001) it became increasingly obvious that the committee's focus shifted from probing Wahid's possible involvement in both scandals to efforts to topple him (Kompas, 29 January 2001). However, this process was subtle and committee members masked their real intentions by referring to the DPR's function to oversee government and denied allegations that the committee was designed to overthrow Wahid and to prove that Wahid abused his power, thereby giving parliament a reason to impeach the president (Tempo Interaktif, 26 December 2000; Suara Pembaruan, 31 October 2000).

Those arguments, that the DPR was exercising its control function towards the government in concert with the spirit of *reformasi* and thus in line with the interest of the media who adopted an explicit watchdog stance towards the president. This was a big advantage for Wahid's opponents and enabled them successfully to use the jargon of press freedom and democracy against Wahid. The following discussion takes a closer look at how those committee members eager to implicate Wahid in Buloggate used the media during the parliamentary investigation process.

Commenting on and leaking information from the committee hearings

The decision of the DPR to hold the Bulog-Bruneigate hearings as 'closed' (*'secara tertutup'*) meetings made the process less transparent and shifted the power balance in favour of the political elite since it was they who could filter the information rather than the media which – when they broadcast live or report on open meetings

was indeed implicated in Buloggate (The Straits Times, 16 October 2000). Committee chairman Bachtiar Chamsyah (PPP) contended that if Wahid was involved in the scandals his government would fall (Republika, 22 September 2000).

– have to decide on the amount and character of information that will be transmitted to the public. Witnesses as well as committee members had the opportunity to speak to journalists before and after the hearing outside the meeting room (Kompas, 18 October 2000; Media Indonesia, 19 October 2000). Consequently, those who physically attended the hearings could ‘filter’ information they provided to the media on the committee’s meetings’ substance and the testimony of witnesses according to their interests by emphasizing or omitting particular details; and in doing so creating the impression that Wahid was indeed involved in the scandals.

For example, in early December 2000 the committee’s deputy chairman, Alvin Lie (PAN), told the media that according to his personal opinion President Wahid could no longer escape the Bruneigate case. By further stating that he had complete and powerful data he signalled indirectly to the media that he had more information which he might be willing to share upon request (Media Indonesia, 12 December 2000). In the context of Buloggate, committee members – hiding behind their anonymity – had stated early in the investigation process that the involvement of Wahid could be expected (Republika, 18 October 2000a) and that “[f]rom what we have now, we can already conclude that the President is involved in abuse of power in the Bulog scam” (The Straits Times, 8 November 2000). Committee members opposed to Wahid also used the capture of Wahid’s masseur, Suwondo, in their interest by raising suspicions that Suwondo’s capture was a prearranged matter. Alvin Lie, for example, raised the possibility that Suwondo was arrested on purpose to defend Wahid (The Straits Times, 16 October 2000) and so Suwondo could be made the scapegoat (Republika, 18 October 2000b). Those comments by

committee members on the investigation process were an elite strategy to politicise the inquiry and to create the perception that Wahid was involved in the scandals.

A further strategy – albeit unlawful – was the leaking of testimonies incriminating Wahid from the committee’s closed door meetings.¹¹⁷ By leaking the substance from the closed hearings committee members deliberately breached the DPR’s code of conduct (*tata tertib*) and the stipulations of Law No. 6/1954 on the DPR’s right of inquiry (Media Indonesia, 19 October 2000). Even though violation of confidentiality could lead to moral and administrative sanctions or even an expulsion from the DPR under the relevant DPR regulations (Lumbuun, 29 January 2001), details of the committee’s findings¹¹⁸ as well as information on the testimony of witnesses who had been questioned during closed-door committee meetings were widely publicized in the media without any sanction against those who leaked the information (Lumbuun, 29 January 2001; Muhammad 2002: 181). The following discussion shows that the leaking of testimonies of Bulog officials and members of the police force that incriminated Wahid was used successfully to undermine

¹¹⁷ The sessions of the Bulog-Bruneigate committee – within which the committee asked for explanations and information from people allegedly involved in Buloggate and Bruneigate and those who had knowledge of the two cases (Panus Bulog-Bruneigate 2001: 7; BBC, 5 September 2000) – were conducted as closed-door meetings (Panus Bulog-Bruneigate 2001: 6). This meant its substance was confidential as a matter of principle and must not be made public by its attendees (journalists, members of the committee, witnesses, observers) (Lumbuun, 29 January 2001; Kompas, 31 October 2000).

¹¹⁸ For example, that the committee would come to the conclusion “that the President was involved in the two scandals, abused his power and told lies” was published in the media prior to the report’s presentation to the DPR on 29 January 2001 (The Jakarta Post, 24 January 2001). Then the leaking of copies of the committee’s final report from the DPR’s closed plenary session on 29 January to the media prior to the DPR’s voting on 1 February (The Jakarta Post, 31 January 2001b).

Wahid's legitimacy (Republika, 1 December 2000; Media Indonesia, 1 November 2000).¹¹⁹

Following the testimony of high ranking Bulog officials¹²⁰ on 17 October 2000 committee members Ade Komaruddin (Golkar) and Didi Supriyanto (PDI-P) told reporters that the three officials had testified that Wahid had ordered the transfer of the Yanatera funds (AWSJ, 18 October 2000; Republika, 18 October 2000b). Furthermore, information leaked from former Bulog executive Saleh Sofyan's second testimony on 20 November 2000 contradicted Wahid's previous denials that he did not know anything about the disbursement of the Yanatera funds, alleging that Wahid knew about Suwondo's hiding place while he was a fugitive (Republika, 22 November 2000; Tempo, 4 December 2000).

Against the background of the testimony of members of the police force¹²¹ on 2 November 2000, committee member Hafizd Zawawi (Golkar) told the media that according to the police's testimony the main characters in the Bulog case were Sapuan and Suwondo, and that the case was unrelated to Wahid. In fact, the police would treat the case as one of embezzlement and fraud. By assessing the police's testimony as an effort to divert the Bulog case from an issue between the government, more specifically the president, and Yantera to a private matter between Suwondo and Yanatera (Republika, 3 November 2000) Zawawi utilized information that could have been understood as the police genuinely not believing that there was sufficient evidence that Wahid was a major suspect as a means to

¹¹⁹ Committee members did not doubt the credibility of the testimonials of Rusdihardjo and Saleh Sofyan.

¹²⁰ Namely Syafei Atmodiwiryo, Moeljono, Jacob Ishak, and Jusuf Kalla (Tempo, 12 November 2000).

¹²¹ Namely Mulyono Sulaiman, Alex Bambang Riatmodjo, and Harry Montolalu (Republika, 3 November 2000).

raise doubts about police independence and to imply police collusion with the president.

However, the most spectacular incident was when details of the *in camera* testimony of former National Police Chief General Rusdiharjo were widely publicized in the media (Lumbuun, 29 January 2001; Gatra 4 December 2000). Rusdihardjo's testimony that Wahid had given an Indonesian businesswoman, Siti Farikha, a cheque for Rp 5 billion , which was reportedly obtained from Bulog Yanatera, heavily incriminated Wahid in Buloggate (The Jakarta Post, 2 December 2000; Media Indonesia, 29 November 2000). Indeed, Rusdiharjo's testimony substantiated the public's belief that Wahid was involved in the scandal and in so doing contributed to mobilising public opinion against him. An opinion poll conducted by *Tempo Interaktif* shortly after Rusdihardjo's testimony showed that more than 80 per cent of respondents believed Wahid was involved in Buloggate, whereas only 14 per cent believed otherwise (Tempo, 17 December 2000). Furthermore, Rusdiharjo's testimony delivered ammunition to Wahid's critics in the DPR who had been utilizing Wahid's alleged involvement in the scandals as a reason to call for his resignation (The Jakarta Post, 2 December 2000).

Media events

Committee members also frequently set up meetings with civil society groups, students, and visited famous personalities to receive and seek moral support and

encouragement for the inquiry.¹²² During the four months of its operations the committee received almost daily various groups from society who came to convey their aspirations (Media Indonesia, 1 February 2001).

Those staged events were aimed at keeping the scandal in the media and showcasing the committee as having broad support from the public. Additionally, such events provided a platform for committee members to criticise the actions of the president (Media Indonesia, 14 December 2000) or to strengthen the interpretation that Wahid was involved in the scandals. During a meeting with prominent Indonesian Muslim intellectual Nurcholish Madjid, for example, committee member Ade Komaruddin stated that the committee had already received lots of information and evidence of the involvement of President Wahid (Media Indonesia, 7 October 2000). Committee members also utilised those events to affirm that the committee would not compromise with anyone (Republika, 10 October 2000) or be influenced by money politics (Media Indonesia, 7 December 2000) in its search for the facts (Media Indonesia, 18 January 2001). These events and the committee members' pledge to do their work properly were rooted in public distrust of the committee and concerns at political bargaining among the elite (Republika, 29 November 2000; Republika, 30 November 2000). Indeed, even though the media shared the legislators' interest in uncovering the Bulog scandal, they were also critical of the DPR's ability to do so and closely scrutinized the legislators' actions and motives.¹²³

¹²² See, for example, Republika, 10 October 2000; Republika, 9 December 2000; Media Indonesia, 10 October 2000; Media Indonesia, 6 December 2000; Media Indonesia, 7 December 2000; Media Indonesia, 2 December 2000; Media Indonesia, 14 December 2000; Media Indonesia, 18 January 2001).

¹²³ See chapter three, section 3.1 of this thesis.

Accusing the government of hampering the inquiry

Another strategy adopted by committee members to discredit Wahid and to create the perception that he was indeed involved in Buloggate was to disseminate allegations through the media that Wahid's camp was actively hampering the inquiry's investigation. By, for example, telling the press that at least two committee members had recently refused a 25-billion-rupiah offer by a tycoon close to the president (The Straits Times, 8 November 2000) and that he himself had been approached by PKB functionaries to meet with Wahid (Tempo, 12 November 2000), Alvin Lie created the impression that Wahid supporters were trying to subvert the committee's work. This impression was intensified by adding that he had received anonymous threats (The Straits Times, 8 November 2000) and by media reports alleging witnesses had been terrorised in relation to their testimonies (The Jakarta Post, 1 November 2000). More specifically, it was reported that, during his testimony on 30 October, former Bulog executive Saleh Sofyan had asked for police protection since he had been threatened with violence by an unknown person in relation to his testimony. Committee member Samuel Koto (PAN, Reform Faction) commented that intimidation directed towards Sofyan was understandable since Sofyan was thought to possess information or data that would shed light on the Wahid's involvement. By adding that some people would be prepared to defend Wahid at any cost Kotto implied that it was Wahid supporters who were threatening Sofyan (Media Indonesia, 1 November 2000).

2.3 The government's strategies

Wahid's and the PKB's strategies focused on denying the accusations and attacking the motives of the accusers. The PKB as well as the NU promoted the view that the scandals and the parliamentary inquiry into the scandals were part of a larger conspiracy to topple the President.¹²⁴ The following section elaborates on the PKB's and Wahid's strategies to deal with the accusations.

PKB's strategies

The PKB was convinced of Wahid's innocence in both scandals. It argued that the \$US 2 million donation from the Sultan of Brunei was a personal gift to Wahid (Republika, 14 July 2000) and that Wahid was not involved in the embezzlement of Bulog Yanatera funds (Media Indonesia, 5 June 2000a). PKB secretary general Muhaimin Iskandar, for example, argued that Buloggate was not a corruption case but a mere case of fraud between Bulog deputy chief Sapuan and Suwondo (The Jakarta Post, 5 June 2000; Media Indonesia, 28 January 2001a) that was "politically manipulated by 'certain' political elites to undermine the president" (The Jakarta Post, 5 June 2000). According to Muhaimin Iskandar the Bulog case was part of a larger effort by Wahid's opponents – the remnants of the New Order and those disappointed by unfavourable political repositioning – to overthrow Wahid through a trial by public opinion, by creating and propagating the perception that Wahid was guilty through the mass media (Gatra, 5 December 2000).

¹²⁴ See, for example, The Jakarta Post, 25 January 2000; Tempo Interaktif, 29 January 2001; Media Indonesia, 5 June 2000a; Media Indonesia, 14 July 2000.

Discrediting the parliamentary inquiry

Criticising the DPR and its inquiry into Bulog-Bruneigate the PKB described the DPR's investigation as politically motivated (Media Indonesia, 14 July 2000). Overall, the PKB tried to create a perception that the committee had no intention of serving the objectives of transparency or accountability. Rather it was an instrument of the forces of the New Order in the DPR and its allies to unseat President Wahid.

According to the PKB this was already evident in the DPR's decision on 28 August 2000 to approve only an inquiry into Bulog-Bruneigate but to reject a second proposal to launch an inquiry into unaccounted Bulog non-budgetary funds amounting to Rp 2.8 trillion from 1993 to 1999 (Media Indonesia, 27 August 2000).¹²⁵ Arguing that the PKB had voted for both proposals in order to show their commitment to KKN eradication and good governance (The Straits Times, 29 August 2000, The Jakarta Post, 29 August 2000a) they denied these intentions to Golkar and *poros tengah* members who had voted for an inquiry only into Bulog-Bruneigate. For PKB chairman Matori Abdul Djalil the attitude of Golkar and *poros tengah* confirmed the suspicion that neither of those parties had a genuine interest in achieving a clean government, but rather wanted to topple President Wahid. This scenario and a failure of *reformasi* would be beneficial for Golkar since it would ensure that its members were not brought to task for their wrongdoings during the New Order (Republika, 30 August 2000; The Jakarta Post, 29 August 2000a; Kompas, 29 August 2000). Matori further claimed that Golkar did not vote for an inquiry into Bulog's non-budgetary funds out of fear that some of its prominent

¹²⁵ This proposal, with Golkar and *poros tengah* voting against it, was rejected by the DPR with 152 to 162 votes (Republika, 29 August 2000).

members were involved in the arbitrary misuse of Bulog's non-budgetary funds (BBC, 30 August 2000). Taufikurrahman Saleh, chairman of the PKB's parliamentary faction, claimed the political parties that had voted *for* an inquiry into Bulog-Bruneigate but *against* an inquiry into Bulog's non-budgetary funds were hampering reform and perpetuating the *status quo* through being inconsistent in dismantling KKN cases that had caused losses to the state (Republika, 31 August 2000).

As the following examples show, the PKB continued to uphold this line of argument in its critique of the inquiry. PKB deputy secretary Chatibul Umam Wiranu stated that "[t]hrough the commission the House no longer performs its controlling duty, but a systematic act of corroding the government's legitimacy and character assassination in a bid to oust the President" (The Jakarta Post, 29 January 2001). PKB legislator Abdul Khaliq Achmad and Arifin Junaidi respectively claimed that the investigation was politicized to discredit the president (The Jakarta Post, 31 January 2001a) and that the committee was "part of a conspiracy to undermine Gus Dur" (The Strait Times, 8 November 2000). PKB committee member Ali Masykur Moesa criticized the committee for conducting its investigations based on an assumption the President was involved (The Jakarta Post, 9 November 2000) and argued that "the investigation has been engineered by certain groups in the special committee to come to the conclusion that the President was involved in the scandals and their main objective is to discredit the government" (The Jakarta Post, 23 January 2001a).

The PKB also disputed the legality of the committee and argued that the committee had violated parliamentary procedures during its investigation (AFP, 29

January 2001). Allegations included that the committee had failed to produce its monthly report during its working period, never reported its budget, and leaked witness testimonies as well as investigation results to the press (The Jakarta Post, 31 January 2001a). Furthermore the PKB alleged that the committee was seemingly acting as if it was a judge and forced those giving testimonies to make false confessions (Media Indonesia, 28 January 2001a). It claimed that the committee's report was unbalanced, being mostly based on interpretations instead of facts (Antara, 1 February 2001).

In reaction to the leaking of witness testimonies by the committee, Muhaimin Iskandar criticised the committee of violating Law Number 6/1954 on the DPR's right of inquiry according to which committee members must keep the testimonies obtained in the examination secret (Media Indonesia, 19 October 2000). He threatened to propose the establishment of a DPR Honorary Council (Dewan Kehormatan DPR) to prosecute the committee if it continued to exceed its authority and functions (Tempo Interaktif, 23 October 2000). PKB legislators also threatened to press charges over the leaking of Rusdihardjo's testimony (Republika, 1 December 2000).

Furthermore, PKB legislators also tried to deny the credibility of key testimonies by pointing out that "Suwondo was working for former President Suharto" (The Jakarta Post, 5 June 2000) and questioning the credibility of Rusdihardjo's testimony by suggesting that Rusdihardo incriminated Wahid out of resentment at having been replaced as chief of police with Bimantaro (Republika, 1

December 2000).¹²⁶ The PKB members labelled Rusdihardjo's statement as slanderous (Media Indonesia, 28 January 2001a).

In order to promote their point of view the PKB published a White Paper following the DPR's memorandum against President Wahid on 1 February 2001 (Kompas, 17 February 2001; Media Indonesia, 18 February 2001).¹²⁷ The publication of the White Paper in mid-February 2001 was preceded by a publicity campaign through the media as well as through dialogues and panel discussions.¹²⁸

Revealing corruption allegations against Golkar and its chairman

The PKB's counterattacks were particularly aimed at Golkar. This is evident in the PKB's support for a parliamentary inquiry into all of Bulog's non-budgetary funds following allegations that Golkar had received Bulog non-budgetary funds to finance its 1999 election campaign (The Jakarta Post, 27 June 2000a; The Jakarta Post, 12 May 2000).¹²⁹ Additionally, PKB members claimed that Golkar chairman Akbar Tandjung should be called to account for his alleged involvement in financial irregularities in the Civil Servants Housing Savings' Scheme (Tabungan Perumahan, Taperum) and proposed a parliamentary inquiry into the scandal (dubbed

¹²⁶ Wahid dismissed Rusdiharjo as National Police chief on 18 September 2000 over his failure to arrest Tommy Suharto and to maintain security in Jakarta (The Jakarta Post, 19 September 2000).

¹²⁷ F-KB (Fraksi Kebangkitan Bangsa). 2001. *Menegakkan kebenaran: kesaksian Fraksi Kebangkitan Bangsa DPR RI tentang dana Yanatera Bulog dan bantuan Sultan Brunei: buku putih*. Jakarta: Fraksi Kebangkitan Bangsa, Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, Republik Indonesia.

¹²⁸ The PKB stated in the media that one million copies will be printed and distributed free of charge (Gatra, 13 February 2001). Additionally, the White Paper was promoted locally through dialogues and panel discussions that in turn received media coverage (Tempo Interaktif, 24 February 2001; Suara Merdeka, 25 February 2001).

¹²⁹ A special inquiry into all of Bulog's non-budgetary funds and not only into the Rp 35 billion allegedly stolen by President Wahid's masseur was initially proposed by the United Development Party (PPP) faction.

'Taperumgate'). The allegations of Tandjung's involvement in Taperumgate were based on an audit report by the State Audit Agency (Badan Pemeriksaan Keuangan, BPK) of the Civil Servants Housing Savings' Scheme that had identified financial irregularities amounting to Rp 179.9 billion in 1996 while Tandjung was state minister for people's housing. However, the PKB's counterattacks against Golkar failed due to insufficient support by other factions to establish a parliamentary inquiry into all of Bulog's non-budgetary funds and their focus on KKN allegations involving President Wahid.

In January 2001, however, the PKB faction attacked Akbar Tanjung again by calling for an investigation into the alleged misappropriation of DPR funds amounting to Rp 35 billion that had occurred in 2000.¹³⁰ Then, in February 2001, following the issuance of the DPR's memorandum against President Wahid, the PKB intensified their attacks to discredit Golkar and individual party members. Those included revived allegations that Golkar had received Rp 90 billion from Bulog during the 1999 election (Tempo, 26 February 2001b; The Jakarta Post, 14 February 2001) and efforts to urge Attorney General Marzuki Darusman to speed up the investigation of corruption cases allegedly involving leading Golkar figures, including Akbar Tandjung and Ginandjar Kartasasmita (Tempo, 25 February 2001; Republika, 9 February 2001). Bringing up those allegations at this particular point in time, i.e. to coincide with the issuance of the DPR's memorandum against President Wahid, suggests that the corruption allegations were a political manoeuvre to get

¹³⁰ This concerns two cases: the alleged squander of Rp 21 billion during the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) conference in September 2000 and the alleged squander of Rp 14 billion for the renovation of the DPR/MPR housing complex in Kalibata, South Jakarta, in July 2000 (The Jakarta Post, 18 January 2001; Gatra, 17 January 2001).

Golkar to open negotiations for compromise in order to avoid further steps towards Wahid's impeachment (Tempo, 26 February 2001b).

President Wahid's strategies

Wahid called allegations of his involvement in Buloggate a figment of imagination (Republika, 13 July 2000) and a part of a conspiracy to topple him (The Jakarta Post, 9 May 2000). Consequently, he denied any involvement in the extortion of money from Bulog Yanatera (Republika, 7 May 2000a) and affirmed that he had no knowledge about the case or about Suwondo's actions (Media Indonesia, 25 May 2000). He emphasised that the law should take its course in solving the case (Media Indonesia, 6 June 2000) and was co-operative with, and talked to, the media about the allegations. For example, in a *Kompas* interview within which he was confronted with Sapuan's allegations – including, that he had authorised the disbursement of Bulog funds. He also repeatedly stated that he would be available to be questioned by the police and to provide clarification to the DPR.¹³¹ During the Annual MPR session he clarified that the US\$ 2 million donation from the Sultan of Brunei had been a personal gift (Kompas, 10 August 2000). In respect to Buloggate he stated that "the investigation into this case has been completed and the case file has been transferred to the South Jakarta District Court dated 8 August 2000 on charges of harming state finances"¹³² (Kompas, 10 August 2000). This statement, however, and Wahid's earlier statement that according to the police Buloggate was just "a civil

¹³¹ Republika, 5 June 2000; Republika, 17 June 2000; Media Indonesia, 5 June 2000b; Media Indonesia, 20 June 2000; The Jakarta Post, 27 June 2000b.

¹³² "Penyidikan atas kasus ini telah diselesaikan dan berkas perkara telah dilimpahkan ke Pengadilan Negeri Jakarta Selatan tanggal 8 Agustus 2000 dengan tuduhan merugikan keuangan negara" (Kompas, 10 August 2000).

case of lending and borrowing"¹³³ (Republika, 16 June 2000), only resulted in legislators becoming more suspicious. Wahid countered the legislators' attacks by arguing that they should take the matter to court if they had proof of his involvement in the scandals instead of utilizing the legislature as a forum (Republika, 19 August 2000).

Wahid did not have an issue with the establishment of a parliamentary inquiry (Republika, 17 October 2000b) and only emphasised that all its activities must follow the law. But following the legislators' announcements that they also intended to question him, he stated to the press that he would not appear before the committee to answer questions over the two financial scandals (Republika, 11 October 2000). However, he, offered to answer queries over the two cases in writing or, if necessary, to receive the respective members of the DPR to question him directly at a mutually determined time (Kompas, 16 November 2000). Yet the committee's calls to summon Wahid intensified following Rusdihardjo's testimony incriminating Wahid on 28 November 2000. This prompted Wahid to change his strategy from defence to attack.

Questioning the committee's legality

On 1 December 2000 Wahid claimed that the establishment of the committee was illegal since it had not been listed in the state gazette as stipulated in Law No. 6/1954 on the DPR's right of inquiry (Kompas, 2 December 2000; The Jakarta Post, 2 December 2000). Legislators rejected those claims by referring to other laws as the committee's legal basis, such as Law No. 4/1999 on the composition and status of the

¹³³ "soal pinjam-meminjam atas dasar perdata".

MPR, DPR and DPRD (The Jakarta Post, 4 December 2000). Wahid further alleged that some committee members were utilizing the inquiry as a means to topple him and that the inquiry was part of a scenario aiming to overthrow the government (Kompas, 2 December 2000; Kompas, 4 December 2000a; Republika, 3 December 2000).

As the following discussion will show, Wahid's plan to paralyse the committee by questioning its legality did not succeed. The committee's legality, and its authority to call the president, was subject to legal and constitutional ambiguity, remaining a point of contention.¹³⁴ However, Wahid's claim that the committee was illegal and his defiance against testifying before the committee backfired. This was because Wahid only asserted the committee was illegal following the testimony of former national police chief Rusdihardjo's (28 November 2000) which claimed the president had played an active role in Buloggate (The Jakarta Post, 2 December 2000; Media Indonesia, 29 November 2000). This gave legislators the opportunity to link Wahid's attack on the committee with the content of Rusdihardjo's testimony. Committee chairman Bachtiar Chamsyah (PPP), for example, suggested "Perhaps the president is in a state of fatigue or feels cornered so he cannot make an interpretation other than a statement like that"¹³⁵ (Republika, 2 December 2000). Committee member Julius Usman (PDI-P) questioned the logic of Wahid's

¹³⁴ See, for example, Kompas, 18 October 2000; Kompas, 30 November 2000; Kompas, 4 December 2000b; Kompas, 5 December 2000; Liputan 6.com, 6 December 2000; Tempo Interaktif, 1 December 2000; Tempo Interaktif, 7 December 2000; Republika, 13 October 2000; Republika, 16 January 2001.

¹³⁵ "Mungkin Presiden sedang dalam keadaan lelah atau terpojok sehingga tidak bisa membuat sebuah interpretasi sampai muncul pernyataan seperti itu".

statement and suggested that “Gus Dur was panicked after hearing Rusdihardjo’s testimony”¹³⁶ (Republika, 2 December 2000).

Committee members also renewed and intensified their call to question Wahid over his role in the scandal by sending him an invitation to appear in front of the committee on 17 January 2001 (Republika, 23 December 2000). Eventually the meeting between president and the committee took place on neutral ground in the Jakarta Convention Centre on 22 January 2001 (Kompas, 22 January 2001). The meeting, however, ended abruptly before questioning was completed. The journalists waiting outside the venue were puzzled when the president left the hearing earlier than anticipated without providing clarification (Kompas, 23 January 2001a). During a press conference immediately following, some committee members used the incident to their advantage. They voiced their astonishment over Wahid’s reaction, emphasized his unwillingness to cooperate with the committee, and asserted his ‘walk out’¹³⁷ was disrespectful towards the parliament and a sign of panic.¹³⁸ Deputy committee chairman Alvin Lie, for example, stated “There was no reason for Gus Dur to become emotional . . . The President failed to uphold mutual respect between the legislative body and the presidency” (The Jakarta Post, 23 January 2001b).

Later that day, Wahid called a snap news briefing at the presidential palace at which he clarified his walkout. He stated that since the committee was unable to answer his question as to whether the meeting was a political or legal forum he did

¹³⁶ “Gus Dur terlihat panik setelah mendengar keterangan Rusdihardjo”.

¹³⁷ The English term was used widely in media reports.

¹³⁸ See, for example, Republika, 23 January 2001; Media Indonesia; 23 January 2001; The Jakarta Post, 23 January 2001b; Tempo Interaktif, 23 January 2001.

not see any point continuing the meeting and left the room (Kompas, 23 January 2001b). He “accused members of the committee of using the scandals ‘to undermine the authority of the government and the President. So, what's happening here is character assassination’”(The Jakarta Post, 23 January 2001b). In a similar vein, PKB secretary-general Muhaimin Iskandar, criticised the press for being unjust in headlining Wahid’s walkout from the committee hearing without reporting on what happened during the interrogation, and specifically explaining what triggered Wahid’s walk out (Media Indonesia, 28 January 2001a).

Power struggle between DPR and president

The controversy over the committee’s legality and whether the president was (legally) obliged to appear before the committee (or whether the committee had the authority to call the president) needs to be seen in the context of the power struggle between parliament and president. During Wahid’s presidency the system of government in Indonesia was still based on the 1945 Constitution which “does not clearly state whether Indonesia is to have a presidential or a parliamentary system of government”(Hara 2001: 315). Thus, Wahid’s defiance when called to the DPR to testify in front of the committee was due to a lack of clarity regarding the hierarchy of authority between the legislative and executive branches of government. For Wahid, Indonesia had a presidential system of government, in which the president was not accountable to the DPR and thus could not be called to parliament in order to be questioned by a parliamentary investigation committee (McIntyre 2005: 129). The legislators instead referred to law no. 4/1999 on the composition and status of the MPR, DPR and DPRD which gives the DPR the right

to subpoena everyone. However, as stated by Ziegenhain (2008: 143), Law no. 4/1999 “does not explicitly mention the president”.

Given the ambiguous legal framework Wahid felt he could not compromise presidential authority by submitting to summons or interrogation at the will of a committee whose legal authority over the president was unclear (Witoelar 2002: 105; Tempo Interaktif, 19 January 2001). If President Wahid had come to parliament it would have meant that he accepted the legal authority of the committee to question him (Ziegenhain 2008: 143). On the other hand, if committee members had refrained from calling for the Wahid’s testimony or agreed to come to the Presidential Palace they would have relinquished authority and would have created the impression that they had come to do a political deal with the President.

However, the way the president and his supporters started doubting the committee’s legality and even demanding its disbandment raised suspicions that the president had something to hide.¹³⁹ Furthermore, legislators and Wahid’s opponents made media statements that made the president’s refusal to come to the DPR look like an act of stubbornness on his part or an attempt to conceal his involvement in the two scandals. Alvin Lie, for example, stated: "Refusal to meet the invitation means the President disrespects the House and democracy" (The Jakarta Post, 14 December 2000) and "[h]is refusal to attend is an insult to the dignity and honour of parliament" (The Financial Times, 16 January 2001). MPR chairman Amien Rais stated that the president “should be reminded that in the present reform

¹³⁹ See, for example, The Jakarta Post, 19 January 2001; Kompas, 9 November 2000; Media Indonesia, 14 December 2000.

era, the executive, legislative and judicative organs of the state were functioning at the same level" (Antara, 11 October 2000).¹⁴⁰

In so doing legislators interpreted Wahid's refusal to come to the DPR to answer questions from legislators and instead inviting the committee to the Presidential Palace not as a sign of the president's willingness to meet with the committee despite its ambiguous legal framework but as an effort to put himself above the parliament, showing that he regarded the presidential office as superior and more powerful. Such behaviour was reminiscent of the way Suharto used to run the government.

This impression that Wahid had slipped towards authoritarianism in order to defend his presidency,¹⁴¹ was enforced by some of Wahid's actions: First, his support of a lawsuit against the Bulog-Bruneigate committee on charges of illegality and libel. This lawsuit had been filed by three individuals allegedly involved in Buloggate with close links to NU and PKB.¹⁴² Second, Wahid directly criticised the media and accused the legislature of being dominated by the forces of the New Order (Juru bicara kepresidenan, 27 January 2001; Kompas, 29 January 2001). Third, he made threats to mobilize his supporters on to the streets (The Jakarta Post, 2 February 2001) and to suspend the DPR if legislators commenced impeachment

¹⁴⁰ In this context it should be mentioned that Wahid prior to the establishment of the committee had agreed to be interrogated by the police as a witness despite the unclear legal situation (Media Indonesia, 13 June 2000; Media Indonesia, 25 June 2000) and had given a brief clarification surrounding Bulog-Bruneigate during the Annual MPR session (Republika, 10 August 2000).

¹⁴¹ Wahid stated that he would not step down since the constitution authorised him to hold the presidency until 2004 (Media Indonesia, 30 December 2000). He repeated that he had no intention to step down in late January 2001 (Media Indonesia, 28 January 2001b).

¹⁴² More specifically, Siti Farikha family ties with the NU, Aris Junaedi is a brother of PKB legislator Arifin Junaedi, and Masnuh is the deputy treasurer at the NU executive board (The Jakarta Post, 30 December 2000; Republika, 8 January 2001).

proceedings against him (Asia Times, 31 January 2001). This way of dealing with the legislative tarnished Wahid's image as a democrat and supporter of press freedom. The remainder of this chapter takes a closer look at how Wahid's actions, particularly his interaction with the press, impaired his initially positive relationship with the media.

2.4 The impact of Buloggate on Wahid's relationship with the media

Under the Suharto regime Wahid had been celebrated by the press as a symbol of resistance, and dubbed "the media's golden child during the New Order" (Romano 2003: 52). Consequently, the press had welcomed his election as president with enthusiasm. Wahid enforced his commitment to press freedom by ratifying the 1999 Press Law, abolishing the licensing system through the closure of the Ministry of Information, and by providing journalists with direct access to the palace (Muryadi 2010; Barton 2002: 372). This led to a situation where the press enjoyed unprecedented freedom (Tempo, 8 January 2001) and could publish freely, including news about the president and the government without fear of being banned (Dharma et al. 2003: 5). But this initially positive relationship between Wahid and the media deteriorated during the course of his presidency (Romano 2003: 51; Sudibyo 2002: 261; Sng 2001).

This was largely due to Wahid's and his supporters' reaction to the disclosure of Buloggate as well as Wahid's strategies to deal with the antagonistic DPR and the press during the inquiry into Bulog-Bruneigate. Indeed, Wahid's

difficulties in engaging positively with the media were inextricably related to the events following Buloggate's disclosure. NU-Banser's occupation of the *Jawa Pos* office over (the inaccuracy of) a *Jawa Pos* article alleging the president and top NU-leaders had been involved in KKN at Bulog – as well as Wahid's reaction to the incident – had a long term impact on his future relationship with the media. It changed the way Wahid and his supporters were viewed by the media – in general and in the context of the Bulog-Bruneigate investigation. Vatikiotis (2001: 145) describes Banser's alleged occupation of the *Jawa Pos* offices as "one of the turning points . . . in the relationship with his government and the press". The incident also contributed to the fact that in May 2001 AJI nicknamed President Wahid (and his followers) as an "Enemy of press freedom" (Solahudin et al. 2001; Supriyanto, 5 January 2010).¹⁴³

Banser's decision to visit the *Jawa Pos* office instead of exercising the right of reply or legal recourse in reacting to the inaccuracy of the *Jawa Pos* report created the impression that the media could not criticise the president and NU-figures without facing intimidation and potentially physical threat. There were conflicting accounts over the number of Banser members involved and what exactly happened during Banser's visit to the *Jawa Pos* office. However, the mere appearance of members of a civilian militia group affiliated to a 40-million member strong organisation that supports the president at a media organisation created anxiety among media professionals. Among other concerns was the worry that it would

¹⁴³ This verdict was based on a number of cases where Wahid's supporters expressed their disaffection with the media by oppressing, intimidating and using violence against journalists and the media (Supriyanto, 5 January 2010). According to AJI's advocacy team, the NU was responsible for 11 out of 47 recorded cases of imposed pressure upon the media between May 2000 and May 2001 (Solahudin et al. 2001: 6-7).

encourage self-censorship by media as a strategy to avoid occupation or 'mob violence'. In an effort to defend press freedom the incident triggered a kind of solidarity among the media that resulted in media coverage that "tended to focus on the *Jawa Pos* as the victim of Banser paramilitaries, and its poor reporting was not made known to the general public" (Asgart 2003: 663).¹⁴⁴

The *Jawa Pos* journalists' failure to contact Hasyim Muzadi over the issue (PW GP Ansor Jawa Timur, 2000) and to re-check the correctness of *Tempo's* allegations before repeating these was clouded by the media's critique of Banser's protest. *Tempo's* article on the incident, for example, with the headline 'Quoted Tempo, Jawa Pos occupied by Banser'¹⁴⁵ (Tempo Interaktif, 6 May 2000), does acknowledge that the *Jawa Pos* took the information from *Tempo* magazine but does not inform the reader that it was *Tempo* that had mixed up the names of Hasyim Wahid and Hasyim Muzadi. Consequently, there was no critique of the *Jawa Pos's* shortcomings. Other national newspapers like *Kompas* and *Republika*, mentioned the confusion of names within the text but clearly highlighted Banser's protest through the selection of headlines 'Protested, the Jawa Pos was not published'¹⁴⁶ (*Kompas*, 7 May 2000) and 'Banser occupies the Jawa Pos' editorial office'¹⁴⁷ (*Republika*, 7 May 2000b). Additionally, the media, journalist organisations and media watchdog

¹⁴⁴ Additional info: If the *Jawa Pos* had contacted *Tempo* prior to publication they would have learned that *Tempo* had already sent a letter of apology to Hasyim Muzadi on 3 May 2000 (Solahudin et al. 2001; The Jakarta Post, 9 May 2000). This might also explain why there was no NU demonstration in front of *Tempo* (Solahudin et al. 2001). In its following edition *Tempo* acknowledged its mistake and printed a correction (Tempo, 8 May 2000b).

¹⁴⁵ 'Kutip Tempo, Jawa Pos diduduki Banser'.

¹⁴⁶ 'Didemo, "Jawa Pos" tak Terbit'.

¹⁴⁷ 'Banser Duduki Kantor Redaksi Jawa Pos'.

organisations were outraged over Banser's action and described it as a threat to press freedom.¹⁴⁸

Banser's and NU's image suffered irrevocable damage from this incident that has been described as the 'climax of violence against the media and journalists' (Supriyanto, 5 January 2010). This was even though Banser strongly rejected allegations raised in media reports that its protest included physical violence and had been responsible for the cancellation of the *Jawa Pos*' Sunday edition, inflicting a loss of Rp 1 billion upon the media company.¹⁴⁹

Wahid had not ordered Banser to attack the *Jawa Pos* and reportedly "had intervened and asked the NU to ensure that the Banser 'did not go too far'" (The Jakarta Post, 3 May 2001). He "was rather angry when Banser made a noisy protest against Jawa Pos" (The Jakarta Post, 8 January 2001). Yet the incident had a significant impact on Wahid's relationship with the media. This is due to Wahid's affiliation with the NU: he chaired the 35 million people strong Muslim organisation for 15 years before he became president. Furthermore, during the Suharto period Banser was considered part of the pro-democracy alliance. But when Wahid became president a shift in the image of Banser occurred (Stanley 2006: 195, 204). Being previously perceived as supporter of the reform movement and democratisation, Banser subsequently was perceived as "willing to use extra-legal means to defend the president with tactics comparable to those of New Order organizations of the

¹⁴⁸ See, for example, Republika Online, 8 May 2000; Kompas, 8 May 2000; Antara, 8 May 2000; Antara, 9 May 2000; CPJ, 19 March 2001; IFEX, 10 May 2000; Luwarso and Solahudin 2001: 13.

¹⁴⁹ Apparently *Jawa Pos* managing editor Arief Affandi decided to cancel the Sunday edition and not Banser. Banser actually wanted them to run the Sunday edition so they could publicly apologize in that edition (The Jakarta Post, 11 May 2000; PW GP Ansor Jawa Timur, 2000). However, one could argue just as well that Banser disrupted work at the office due to their sit in and ultimately prevented the publication of the *Jawa Pos* due to its mere presence (Antara, 9 May 2000).

type of Pemuda Pancasila" (Ryter 2001: 155).¹⁵⁰ Consequently, a fear developed that Wahid would use NU, especially Banser, to fight against and to intimidate his opponents and political rivals (The Jakarta Post, 8 January 2001). This fear was enforced by Wahid's reluctance to condemn Banser's action. Instead, he accused the *Jawa Pos* of having violated the journalistic code of ethics and of publishing the article as "part of a conspiracy to topple and discredit the government" (The Jakarta Post, 9 May 2000).¹⁵¹ In a similar vein, PKB deputy secretary general Chotibul Umam Wiranu claimed that there was a print media conspiracy to oust Wahid. Elaborating on the issue Wiranu stated that 60 per cent of the print media were conspiring with Wahid's opponents, whereas the remaining 40 per cent were divided equally between those neutral and those supporting Wahid (The Jakarta Post, 6 October 2000). Wahid further emphasised that he could sue the *Jawa Pos* over the report on the grounds that it had violated the journalistic code of ethics by republishing erroneous information from *Tempo* magazine without prior cross-checking (Kompas, 9 May 2000; Republika, 9 May 2000).

Those statements gave the impression that Wahid seemed to support Banser's action or at least had tried to justify Banser's action by shifting the blame to the *Jawa Pos* by highlighting its breach in professionalism. Furthermore, Wahid's reaction raised doubts about his commitment to press freedom and concerns that he was unknowingly slipping towards authoritarianism. Added to those concerns was Wahid's failure to explain the reasons for Kalla's and Sukardi's dismissal from the

¹⁵⁰ The Pancasila Youth (Pemuda Pancasila, PP) is an Indonesian paramilitary organization established in 1959. It was absorbed semi-official political gangsters (*preman*) that supported Suharto's New Order. For further information see Ryter 2002.

¹⁵¹ See also Republika, 7 May 2000b.

cabinet while simultaneously insisting on his prerogative to replace Cabinet ministers, and his questioning of Bulog-Bruneigate inquiry's legality. As a result, many of those who had initially welcomed Wahid's election as president and sympathized with him became increasingly disappointed and ultimately alienated (Budiman, 15 May 2000).

However, Wahid's statement that he could sue the *Jawa Pos* over the report on the grounds that it had violated the journalistic code of ethics by taking over erroneous information from *Tempo* magazine without prior cross-checking was indeed justified and pointed to the media's shortcomings. The simplification and liberalisation of procedures for starting new publications had resulted in an explosive growth in the number of publications. Following Suharto's fall and the era of reform 1,398 new publications entered the market (Nurbaiti and Solahudin, 26 December 2001).¹⁵² This was in addition to the 289 existing publications during the

¹⁵² Most formal restrictions on the press were removed after Suharto's fall in May 1998. The requirement that press publications have a license, known as SIUPP, issued by the Ministry of Information before they might publish, stopped being applied after Suharto's fall. Since licensing was no longer a barrier to publication a large number of new publications entered the market. By eliminating the Ministry of Information in 1999, Wahid abolished the licensing system altogether (Nurbaiti and Solahudin, 26 December 2001). However, market realities forced the majority of the newly established publications out of business. According to AJI the decline in the number of publications was explained by three factors. First, many of the newly established media lacked professionalism. Second, the market was saturated by too many media that raised the same issues. Third, funding by investors stalled (Nurbaiti and Solahudin, 26 December 2001). More specifically: AJI estimates that by the end of 2000 the 1,398 newly established publications and those 289 pre-existing publications had dropped to 487 and 219 respectively (Nurbaiti and Solahudin, 26 December 2001). By 2001 the number of publications dropped further to around 500. According to the Indonesian Newspaper Publishers Association (SPS) (as quoted in World Association of Newspapers, 2007: 380) the number of titles of paid-for dailies and non-dailies was 493 in 2001; compared to 1142 in 2000 respectively. According to data from the Indonesian Press Council the number of print media had increased from 1381 in 1999 to 1881 in 2001. Out of those titles 551 published regularly in 1999 or 566 in 2001 respectively. This data shows the tough competition in the media business and that it is easier to establish a publication than keep it going (Dewan Pers 2002: 11). Due to the relaxation and the later abolition of the licensing system the actual number of publications can only be estimated and consequently results in statistical discrepancies.

New Order. The majority of the new publications consisted of tabloids that provided sensational coverage of politics (Olle 1999). In order to attract readers and to remain competitive, some publications, mainly newly established tabloids, “publish[ed] speculative and irresponsible reports, which freely mix[ed] facts with opinion and conjecture” (Harsono 2000: 90) or resorted to “sensationalism rather than accuracy and fresh insights and analyses of issues” (Basorie 2001: 72).

The overall increase in the number of print publications – despite a notable fluctuation between 1999 and 2001 – not only resulted in greater competition but also in heightened demand for journalists. Since the demand for trained journalists could not be met, many publications had to draw their personnel from outside the media industry. This led to a decline in the standards of journalism (Ali 1999: 61; Hanitzsch 2005: 493-4). According to Bambang Bujono (interview 5 April 2010, Jakarta), former managing editor of the weekly tabloid *D&R* and *ex-Tempo* journalist, the competition among the media companies to attract readers also caused journalists to follow allegations and assumptions about which news stories would maximise demand, for example, Buloggate. Media professionals (Antara, 9 May 2000; Lubis, 14 June 2000) and journalist organisations (Solahudin et al. 2001: 13) were also aware of those shortcomings, and “Indonesian journalists admitted that problems of professionalism and ethics did exist in the media” (Clear 2005: 173).

Thus, Wahid’s criticism of the press and his talk about “suing some newspapers for outright false information” (Witoelar 2002: 174-5) was not unwarranted. However, being aware that legal action against errant media would create a chilling effect on the media in general he refrained from doing so in order to maintain press freedom and democracy (BBC, 31 January 2001). Instead, he

frequently criticised and complained about the press by pointing to its shortcomings and poor performance, noting for example, that some media emphasize sensationalism rather than facts, objectivity and accuracy in reporting (Kompas, 13 March 2001a). Wahid further accused some sections of the press of frequently twisting his words (Gunawan, 28 February 2002), to systematically ruin his reputation, of carrying out a 'character assassination' and of not being interested in reporting the government's achievements (CNN, 29 May 2001; Harsono, 1 June 2001; Laksamana.Net, 25 June 2001). Additionally, he also appealed to journalists to refrain from sensationalism and to keep their public responsibility in mind (Republika, 13 July 2000).

However, even though there was "considerable justification for Wahid's claim that the post-Suharto media circulate inaccurate and ill-founded reports" (Romano 2003: 52) his way of dealing with the media was counterproductive since it antagonized the media and ultimately created the impression that Wahid was hostile to the media and press freedom (Barton 2002: 347-8; Supriyanto 2001; Sudibyo 2002). Didik Supriyanto, secretary-general of AJI at that time, argued that Wahid's verbal attacks against the media inflamed antagonism towards the media and triggered his supporters to take action against the press (Supriyanto 2001). However, Wahid rejected those accusations and saw himself as a victim of the media (Sng 2001). He believed that the media deliberately discredited him and his policies and he suspected a conspiracy by his opponents behind it (Laksamana.Net, 25 June 2001). In late December 2000, for example, he stated that some media had been paid – and that editors were being intimidated – to launch a character assassination against him by publishing lies, slander and inappropriate comments

(The Jakarta Post, 29 December 2000). In early 2001, he became more precise and argued that the press had been bought by particular groups¹⁵³ – to one of which he also assigned Bulog-Bruneigate committee leaders Bachtiar Chamsjah (PPP) and Alvin Lie (Fraksi Reformasi) – who were trying to undermine his position as president (Republika, 8 January 2001). When Wahid sought to call a state of emergency in May 2001 he listed character assassination initiated by the media among the reasons behind this measure.¹⁵⁴ This claim was reinforced by the media's ownership structure during the Wahid presidency.¹⁵⁵

Ownership and control of the media are largely in the hands of Wahid's political opponents and so-called Soehartoists – those related or linked to the Soeharto family and who have an interest in preserving the status quo (Pit Chen Low 2003: 31).

Thus it is easy to assume Wahid's opponents consciously used sections of the media in order to sabotage the reforms initiated by Wahid and to maintain the *status quo* as far as possible. According to Barton (2002: 299) "Abdurrahman's political enemies, including elements aligned with the former regime, were manipulating the media on a grand scale through money and intimidation". In a similar vein, Sudiby (2001) argues that the political elite systematically delegitimized Wahid through the media.

¹⁵³ He outlines the four groups as follows: first, the people who have a very strong personal ambition; second, people who are afraid of the law; third, people who want to maintain the status quo; fourth, Islamists (Republika, 8 January 2001).

¹⁵⁴ As the two other reasons he named first, that his political enemies were using the parliament as a tool to judge and condemn him; second, to control anticipated clashes between pro- and anti- President Wahid (Laksamana.Net, 25 June 2001; Republika, 29 May 2001).

¹⁵⁵ For detailed information on media ownership around that time see for example Piliang 2002; Kingsbury 2005: 130, 139-40; Sen and Hill 2007: 111-6; Sng 2001.

Against this background Wahid's allegations that there was a conspiracy to overthrow him and Wahid's talk about "fighting 'dark forces' aligned with the former regime" (Barton 2002: 301) should not be simply dismissed as an attempt to find scapegoats. As discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, the former New Order elite was still powerful and had successfully hijacked the country's new democratic institutions. Those loyal to Suharto or to their own interests would not hesitate to destabilise the new government in order to protect their interests (Barton 2002: 301). There was widespread a assumption that the media had contributed to Wahid's fall.¹⁵⁶ The media's negative portrayal of Wahid – through highlighting and exaggerating his mistakes, downplaying his achievements, interlacing KKN charges in Buloggate with other shortcomings of his presidency, describing him as incompetent in managing the government, favouring statements by those critical of Wahid and ignoring his replies to his accusers (Witoelar 2002: 108; Sudibyo 2002) – not only tarnished the president's image but also contributed to the decline of public confidence in the government's ability to overcome the country's economic and political crises. This led ultimately to the president's impeachment (Sng 2001).

However, media ownership and shortcomings in professionalism as well as Wahid's and his supporters strategies to deal with the media can only partially explain the media's attitude towards Wahid, and their unbalanced coverage of Bulog- and Bruneigate in particular (Sudibyo 2002; Solahudin et al 2001). On the other hand, the media were exercising their supervisory function by criticising the government. Indeed, following the end of Suharto's authoritarian regime and the introduction of press freedom and democracy, the Indonesian media were

¹⁵⁶ See, for example, Barton 2002; Supriyanto 2010; Koran Duta, 30 October 2001.

particularly sensitive to issues of law enforcement and the embodiment of a clean government. Or, as stated by Pit Chen Low (2003: 70):

the newly freed press has moved from one extreme to the other in its euphoria of freedom. After coming out of a period of tight government control and censorship, it now sees itself as the Fourth Estate and defines its role as a watchdog of the government. It appears that emphasis is placed on its “check-and-balance” role of keeping the government accountable for its action instead of its primary role to inform the people. The press has become hyper-critical of the government and its policies.

In accordance with the spirit of *reformasi* and democratisation the media pushed for political, economic, administrative and legal reform (Sudibyo 2002). When it became obvious that Wahid was unable to put those demands into practice and was increasingly entrapped into charges of corruption in Buloggate, the media’s support began to ebb and criticism increased (Supriyanto, 5 January 2010). Entering 2001, against the background of the intensifying power struggle between the DPR and the President, the media began increasingly to lose faith in the Wahid government’s ability to overcome the political and economic crisis. Ultimately, around June 2001, as stated by AJI’s then secretary-general, Didik Supriyanto, the media took the position that

Gus Dur’s rule could not continue . . . Consciously or not, at that time the media united with the alliance of political groups that wanted to end Wahid’s rule.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ “kekuasaan Gus Dur tidak bisa dilanjutkan . . . Sadar atau tidak, media saat itu bersatu dalam aliansi politik kelompok yang menghendaki Gus Dur tidak melanjutkan kekuasaan” (Supriyanto, 5 January 2010).

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that Buloggate was an intra-elite power struggle over access to political resources. The contesting elite has incorporated the media in their power struggle. However, the opportunities and limitations to do so were at this point in time related to one's position. Due to his position as president, Wahid's opportunities to utilize the media were limited. Having been tightly controlled by the government during Suharto's authoritarian New Order the now free media were particularly sensitive towards government interference and took a pronounced watchdog stance towards the president. Other members of the politico-business elite, in particular Wahid's political enemies and members of the former New Order elite, profited from the media's 'watchdog function' and utilized this (in conjunction with parliament) to promote their interests. Making Wahid's position worse was his conflict with parliament.

Following Indonesia's authoritarian experience – marked by the media's submission under government control and the parliament's rubber stamp function – both institutions were eager to scrutinize the government. This spirit, and a high degree of intra-elite contestation that was played out in the power struggle between legislative and executive, made the Wahid administration vulnerable to scandal. Since the media were extremely sensitive towards issues of government corruption, and equally alert to the market potential of sensationalist expose of government corruption, Bulog- and Bruneigate were the perfect weapon for Wahid's opponents to discredit and delegitimize the president. Yet President Wahid's criticism of the

media and the legislative was countered by opponents' claims that Wahid was slipping towards authoritarianism or was attempting to restrict press freedom.

Having discussed the various strategies through which the contesting elite, particularly legislators and President Wahid, integrated the media in their power struggle, the following chapter turns its focus on the role and interests of particular media organisations in those struggles.

3 The media's role in Buloggate and Aryantigate

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the interests and contrasting positions of particular media organisations in two different scandals, namely the Bulog Yanatera scandal (Buloggate), which has been discussed in detail in the previous chapter, and Aryantigate. The latter refers to an alleged extramarital affair between President Wahid and a woman called Aryanti prior to his presidency. Since both scandals featured President Wahid and provided an opportunity to engage in “politics by other means”(Ginsberg and Shefter 1990) they fitted Waisbord's (2004: 1087) description of an issue that was “journalistically appealing”. Yet the scandals triggered different media responses. This is because Buloggate was a public governance issue that dealt with corruption allegations against an incumbent president who was widely regarded as an opponent of KKN. Aryantigate in contrast was a personal issue that had occurred in 1995 during Wahid's third term as NU chairman. This means that the media had a choice over whether to cover or ignore Aryantigate, whereas they had to cover Buloggate in order to fulfil their role as the Fourth Estate checking on government and rectifying abuses of power.

However, this chapter argues that the contrasting positions of the media in both scandals can be best explained through the politico-economic interests and ideological affiliations of their respective owner or prominent editors. Besides focusing on particular media organisation's interests and positions on Buloggate this chapter also sheds light on how the government's and the committee's strategies were perceived by the media, and came to be regarded as successful.

This chapter is divided in two parts. The first part (section 3.1) examines editorial commentary on Buloggate in three daily national newspapers. *Media Indonesia*, *Kompas*, and *Republika* were selected based on the following considerations: *Kompas*, is generally accepted as politically neutral and non-partisan. However, *Kompas* does prioritise issues which have a national economic relevance (Hamad 2004: 27). The nationalist-secular orientated *Media Indonesia* is owned by businessman and Golkar Party member Surya Paloh and is influenced by the political interests of the owner (Hamad 2004: 27). *Republika* is close to the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia, ICMI¹⁵⁸) and *poros tengah* (central axis¹⁵⁹). Thus *Republika* is affiliated with interests politically and ideologically opposed to Wahid. Furthermore, whereas *Kompas* appeared to align with reform parties (among others, PKB), *Media Indonesia* and *Republika* were among those newspapers that showed partisanship towards non-reform parties and Golkar (Hamad 2004: 24, 27). It is argued that these factors influenced the respective newspapers' editorial stances on the Bulog scandal. In 2000, when Buloggate was disclosed, *Kompas* had a readership of 1,598,000¹⁶⁰, compared to *Media Indonesia* and *Republika* readerships of 396,000¹⁶¹ and 335,000¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ ICMI was established in 1990 under the chairmanship of Habibie who was at that time Minister of Research and technology. For further information on ICMI see, for example, Hefner 1993; Ramage 1995: 75-121; Porter 2002.

¹⁵⁹ A loose coalition of Islamic parties, which included, among others, National Mandate Party (Partai Amanat Nasional, PAN), Justice Party (Partai Keadilan, PK), United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, PPP) and Crescent Star Party (Partai Bulan Bintang, PBB) (Sidel 2006: 135). Initially, the *poros tengah* was brought together by Amien Rais to support the election of Wahid as president in the 1999 MPR election (Sukma 2004: 98; Bourchier 2000: 23). For further information see for instance: Sukma 2004; Bourchier 2000.

¹⁶⁰ Media Index AC Nielsen 1990-2000, quoted from Nainggolan (2003: 102).

¹⁶¹ Media Index AC Nielsen 1990-2000, quoted from Nainggolan (2003: 215).

¹⁶² Media Index AC Nielsen 1990-2000, quoted from Nainggolan (2003: 267).

respectively. Among those three newspapers *Kompas* had also the highest circulation with 507,000, followed by *Media Indonesia* and *Republika* with circulations of 170,000 and 160,000 respectively.¹⁶³

Part two (section 3.2) analyses Aryantigate. Following an overview of this scandal, the subsequent paragraphs offer an understanding of why the three weeklies *Gatra*, *Panji Masyarakat*, and *Forum Keadilan* made the alleged affair a cover story, whereas *Tempo* did not cover the scandal at all. It establishes that the difference in coverage on Aryantigate in the three weeklies was due to their ownership, ideological factors and economic interests.

3.1 The media's role and interest in Buloggate

The following paragraphs focus on editorial commentary covering the Bulog scandal in *Kompas*, *Media Indonesia*, and *Republika*. The analysis includes all editorials from the time of the Bulog Yanatera scandal's disclosure in May 2000 until the first editorial following the parliament's acceptance of the Bulog-Bruneigate parliamentary inquiry's final report on 1 February 2001 that mention the word 'Bulog' in the context of the Bulog Yanatera scandal (Buloggate) even if the editorial might not focus on the Bulog scandal itself.¹⁶⁴ This rather broad analysis is done to avoid missing a comment crucial to the respective newspaper's point of view on the issue and in order to show that the media kept Buloggate alive by incorporating it

¹⁶³ WAN 2001: 120 (quoted from Press Reference Indonesia).

¹⁶⁴ Excluded from the analysis are editorials that refer to 'Bulog' in another context not related to the Bulog Yanatera scandal, for example to Bulog as an institution or to another scandal in Bulog (eg. Bulog-Goro).

as an example of other broader concerns like corruption eradication and law enforcement. Counted in that way, these particular newspapers carried the following number of editorials: *Kompas* 31, *Media Indonesia* 18, and *Republika* 15.¹⁶⁵

Thus, *Kompas* published more editorials mentioning the word 'Bulog' in the context of the Bulog Yanatera scandal (Buloggate) than the two other newspapers under scrutiny. Yet this number should be interpreted carefully since *Kompas* often used the Bulog scandal as an example to illustrate other issues facing the Wahid government. Of *Kompas*' 31 editorials, only 11 focus on the Bulog Yanatera scandal itself. This illustrates *Kompas*' indirect style and criticism. Thus, in order to present a full picture of *Kompas*' position in the scandal all of *Kompas*' 31 editorials are included.¹⁶⁶

3.1.1 Media Indonesia: Critical while maintaining an aura of neutrality

Overview of Media Indonesia's position

Media Indonesia is not specific about how Wahid might have been implicated in Buloggate but rather only implies that he might have had a role. *Media Indonesia* wants Buloggate solved but, by referring to how previous corruption scandals had

¹⁶⁵ A list of all the editorials is in Appendix C.

¹⁶⁶ The Bulog Yanatera scandal was most prominent in editorials from late May to early June 2000 (phase I) and from late January to early February 2001 (phase II). During these months all three newspapers discussed the issue in their editorials. This reflects the milestones in the scandal's development: During phase I the scandal was disclosed, its main actors Suwondo and Sapuan were identified, Suwondo was on the run whereas Sapuan was arrested by the police, Sapuan's testimony incriminated President Wahid, Wahid's defense in the Bulog scandal led to disclosure of Bruneigate, and the stolen Bulog Yanatera funds were returned. Phase II evolved around the Bulog-Bruneigate parliamentary investigation committee's final conclusion and the DPR's reaction to it. However, as the accompanying table in Appendix B illustrates, the Bulog case was also sporadically discussed in editorials from July 2000 to December 2000.

been handled by the DPR, it doubts whether Buloggate will be resolved any more satisfactorily. *Media Indonesia* discusses Buloggate in the broader context of corruption scandals as exemplifying the rampant KKN prevailing in post-Suharto Indonesia, and the Wahid government's failure in upholding law and justice. In this context, *Media Indonesia* argues that the only difference between the New Order and the Wahid government resides in the fact that high-profile corruption cases are now vigorously pursued initially but, as under Suharto, they still end without clarity and in favour of the accused. However, *Media Indonesia* does not merely hold the government responsible for this but also the legislature, and complains about the demoralisation and ineffectiveness of these monitoring institutions.

In sum, *Media Indonesia* views the parliamentary investigation into Bulog- and Bruneigate and its outcomes primarily as a manoeuvre by the DPR in its conflict with Wahid. It remains neutral and calls upon the DPR as well as the president to improve and to reconcile their differences. *Media Indonesia* is critical of Wahid's involvement in Buloggate yet attempts to maintain an aura of neutrality in its coverage of the scandal.

Editorial analysis

For *Media Indonesia* Buloggate shakes the credibility of the government (28 May 2000) and demonstrates that New Order-style corruption still prevails in the new government (31 May 2000). Moreover, *Media Indonesia* (31 May 2000) is disappointed that Wahid not only squashed hopes to eradicate corruption but seems – as allegations surrounding Buloggate indicate – to even be involved in those practices.

Now even though the times have changed, with a new president, [those in] power are still familiar with fraud. Misappropriation of state funds . . . has still not receded! . . . Look at the many corruption cases that adorn our mass media, generally involving officials, both in the region and the centre. And, now the most recent scandal is the case of Bulog . . . In fact, President Abdurrahman Wahid was our hope . . . However, Wahid has let us down. He, with a reputation for being clean, it turns out, cannot guarantee that he is determined to stand in the vanguard, to start living clean. The Bulog scandal is a tangible example. This is indeed still a suspicion. However, according to various testimonies, especially from the former Bulog deputy head Sapuan, Gus Dur had a role in corrupting the people's money gathered through the Bulog's Employee Welfare Foundation, to the sum of Rp 35 billion.¹⁶⁷

The last sentence as well as *Media Indonesia's* editorial commentary on Bondan Gunawan's resignation (3 June 2000) and Suwondo's capture (19 October 2000) suggests that the president had a role in the scandal. In respect of the former, *Media Indonesia* (3 June 2000) implicitly states that Bondan Gunawan – who was among those mentioned as beneficiaries of the Bulog funds – resigned voluntary from his position as state secretary in order to protect Wahid. The paper compares this behaviour with New Order practices.

Bondan Gunawan who willingly resigned from two prestigious positions: Acting Secretary of State and Secretary for Government Affairs, deserves our respect. Why? Because he respects the law in order to facilitate the investigation

¹⁶⁷ "Sekarang meski zaman berganti, dengan presiden baru, kekuasaan tetaplah akrab dengan penyelewengan. Embat-mengembat uang Negara . . . tetap tak surut! . . . Lihatlah sekian banyak kasus korupsi yang menghiasi media massa kita, pada umumnya melibatkan para pejabat, baik di daerah maupun di pusat. Dan, kini skandal yang paling gres adalah kasus Bulog . . . Padahal, Presiden Abdurrahman Wahid adalah harapan . . . Tetapi, Abdurrahman Wahid telah mengecewakan kita. Dia, dengan segala record sebagai orang bersih, ternyata, tak bisa menjadi jaminan bahwa ia bertekad berdiri paling depan dalam memulai hidup bersih. Skandal Bulog adalah contoh yang nyata. Ini memang masih serbadugaan. Tetapi, dari berbagai keterangan, terutama dari bekas Wakabulog Sapuan, Gus Dur punya peran dalam membobol uang rakyat yang dikumpulkan lewat Yayasan Kesejahteraan Karyawan Bulog sebesar Rp 35 miliar itu" (*Media Indonesia*, 31 May 2000).

in case he really was allied with Suwondo. However, from the undertones of his words, it is clear he wants to protect his master. It is the bitter reality. If during the New Order era, the master desperately protected his aides, now it is just the opposite. Both are equally as bad.¹⁶⁸

In its editorial commentary on Suwondo's capture *Media Indonesia* (19 October 2000) does not only imply Wahid was involved in the scandal but also indirectly accuses him of having engineered Suwondo's capture:

From the mouth of Soewondo in court later, we expect a number of facts to become explicit, including facts about whether President Abdurrahman Wahid is involved or not in the scandal of the misappropriation of the Yanatera Bulog funds amounting to Rp 35 billion. However, precisely because that is the case the opposite is also true. Namely, because Soewondo is too important to Wahid he 'preferably' should not be captured. From this perspective, one might ask why was it really so hard to catch a Soewondo . . . Soewondo was actually 'around' the police. He was not arrested because it was not yet time for him to be arrested. So, there is someone who is holding the cards, who determines whether or not it is feasible to arrest Soewondo. There is someone who determines whether capturing Soewondo is now necessary or not . . . We wait [to find out] whether the arrest of Suwondo was indeed an achievement, planned or accidental.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ "Bondan Gunawan yang rela mengundurkan diri dari dua jabatan prestisius: Pjs Sekretaris Negara dan Sekretaris Pengendalian Pemerintahan, memang patut kita hargai. Kenapa? Karena ia menghargai hukum agar memudahkan pengusutan kalau-kalau dia memang benar bersekutu dengan Suwondo. Tetapi, dari nada-nada ucapannya, jelaslah ia ingin melindungi tuannya. Ini adalah realitas yang getir. Jika di zaman Orde Baru, sang tuan mati-matian melindungi para pembantunya, kini justru sebaliknya. Dua-dua sama buruknya" (*Media Indonesia*, 3 June 2000).

¹⁶⁹ "Dari mulut Soewondo di pengadilan kelak, kita berharap sejumlah fakta menjadi gamblang, termasuk fakta apakah Presiden Abdurrahman Wahid terlibat atau tidak dalam skandal bobolnya dana Yanatera Bulog sebesar Rp 35 miliar. Akan tetapi justru karena itulah pula perkara sebaliknya juga benar. Yaitu, Soewondo justru terlalu penting untuk Presiden Abdurrahman Wahid karena itu ia 'sebaiknya' tidak berhasil ditangkap . . . Soewondo sesungguhnya berada di 'sekitar' polisi. Mengapa ia tidak ditangkap karena memang belum waktunya boleh ditangkap. Jadi, ada yang memegang kartu, yang menentukan, apakah sudah layak ditangkap atau belum. Ada yang mengatur, apakah menangkap Soewondo sekarang sudah memenuhi kebutuhan atau tidak . . . Kita tunggu, apakah penangkapan Suwondo memang prestasi, atau kebetulan yang direncanakan" (*Media Indonesia*, 19 October 2000).

Other commentary like “Soewondo, the masseur who carried the name of the president, so as to deceive Bulog of tens of billions”¹⁷⁰ (25 May 2000) or “[t]he Bulog case . . . involves people close to President Abdurrahman Wahid”¹⁷¹ (7 August 2000) imply that Wahid was not involved himself. Furthermore, *Media Indonesia* (13 December 2000) is also critical of Rusdihardjo’s testimony that implicates Wahid in the Bulog scandal and questions his credibility by pointing out that he only spoke out against the president after he had been dismissed from his position as National Police chief by Wahid. This indicates that *Media Indonesia* is critical of Wahid’s involvement in Buloggate but attempts to maintain an aura of neutrality.

Media Indonesia (7 August 2000) criticises Wahid for being eccentric and the Wahid government for its weakness in upholding the rule of law, weak economic performance, and widespread KKN. However, emphasising that one year of the Wahid presidency is not enough to solve all those issues that accumulated during the 32 year New Order and by praising the maintenance of freedom of expression, *Media Indonesia* (7 August 2000) strongly rejects utilizing the 2000 Annual MPR as means to topple Wahid. Ultimately, *Media Indonesia* (3 February 2001) does not demand Wahid’s resignation over Buloggate but his commitment to KKN eradication and law enforcement. *Media Indonesia’s* major concern is that Buloggate will be resolved properly and that those involved will be brought to justice.

Media Indonesia sees Suwondo as the main actor in the case. In this context *Media Indonesia* appreciates Wahid’s order to capture Suwondo (25 May 2000) but

¹⁷⁰ “Soewondo, tukang pijit yang membawa-bawa nama presiden, sehingga mampu mengelabui Bulog puluhan miliar” (*Media Indonesia*, 25 May 2000).

¹⁷¹ “Kasus Bulog . . . melibatkan orang dekat Presiden Abdurrahman Wahid” (*Media Indonesia*, 7 August 2000).

questions the commitment of law enforcement agencies in doing so (3 June 2000). *Media Indonesia's* concern that the Bulog case will join the long list of initially vigorously pursued but ultimately unsettled cases (3 June 2000) increases following the return of the stolen Bulog funds to the police (9 June 2000). In order to support a successful conclusion to the investigation, *Media Indonesia* (9 June 2000) urges the police to continue pursuing the case and calls upon Wahid to keep his promise to "explain the Bulog case before the DPR. If not, we recommend that this matter will be put on the agenda of the forthcoming Annual General MPR session."¹⁷²

Media Indonesia's distrust of law enforcement institutions is also expressed in the following examples. *Media Indonesia* (23 August 2000) criticizes the arrest and trial of Bulog deputy chief Sapuan as well as of other corruptors as a farce:

A show trial for the sake of political maneuvering only. Some are deliberately protected but some deliberately played with as if there was a commitment to law enforcement.¹⁷³

Additionally, the fact that, following his capture, Suwondo was examined by a doctor and not the police raises concerns for *Media Indonesia* (19 October 2000). Namely, that Suwondo's trial will be similar to President Suharto's trial¹⁷⁴ or that he will be declared mentally ill.

Media Indonesia (13 September 2000) labels the DPR's call for an inquiry into Bulog- and Bruneigate as a mere manoeuvre in the context of the DPR's conflict

¹⁷² "membuka kasus Bulog ini di hadapan DPR. Jika tidak, kita anjurkan agar soal ini dijadikan agenda dalam Sidang Umum Tahunan MPR nanti" (*Media Indonesia*, 9 June 2000).

¹⁷³ "Sebuah show trial demi manuver politik saja. Ada yang sengaja dilindungi tetapi ada yang sengaja dimainkan seolah-olah ada komitmen terhadap law enforcement" (*Media Indonesia*, 23 August 2000).

¹⁷⁴ Shortly before, in September 2000, the corruption case against former President Suharto was dismissed by court after a panel of doctors had declared him medically unfit to stand trial (Elson 2001: 296).

with the president. *Media Indonesia* rejects the executive's and the DPR's public display of mutual power and authority, and demands:

We want the DPR and the executive to show intelligence in the search for a solution. The exchange of ridiculousness is only good for a farce. Not for problem solving. Because the DPR and the executive are busier with this foolish conflict, it is not surprising that the reforms are now stagnating. Thus, there is no change in the attitude of the DPR and the executive in the reform era. Instead they are only boldly pretending to then reach an embarrassing compromise.¹⁷⁵

In so doing *Media Indonesia* (28 January 2001) criticizes both institutions. This critique becomes clearer at the end of January 2001:

What is shown by the two state institutions nowadays, the presidency and the parliament, is the arrogance of authority. The DPR feels most right while Gus Dur has never felt wrong. There is no spirit in the leaders of these higher state institutions to view this and think about it in the context of [good] governance.¹⁷⁶

Media Indonesia argues that the mass actions for and against Wahid surrounding the announcement of the parliamentary inquiry's verdict on 29 January 2001 create fear and disrupt the economy. For *Media Indonesia* (27 January 2001) such mass politics is an expression of institutional failure.

¹⁷⁵ "Kita mau DPR dan eksekutif memperlihatkan kecerdasan dalam mencari solusi. Adu kekonyolan hanya bagus untuk lelucon. Tidak untuk pemecahan masalah. Karena DPR dan eksekutif lebih sibuk berada konyol, maka tidak mengherankan kalau reformasi kini mengalami stagnasi. Jadi, tidak ada perubahan sikap DPR dan eksekutif di era reformasi. Yang ada cuma mereka lebih berani bersandiwara untuk kemudian mencapai kompromi-kompromi memalukan" (*Media Indonesia*, 13 September 2000).

¹⁷⁶ "Apa yang dipertontonkan oleh dua lembaga tinggi negara sekarang ini, lembaga kepresidenan dan parlemen, adalah arogansi kewenangan. DPR merasa paling benar sementara Gus Dur tidak pernah merasa bersalah. Tidak ada semangat para pemimpin lembaga tinggi negara untuk melihat dan berpikir dalam konteks pemerintahan" (*Media Indonesia*, 28 January 2001).

That *Media Indonesia* sees the investigation into Bulog- and Bruneigate first and foremost in the context of the conflict between Wahid and the DPR is evident in an editorial following the DPR's verdict. *Media Indonesia* (3 February 2001) describes the memorandum "as a very tough political and moral verdict"¹⁷⁷ that "has undermined his credibility and shaken his legitimacy as a leader of the country . . . the memorandum is like the DPR taking a whip to Gus Dur so that he becomes conscious and changes."¹⁷⁸

In the context of the conflict between Wahid and the DPR *Media Indonesia* assigns the blame more to the president. For example, it states that the "political commotion that has arisen so far is caused more by the persistence of Gus Dur who does not give in to anyone or anything."¹⁷⁹ However, *Media Indonesia* accepts the president's apology and his promise to improve law enforcement and to eradicate KKN following the issuance of the DPR's memorandum, but it simultaneously emphasizes that he has to show commitment to his promises and improve his style of managing the government. However, the editorial closes with the following appeal:

Forgiveness and promises should be part of a civilised polity. How wonderful if Gus Dur and all those who are in conflict could sincerely forgive each other while mutually promising to improve themselves and their respective

¹⁷⁷ "vonis politik dan moral yang amat berat" (*Media Indonesia*, 3 February 2001).

¹⁷⁸ "telah meruntuhkan kredibilitas dan mengguncang legitimasinya sebagai pemimpin negara . . . Memorandum adalah pecut DPR kepada Gus Dur supaya sadar dan berubah" (*Media Indonesia*, 3 February 2001).

¹⁷⁹ "Kegaduhan politik yang timbul selama ini lebih banyak disebabkan oleh kegigihan Gus Dur untuk tidak mengalah terhadap siapa dan apapun" (*Media Indonesia*, 3 February 2001).

institutions so we could immediately leave the ignorance that has been exhibited with great arrogance.¹⁸⁰

In so doing *Media Indonesia* also blames other institutions supportive of democracy and calls upon them to resolve the conflict and work together in harmony.

Explaining Media Indonesia's coverage

Media Indonesia's critical but neutral coverage could be explained by it adopting the spirit of *reformasi* and, in so doing, critically watching the government. Indeed, as argued by Anwari (2003: 17) *Media Indonesia's* editorials often appeared to be written "as an imperative to what should be done by the actors managing power and national leaders".

Nonetheless, *Media Indonesia's* editorials on President Wahid were thick with cynicism, satire, and subjectivity (Desiani 2000: 77¹⁸¹) and *Media Indonesia*, in contrast to *Republika* and *Kompas*, had shown partisanship towards Golkar during the 1999 elections (Hamad 2004: 25, 27). *Media Indonesia*, however, is not opposed to President Wahid. Nor had there had been any personal animosity between *Media Indonesia's* owner Surya Paloh and Wahid. Indeed, Surya Paloh describes their personal relationship as excellent (Antara, 17 March 2014). President Wahid had even made a speech at the ceremony celebrating *MetroTV's* launch as Indonesia's first news TV station, in November 2000 (The Jakarta Post, 19 November 2000).

¹⁸⁰ "Maaf dan janji harus menjadi bagian dari peradaban politik. Alangkah indahnya kalau Gus Dur dan semua orang yang berseteru saling memaafkan secara tulus sambil sama-sama berjanji untuk memperbaiki diri dan lembaga masing-masing agar kita segera bangkit meninggalkan kebodohan yang telah dipamerkan dengan amat angkuhnya" (*Media Indonesia*, 3 February 2001).

¹⁸¹ According to *Media Indonesia* journalist Edy A Effendi, as quoted in Desiani (2000: 77).

Furthermore, Surya Paloh did not hold an office in Golkar during the Wahid presidency and thus was not actively involved in politics at that time. Thus, it seems that scrutinizing the government was paramount for *Media Indonesia* during Buloggate. This, as shall be discussed later, is in stark contrast to *Media Indonesia's* interest in the Bank Century scandal.

3.1.2 *Kompas*: Showing sympathy for Wahid

Overview of Kompas' position

Kompas argues that New Order practises still take place during the Reform era but is torn about Wahid's alleged role in Buloggate and wants him to stay in office until the end of his term. Thus *Kompas* condemns the parliamentary inquiry's efforts to topple him. *Kompas'* main concern, however, is that the involvement of the masses in the intra-elite fighting could lead to unrest. Consequently, *Kompas* appeals to the conflicting elite, more specifically President Wahid and the DPR, to find a compromise that ensures that the process of democratic and economic reform is sustained.

Editorial analysis

Kompas (26 May 2000) was the first newspaper among those under scrutiny that provided a comprehensive assessment of Buloggate and its implications for the Wahid government. For *Kompas* (26 May 2000), the Bulog scandal was significant not in terms of money:

What is more significant, because behind the scandal that smells of corruption, collusion and nepotism (KKN) it is mentioned – because it's not necessarily true – that a number of names in the circle of the Presidential Palace are involved. That in the present era there are still people who behave in the same way as in the previous era, namely treating Bulog as a tactical source of funding that does not need accountability, there are still rulers who assume that state funds can be utilized arbitrarily.

That's ironical. Is it not one of the most important mandates for the government of President Abdurrahman Wahid to resolve cases of corruption from the old regime, including former President Suharto and his cronies, as well as to lay the foundation for the creation of a clean government? In other words, is not the eradication of corruption a major target of the current government?¹⁸²

Thus, for *Kompas* the main issue is that New Order practices like the arbitrary use of state funds still seem to take place in a government that took office to eradicate KKN and lay the basis for a clean government (26 May 2000; 27 May 2000). In short, the Bulog case raises doubts about the government's commitment to reform and shows that KKN is apparently still rampant during *reformasi* (27 May 2000; 29 May 2000). However, compared to the other newspapers under scrutiny *Kompas* (26 May 2000) avoids finger-pointing by highlighting that, to that point in time, the details of Buloggate were unclear.

¹⁸² “Yang lebih berarti, sebab di balik skandal itu tercium bau korupsi, kolusi, dan nepotisme (KKN) yang disebut-sebut – karena itu belum tentu benar – melibatkan sejumlah nama dalam lingkaran Istana Kepresidenan. Bahwa pada era sekarang masih ada orang berperilaku sama dengan era sebelumnya, yakni memperlakukan Bulog sebagai sumber dana taktis yang tak perlu pertanggungjawaban, masih ada penguasa yang menganggap bisa semena-mena mendayagunakan uang Negara. Itulah ironi. Bukankah salah satu amanat paling penting untuk pemerintahan Presiden KH Abdurrahman Wahid adalah menyelesaikan kasus-kasus KKN rezim lama, termasuk mantan Presiden Soeharto beserta kroninya, sekaligus meletakkan kerangka landasan bagi terciptanya pemerintahan yang bersih (clean government)? Dengan kata lain, bukankah pemberantasan KKN merupakan target utama pemerintahan sekarang?” (*Kompas*, 26 May 2000).

According to *Kompas* (26 May 2000) the scandal is “highly politically charged or at least very likely to be politicized”¹⁸³ and, if not handled properly, could have the potential to undermine the government’s authority and credibility. This presumption is also clearly expressed in the editorial’s headline ‘The Bulog scandal could become a stumbling block for the Abdurrahman government’¹⁸⁴ (26 May 2000). In order to avoid that, *Kompas* urges that the case be settled in a timely manner. However, while praising Wahid’s order to capture all involved in the scandal as a step towards law enforcement (26 May 2000), *Kompas* (29 May 2000) doubts that justice will be done and implicitly recommends that the scandal not be prolonged:

Already we expect that it would not be simple to complete the Rp 35 billion case legally. Namely, the law that unfolds truth and justice, the truth nothing but the whole truth [sic], the truth as it is. When, for example, the law does not succeed to uncover the issue until a sense of justice is met, an increasing number of lawsuits the processing and completion of which increases the frustration with the society and encourages people increasingly to turn to vigilantism. Yes, no-nonsense. For days at least, the attention of the government and the public will be disrupted. The concentration on economic recovery efforts is disturbed by the continuation of the case of the Rp 35 billion funds.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ “sangat kental dengan muatan politis atau paling tidak sangat mungkin diperpolitisasi” (*Kompas*, 26 May 2000).

¹⁸⁴ ‘Skandal Bulog bisa jadi batu sandungan pemerintahan Abdurrahman’ (*Kompas*, 26 May 2000).

¹⁸⁵ “Sudah dapat kita perkirakan, tidak akan sederhana, menyelesaikan perkara Rp 35 milyar itu secara hukum. Yakni hukum yang menguakkan kebenaran dan keadilan, the truth nothing but the whole truth, kebenaran seperti apa adanya. Manakala misalnya, hukum tidak berhasil menguak persoalan hingga rasa keadilan terpenuhi, bertambahlah perkara hukum yang lagi-lagi penanganan dan penyelesaiannya menambah frustrasi masyarakat dan mendorong masyarakat semakin cenderung main hakim sendiri. Ya, ada-ada saja. Berhari-hari, sekurang-kurangnya, perhatian pemerintah dan masyarakat terganggu. Konsentrasi pada usaha pemulihan ekonomi diganggu oleh kelanjutan perkara dana Rp 35 milyar” (*Kompas*, 29 May 2000).

Kompas nevertheless sharply condemns the arbitrary use of state funds (5 June 2000) and wants law enforcement agents to follow up the case despite the return of the majority of the missing Bulog funds (9 June 2000). Yet a parliamentary inquiry into both scandals is seen by *Kompas* (1 September 2000) as a political manoeuvre.

Kompas is torn over Wahid's role in the Bulog case. For example, *Kompas* (29 May 2000) appreciates the immediate arrest of Sapuan and the government's need for funds, but questions whether "Soewondo was a fugitive or was he given the opportunity to run?"¹⁸⁶ and is suspicious why the funds then went to private accounts (*Kompas*, 29 May 2000). In so doing *Kompas* tries to be appreciative while simultaneously highlighting the limitations of its sympathy.

Kompas (2 December 2000) sees the emergence of Buloggate as a consequence of the President's behaviour and in so doing comes to Wahid's defense by highlighting that he did not act in bad faith.¹⁸⁷

The president had innately good intentions, just taking things easy . . . [He] does not understand the depth and seriousness of the problem. If he wants to be like that, go ahead..... The issues that came to be known as Buloggate and Bruneigate, originate also from there. [He] does not mean any harm, but tends to take the easy way out of the problem. The result appears in the chaotic situation.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ "Soewondo sempat buron atau diberi kesempatan buron?" (*Kompas*, 29 May 2000).

¹⁸⁷ *Kompas* reaction in respect to the president's role in Bruneigate is similar. By posing the question why Wahid talked publicly about the two million dollar he had received from the Sultan of Brunei if he had something to hide *Kompas* (12 June 2000) denies him any ill-intention. Instead *Kompas* justifies Wahid's behaviour by referring to his weakness in dealing with money and bureaucracy as well as his lack of experience in ruling.

¹⁸⁸ "Presiden berpembawaan maksud baik, gampang-gampang saja . . . Tidak memahami secara mendalam dan secara serius persoalannya. Maunya begitu, silakan saja. Nanti, bagaimana pelaksanaannya, urusan nanti. Persoalan-persoalan yang kemudian dikenal sebagai Buloggate dan Bruneigate, dari sana pula asalnya. Tidak bermaksud buruk, tetapi cenderung memudahkan persoalan. Akibatnya muncul situasi amburadul" (2 December 2000).

Kompas does not avoid criticising Wahid and points out his weaknesses (12 June 2000, 16 June 2000; 27 January 2001).

The problem lies in the fact that he has absolutely no experience in governing. His inclination is more towards vision, more intellectual, as a humanist and religious scholar. Weak in consistency or outlining a vision into consistency. Weak in terms of organizing or bureaucracy. Weak and careless in financial issues. It is this weakness that has repeatedly led to a variety of statements, policies and actions accompanied by or causing controversy, differences in judgement, conflict.¹⁸⁹

Despite this frequent critique, including condemning Wahid's claim that the inquiry was illegal (5 December 2000), *Kompas* does not see Wahid's actions as ill-intended and wants him to stay in office until the end of his term.

Democracy requires stability . . . The president showed various weaknesses, omissions, and errors during his seven-month government. But for the political parties in the DPR and the MPR and for the elite and the political forces outside the representative institutions, in our opinion, the replacement of the president in the middle of the road will be of no use.¹⁹⁰

Carried to its extreme, if Gus Dur no longer has integrity and purpose, it doesn't matter who else or which group, his successor will experience the same thing. This is why taking turns alternately will neither create democratic stability nor would it be democratic!¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ "Masalahnya terletak pada kenyataan bahwa ia sama sekali tidak mempunyai pengalaman memerintah. Inklusinya lebih ke visi, lebih intelektual, budayawan dan kyai. Lemah dalam konsistensi atau menjabarkan visi menjadi konsistensi. Lemah dalam cara mengatur atau berbirokrasi. Lemah dan ceroboh dalam masalah keuangan. Kelemahan itu berkali-kali menyebabkan berbagai pernyataan, kebijakan dan tindakannya disertai atau menimbulkan kontroversi, perbedaan penilaian, konflik" (*Kompas*, 12 June 2000).

¹⁹⁰ "Demokrasi memerlukan stabilitas . . . Presiden melakukan berbagai kelemahan, kealpaan, dan kesalahan selama tujuh bulan pemerintahannya. Akan tetapi oleh partai-partai politik di DPR dan MPR dan oleh elite dan kekuatan politik di luar lembaga perwakilan, menurut pendapat kita, tidak akan digunakan untuk mengganti Presiden di tengah jalan" (*Kompas*, 12 June 2000).

¹⁹¹ "Ekstremnya, jika Gus Dur jatuh di luar ketulusan dan kepamrihan siapa pun dan kelompok mana pun, penggantinya akan mengalami hal serupa. Akan silih berganti dan karena itu tidak ada stabilitas demokrasi atau demokratis!" (*Kompas*, 16 June 2000).

Kompas (29 January 2001) reinforces its position by stating on the day the committee was scheduled to present its findings to the DPR that it only supports the parliamentary inquiry as a means to clarify Wahid's involvement in Bulog- and Bruneigate but not as means to topple him.

Kompas (12 January 2001, 22 January 2001) sees the issues surrounding the inquiry into Bulog- and Bruneigate as the most imminent cause of tension between the government, particularly the president, and the DPR. *Kompas* argues that the inquiry has turned its focus from probing Wahid's possible involvement in Bulog- and Bruneigate to efforts to topple him. In other words, that the parliamentary inquiry into the scandals is being used as a means to topple the President constitutionally (29 January 2001).¹⁹² *Kompas'* main concern though is that the masses have been drawn into, and polarized over, this intra-elite conflict. Indeed, following the DPR's return from recess on 15 January 2000 demonstrations for and against Wahid in connection with his alleged role in Bulog- and Bruneigate were a frequent occurrence. The fear that the intra-elite bickering surrounding the Bulog- and Bruneigate inquiry could ignite a violent conflict among the polarised masses and lead to bloodshed crystallises as *Kompas'* main concern as the inquiry nears its end (12 January 2001, 30 January 2001). In order to avoid that, and to not prolong the uncertainty over the inquiry's outcome, *Kompas* (24 January 2001) would have preferred that the meeting between the president and the committee in the Jakarta Convention Centre would have resulted in a political compromise instead of a stand-off between the president and the committee:

¹⁹² Through constitutional means as the investigation's results may lead the DPR to issue a memorandum that could ultimately lead to Wahid's impeachment.

The substance of Buloggate itself in fact may also be considered in terms of morality and conscience. Such a perspective and approach would open an elegant solution because anyone can be at fault and therefore can also correct errors. Now, after the meeting ended dramatically-silent, we're back in a situation that is unclear. It is not clear how the Buloggate case will end up. We can just answer let the case be resolved through the democratic mechanism in the DPR. Yet this reasonable answer may not resolve the issue well, because this mechanism taken by the Special Committee is already embroiled in politics like the politics of pros and cons. Meanwhile, signs are present, the pro and cons also already involve the power and the masses of pro and contra.¹⁹³

Kompas' fear of the involvement of the masses becomes reality when the DPR's plenary session on 29 January 2001 – within which the committee presented its conclusion that Wahid was involved in the sandal – is accompanied by unrest between Wahid opponents and supporters. Criticising the committee's conclusion as hardening fronts, *Kompas* fears that the DPR's bickering over the committee's report – namely whether to accept or reject the committee's conclusion – could translate into violent conflict among the masses and endanger *reformasi* and the overall democratisation process. *Kompas* appeals to all actors – first and foremost to the elite – to avoid that happening and “to seek the best possible exit”¹⁹⁴ (30 January 2001). On the day prior to the DPR factions' scheduled presentation of their

¹⁹³ “Substansi Buloggate sendiri, sebenarnya juga dapat dipertimbangkan dari segi moralitas dan suara hati. Sudut pandang dan pendekatan itu pun membuka solusi yang elegan, mengingat siapa pun dapat bersalah dan karena itu dapat pula memperbaiki kesalahannya. KINI setelah pertemuan yang berakhir secara dramatis-bisu itu kita kembali berada dalam situasi yang tidak jelas. Tidak jelas akan berakhir semacam apakah kasus Buloggate itu? Kita bisa saja menjawab, biarlah kasus itu diselesaikan melalui mekanisme demokrasi di DPR. Jawaban yang masuk akal itu belum bisa menyelesaikan persoalannya secara baik, karena terhadap mekanisme seperti yang ditempuh dengan Pansus telanjur disertai politik serta perpolitikan pro dan kontra. Sementara itu, hadir tanda-tanda, sikap pro-kontra juga telanjur melibatkan kekuatan dan massa pro dan kontra. Kali ini kita cenderung menyerahkan penyelesaian masalahnya kepada Presiden, Wakil Presiden, para pemimpin politik, dan elite politik” (*Kompas*, 24 January 2001).

¹⁹⁴ “untuk mencari exit yang sebaik-baiknya” (*Kompas*, 30 January 2001).

opinions *Kompas* (31 January 2001) calls upon the conflicting parties to put aside their own interests and work together in finding a solution that leads to stability and security in order to move on with the democratisation process and economic reform.

We are waiting for the continuance of the DPR plenary's stance on the results of the Bulog- and Bruneigate inquiry. In the current phase, we cannot anticipate clearly, where the political conflict that has formed around the inquiry of the two cases ends. Will it be fought out politically in Parliament in accordance with constitutional mechanisms or reconciled in a search for an amicable settlement? If the choice is to fight it out politically in the DPR, we question, what the impact is on the different positions at the mass level. Will the mass also take the view that it should fight it out outside of the DPR building and outside of the institutions of democracy?

The following question emerges. Will the process of settlement of result of the inquiry in the DPR and outside DPR take place quickly or over a long time? Will it be completed on Thursday, 1 February, or will it be prolonged? This question, first of all, is associated with the serious problem that the uncertainty is unsettling. Among others, entrepreneurs and the business community, are very sensitive to the uncertainty factor . . . The theme of this review is the uncertainty and vagueness of the political constellation. The subtheme of this review cues us constantly, *trapper toujours* [sic], let us not play with fire, but rather show wisdom. Put the interests and safety of the whole nation above the interests of the party, class, and personal interests.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ "Kita menantikan kelanjutan sikap bidang paripurna DPR terhadap hasil angket Pansus Buloggate dan Bruneigate. Pada fase sekarang, belum dapat kita antisipasi dengan jelas, ke mana muara konflik politik yang mengental sekitar Pansus dua kasus itu. Bertarung habis-habisan secara politik di DPR sesuai dengan mekanisme konstitusional atau berislah mencari penyelesaian secara baik-baik? Andaikata dipilih bertarung secara politik habis-habisan di DPR, kita persoalkan, apa pengaruhnya terhadap perbedaan sikap pada tingkat massa. Apakah massa juga akan mengambil sikap habis-habisan di luar gedung DPR dan di luar institusi demokrasi? Pertanyaan berikutnya muncul. Proses penyelesaian hasil kerja Pansus di DPR dan di luar DPR akan berlangsung cepat atau lama? Apakah selesai pada hari Kamis 1 Februari atau akan berkepanjangan? Pertanyaan itu pertama-tama dikaitkan dengan masalah serius yang selama ini sudah mengganggu yakni ketidakpastian. Di antaranya, para pengusaha dan masyarakat bisnis, amatlah peka terhadap faktor ketidakpastian . . . Tema pokok ulasan ini ialah ketidakpastian dan ketidakjelasan peta politik. Subtema ulasan ini, isyarat kita terus-menerus, *trapper toujours*, janganlah kita bermain api, melainkan bijak. Menempatkan kepentingan

For *Kompas*, the DPR's decision to censure the president brought worries it would lead to a further decline in economic conditions and prolonged political uncertainty (2 February 2001a). Against this backdrop *Kompas* (2 February 2001b) repeats its appeal to the conflicting elite to prioritise the safety of the nation when considering their next steps.

Explaining Kompas' coverage

Kompas' sympathy towards Wahid may derive from its inclinations towards the Catholic community, which is a minority, leading the newspaper to hold an interest in keeping a pluralist and open minded president in office.¹⁹⁶ Indeed, the stream of political interests that opposed Wahid consisted of Islamic political groups that had ideological differences with *Kompas'* leaders (Koran Duta, 30 October 2001). Furthermore, *Kompas* co-founder Jakob Oetama and Wahid were good friends (Wahid 1998: 66). Even though Jakob Oetama stepped down as chief editor from *Kompas* in January 2000, he maintained his positions as head of *Kompas* and President Director of Kompas Gramedia, and was sometimes still writing the *Kompas'* editorial. Furthermore, Jakob Oetama's style of journalism, philosophy and values are embodied in *Kompas*. *Kompas'* preference to keep Wahid in office, however, is also related to fears that the inquiry's efforts to topple Wahid could lead to mass unrest between pro- and anti-Wahid forces resulting in political instability

dan keselamatan seluruh bangsa di atas kepentingan partai, golongan, dan pribadi" (*Kompas*, 31 January 2001).

¹⁹⁶ Conversation with Yanti Muchtar, Advisory Council of Kapal Perempuan Institute, 14 May 2014, Perth.

Furthermore, since the 1970s Wahid had been writing regular columns for various print media, including *Kompas* and *Tempo*, in which he promoted "pluralism, religious tolerance, and the protection of minority rights" (Wahid and Ikeda 2015: 59).

and economic slump. This is in line with *Kompas'* paramount economic considerations.

Kompas' dilemma in following its principles of remaining neutral while fulfilling its watchdog function is most profoundly expressed in an editorial (27 January 2001) that elaborates on its reasons and justification in covering Buloggate:

[W]hy was the press so persistent in questioning Buloggate? Not because it went along with the legislative. The press based its judgment on issues that it considers most principle and very decisive for the implementation of democracy and democratic governance. Namely since the beginning of its establishment even in contrast to the old government, this government has wanted to implement clean, authoritative, effective and efficient governance. The establishment of good government as well as good governance.

When the case developed the press was nervous of becoming partisan or even a source of polarization. This should have been prevented to avoid coverage becoming partisan, and it should have remained tied to our common commitment (commitment to reform) to create a government, governance as well as politics that are clean.

Even though the mode of presentation and quality of effort is different, the mass media, because of the character inherent to the media, will select and pick up events and issues which it determines to be of most interest.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ “[M]engapa pers gigih mempersoalkan kasus Buloggate? Bukan karena ikut-ikutan legislatif. Pers mendasarkan pertimbangannya pada persoalan yang dipandang amat prinsipil dan amat menentukan untuk penyelenggaraan demokrasi dan pemerintahan demokrasi. Yakni tegaknya sejak semula bahkan secara kontras (terhadap pemerintah lama) pemerintah dan pemerintahan yang bersih, berwibawa, efektif, efisien. Tegaknya good government maupun good governance. Pers gamang, ketika kasus itu berkembang menjadi partisan bahkan dijadikan sumber polarisasi. Seharusnya perspektif kasus itu dicegah menjadi partisan dan tetap diikat pada komitmen kita bersama (komitmen reformasi) membangun pemerintah, pemerintahan serta kehidupan politik yang bersih. Sekalipun cara presentasi dan kualitas upayanya berbeda-beda, media massa karena karakter yang melekat pada media, akan memilih dan mengangkat peristiwa dan masalah yang diperkirakan paling menarik” (Kompas, 27 January 2001).

3.1.3 *Republika*: Anti-Wahid

Overview of Republika's position

For *Republika*, Buloggate shows that New Order-style KKN is still prevalent among power holders despite a change of leadership and reform efforts. The paper wants Buloggate to be settled. *Republika* not only doubts the commitment and ability of the law enforcement agencies, the judiciary and the DPR to settle the case. It also suggests that the government and Wahid are actively trying to divert attention from the scandal and hampering its investigation. *Republika* presents the President as involved in Buloggate and wants him to resign over the case.¹⁹⁸

Editorial analysis

Republika (31 May 2000) reacts to Buloggate in a similar way to *Kompas* and *Media Indonesia*. Namely that the scandal is of serious concern

because it occurs during the post-reform [period], and involves key people who are in power today. The Bulog scandal, at least, reminds us again that the style of the old ways of the Soeharto regime in managing state finances was still ongoing, although the New Order went two years ago. As if the stigma is still alive in this country: if you enter the circle of power be ready to get dirty. This means that the reform movement has not managed to make substantial changes to the culture of power in this country. The new reforms managed to change the face and the name of the ruler, but the culture of power is still the same: KKN is still strong.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ In the context of Bruneigate *Republika* (2 June 2000) only criticises Wahid's lack of transparency in the acceptance of the US\$ 2 million donation from the Sultan of Brunei.

¹⁹⁹ "karena justru terjadi pada pascareformasi, dan melibatkan orang-orang penting dalam kekuasaan sekarang ini. Munculnya skandal Bulog, setidaknya, kembali menyadarkan kita bahwa cara-cara lama ala rezim Soeharto dalam mengelola keuangan negara ternyata masih berlangsung, meski penguasa Orde Baru itu sudah lengser dua tahun silam. Seakan masih hidup stigma di negeri ini: jika Anda memasuki lingkaran kekuasaan bersiaplah untuk ikut terkena lumpur. Ini artinya, gerakan reformasi belum berhasil melakukan perubahan yang mendasar terhadap budaya kekuasaan di negeri ini.

Whereas in this excerpt *Republika* only complains about the failure of the reforms in tackling corruption, its view on Wahid's involvement starts to take shape in its commentary on Bondan Goenawan's resignation in the same editorial (31 May 2000).

But, Bondan himself admitted his resignation was solely to ease the burden of the president. Lately, Bondan was mentioned as being involved in the case of 'the theft' of Rp 35 billion belonging to Yanatera Bulog. And, he felt that he had been targeted as an intermediary to attack Abdurrahman. Therefore, to ease the burden of the president – while asserting that he knew nothing about the scandal that came to be called the Buloggate – the FORDEM activist [Bondan Goenawan] chose to resign.²⁰⁰

That *Republika* sees Wahid implicated in Buloggate becomes more evident when discussing the cause of the case:

In this case [Bulog], there are very strong indications of the involvement of the palace. Moreover the testimony of Sapuan as deputy head of Bulog in front of the DPR's Commission III last week, has clearly revealed that it was President Abdurrahman Wahid who first intended to use these [Bulog] funds.²⁰¹

Reformasi baru berhasil mengganti wajah dan nama penguasa, tapi budaya kekuasaannya masih sama: kuatnya kasus KKN" (*Republika*, 31 May 2000).

²⁰⁰ "Tapi, Bondan sendiri mengaku pengunduran dirinya semata-mata untuk meringankan beban sang Presiden. Belakangan, Bondan memang disebut-sebut terlibat dalam kasus 'pembobolan' dana Rp 35 miliar milik Yanatera Bulog. Dan, ia merasa telah dijadikan sasaran antara untuk menyerang Abdurrahman. Karena itu, untuk meringankan beban sang Presiden – sambil menegaskan bahwa ia tidak tahu-menahu tentang skandal yang kemudian disebut Buloggate itu – aktivis Fordem ini memilih untuk mengundurkan diri" (*Republika*, 31 May 2000).

FORDEM is the acronym of Forum Demokrasi (Democracy Forum), a loose association of liberal, social democratic and religious intellectual and political figures critical of the Suharto government. It was formed in 1991 under the patronage of Abdurrahman Wahid. For further information see Aspinall 2000: 101-13.

²⁰¹ "Dalam kasus ini [Bulog], sangat kental indikasi keterlibatan kalangan istana. Bahkan keterangan Sapuan sebagai Wakil Kepala Bulog di depan Komisi III DPR minggu lalu, jelas terungkap Presiden Abdurrahman Wahid-lah yang pertama berniat untuk menggunakan dana [Bulog] tersebut" (*Republika*, 5 June 2000).

Both of these issues, long known as the Buloggate and Bruneigate scandals, involve President Abdurrahman Wahid.²⁰²

In the judicial proceedings Dr Sapuan, deputy head of Bulog who signed the disbursement of the Yanatera funds, revealed indications of the indirect involvement of President Abdurrahman Wahid and the palace.²⁰³

Republika's (22 November 2000) editorial headed 'Evidence of the involvement of the President'²⁰⁴ following Saleh Sofyan testimony in front of the Bulog- and Bruneigate committee incriminating Wahid, leaves no doubt on its position towards Wahid's implication:

The mystery of the involvement of President Abdurrahman Wahid in the Buloggate case has been lifted. Praise Be To God, former Bulog general bureau chief, Sofyan Saleh finally dared to reveal the truth, even if he previously received death threats. The courage of this key witness in the case of the misuse of Rp 35 billion funds from Yayasan Yanatera Bulog must be appreciated. In a meeting of the Special Committee and Bruneigate Buloggate last Monday, Sofyan revealed the involvement of Abdurrahman Wahid.²⁰⁵

In praising Sofyan's courage in speaking the truth *Republika* implies that Wahid is not speaking the truth. Sofyan's testimony that Suwondo organised a meeting between him and the President after a search warrant against Suwondo had been

²⁰² "Kedua masalah ini sudah lama kita kenal sebagai skandal Buloggate dan Bruneigate yang melibatkan Presiden Abdurrahman Wahid" (*Republika*, 30 August 2000).

²⁰³ "Dalam proses peradilan Dr Sapuan, Waka Bulog yang menandatangani pencairan dana Yanatera, terungkap adanya indikasi keterlibatan Presiden Abdurrahman Wahid dan kalangan istana secara tidak langsung" (*Republika*, 16 October 2000).

²⁰⁴ 'Bukti Keterlibatan Presiden' (*Republika*, 22 November 2000).

²⁰⁵ "Terkuak sudah misteri keterlibatan Presiden Abdurrahman Wahid dalam kasus Buloggate. Alhamdulillah, Ir Saleh Sofyan, mantan Kabiro Umum Bulog, akhirnya berani mengungkapkan kebenaran, sekalipun sebelumnya mendapat ancaman akan keselamatan jiwanya. Keberanian saksi kunci kasus penyalahgunaan uang Yayasan Yanatera Bulog sebesar Rp 35 miliar itu patut disyukuri. Dalam rapat Pansus Buloggate dan Bruneigate Senin lalu, Sofyan mengungkapkan keterlibatan Abdurrahman Wahid" (*Republika*, 22 November 2000).

issued subverted Wahid's denial that he did not know about the disbursement, and revealed that there was continuing communication between the president and Suwondo. Based on the latter, *Republika* (22 November 2000) imputed Wahid of having known about Suwondo's hiding place and having even engineered his capture:

Based on [Sofyan's] testimony, people are easily drawn to the conclusion that the President knew Suwondo's hideout. In fact, let us hope that it was not the president who organised and protected the fugitive until he was later was arrested by police perhaps due to some some manipulated intervention.²⁰⁶

For *Republika* (22 November 2000) the testimony of former Bulog executive Saleh Sofyan is a delayed gratification since Wahid's implication into Buloggate provides a strong reason – even for those who tolerated Wahid's previous contested actions and the government's lack of performance – to lead the president to a Special Session of the MPR. *Republika* doubts that after Sofyan's statement Wahid could any longer deny his implication and suggests:

Wouldn't it be better for you to resign immediately instead of being disgraced in a MPR special session?²⁰⁷

Republika (29 January 2001) links the DPR's decision on the Bulog- and Bruneigate report to the question of whether Wahid still has the legitimation and credibility to continue his presidency until the end of his term. The newspaper repeats the

²⁰⁶ "Berdasarkan keterangan itu, orang mudah menarik kesimpulan bahwa Presiden mengetahui tempat persembunyian Suwondo. Bahkan, jangan-jangan Presiden yang mengatur dan melindungi si buron sampai ia kemudian, entah dengan rekayasa apalagi, ditangkap polisi" (22 November 2000).

²⁰⁷ "Tidakkah seyogianya Anda mundur secara sukarela secepatnya daripada harus dipermalukan dalam SI MPR?" (Republika, 22 November 2000).

suggestion that Wahid step down following the DPR's acceptance of the committee's report (2 February 2001):

Many believe that it would be better if President Abdurrahman Wahid resign immediately. Such a scenario may smooth the resolution of the current political crisis.²⁰⁸

This clearly shows that *Republika* wants Wahid to step down from presidency over Buloggate. *Republika* wants to avoid bloodshed between the pro- and anti-Wahid groups over the DPR's decision on the committee's report and calls upon the groups to accept the DPR's decision.

Republika wants Buloggate to be solved (31 May 2000) and highlights the importance of doing so by arguing (7 June 2000):

The eradication of corruption without distinction, including within the State Palace, is important to build the image of a just government, clean and dignified. Let it not transpire that KKN scandals are never completely solved because they simply serve as as 'political fodder'.²⁰⁹

However, *Republika* doubts whether this will happen. *Republika's* (15 May 2000) concern that Buloggate will be covered up is already evident in its first editorial mentioning the scandal. Here, *Republika* voices its critique of the silence of anti-corruption organisations and the DPR.

²⁰⁸ "Banyak kalangan berpendapat bahwa akan lebih baik bila Presiden Abdurrahman Wahid segera mengundurkan diri. Hal demikian dinilai akan mempermudah penyelesaian krisis politik sekarang" (*Republika*, 2 February 2001).

²⁰⁹ "Memberantas KKN tanpa pandang bulu, termasuk di lingkungan Istana Negara, penting untuk membangun citra pemerintahan yang adil, bersih, dan berwibawa. Jangan sampai skandal-skandal KKN tak pernah diselesaikan secara tuntas karena hanya dijadikan 'makanan politik'" (*Republika*, 7 June 2000).

The officials who disbursed the money are already known, the palace cronies who received the money are already detected, but the loud noise from ICW [Indonesian Corruption Watch] or other anti-corruption bodies has already disappeared . . . Commission members in the DPR who are responsible for the reputation of the government, responsible for enforcing the rule of law, are silent.²¹⁰

Republika explains the silence of these institutions by pointing out that ICW leader Teten Masduki had lost his independence due to his co-option into the National Ombudsman Commission (Komisi Ombudsman Nasional) – an institution established in March 2000 by Wahid in an attempt to enforce clean and good governance.²¹¹ The paper further implies that legislators in the fight against high profile KKN put political interests above legal action. In this context *Republika* (25 May 2000) also blames the attorney general, the judiciary (*kejaksaan*) and the police for being sluggish in handling the Bulog case.

For example, *Republika* (26 June 2000) sees the investigation of Wahid by the police in the context of Buloggate more as a mere formality rather than a demonstration of the supremacy of law. The paper argues that during the Wahid government the law had merely become a political instrument. *Republika* also directly criticises Wahid by questioning:

²¹⁰ “Pejabat yang menyerahkan uang pun sudah jelas, kroni istana yang menerima uang pun sudah terdeteksi, tetapi suara keras dari ICW atau lembaga antikorupsi lainnya sudah menghilang . . . para anggota Komisi di DPR yang bertanggung jawab atas nama baik pemerintah, bertanggung jawab menegakkan supremasi hukum, diam seribu bahasa” (*Republika*, 15 May 2000).

²¹¹ For further information on the National Ombudsman Commission see, for example, Bhargava et al. 2004: 222; Butt et al. 2015: 135-8.

How can it be that a president who had founded the institution “Democratic Forum” and had been praised when opposing the Suharto government . . . turned out to be is using the law as an instrument to achieve his goal once he was in power?²¹²

Republika (16 October 2000) criticises the government’s failure in upholding law and justice. More specifically, it laments that in high profile cases trials are only theatre and court decisions are only a pretence since they do not derive from legal considerations but are a product of negation and compromise.

Republika (16 October 2000) conveys the impression that the government was covering up Buloggate by, for example, avoiding the capture of Suwondo out of concern that Suwondo’s testimony could incriminate the President in the scandal, and by suggesting that re-opening investigations into Baligate²¹³ just at the time the Bulog scandal broke was merely a tactic by the government to extend the issue of KKN and divert public attention from the Bulog scandal (7 June 2000):

Interestingly, the reopening of Baligate that caused the state losses of Rp 904 billion, happened precisely when President Abdurrahman "Gus Dur" Wahid and people around the Presidential Palace were being linked with a new KKN scandal, Buloggate . . . Therefore, although the intention of the attorney general in reopening Baligate was purely to resolve KKN, yet an impression that the motives were political is unavoidable. Many people directly assumed, the reopening of the scandal was simply to expand the issue of KKN and diverting

²¹² “Bagaimana mungkin seorang Presiden yang pernah mendirikan sebuah lembaga “Forum Demokrasi” dan dipuji saat melawan pemerintahan Soeharto . . . ternyata ketika berkuasa justru masih menjadikan hukum sebagai instrumen untuk mencapai tujuan?” (26 June 2000).

²¹³ The Bank Bali scandal (‘Baligate’) broke in July 1999. It revolved around the alleged illegal transfer of about Rp 546 billion from Bank Bali to PT Era Giat Prima (EPG) as a commission for helping the bank recoup interbank claims. Given that those claims were already guaranteed by the government and that EPG was linked to Golkar and President Habibie loyalists, it was suspected that the commission would be used for the re-election bid of Habibie in the October 1999 presidential election. For further information see, for example, Booth 1999; Saydam 1999.

public attention from the Buloggate scandal that was enough to shake the credibility of the government of Gus Dur.²¹⁴

However, following the capture of Suwondo *Republika's* (16 October 2000) opinion of the police improves:

[W]e should express our appreciation to the police officers who have successfully captured Suwondo, because it turns out they do not want to become a tool of the power again.²¹⁵

In respect to the judiciary and the forthcoming parliamentary inquiry, *Republika* (16 October 2000) remains critical:

It is important that this case is taken up . . . because it became an example of how the authorities use their powers for the benefit of their cronies, regardless of the public . . . Therefore, the trial of Suwondo later must be an independent trial, it must not be regulated and engineered for the interests of the authorities. Not just tactics and strategies to avoid and pass the blame to a particular person both in court and at the hearing of the special Buloggate committee by the DPR that is reportedly not very long away.²¹⁶

²¹⁴ "Yang menarik, mencuatnya kembali Baligate yang merugikan negara Rp 904 miliar ini justru terjadi ketika Presiden Abdurrahman 'Gus Dur' Wahid dan orang-orang di sekitar Istana Negara sedang dikait-kaitkan dengan skandal KKN baru, Buloggate . . . Karena itu, meskipun sangat mungkin niat Kejaksaan Agung mengungkap kembali Baligate itu adalah murni untuk menuntaskan KKN, tapi kesan politis tidak dapat dihindari. Banyak orang lantas menduga, dibukanya kembali skandal itu sekadar untuk memperluas persoalan KKN dan mengalihkan perhatian publik dari skandal Buloggate yang cukup menggoyang kredibilitas pemerintahan Gus Dur" (*Republika*, 7 June 2000).

²¹⁵ "kita patut memberi penghargaan yang tinggi kepada aparat kepolisian yang telah berhasil menangkap Suwondo, karena ternyata mereka tidak mau lagi jadi alat kekuasaan" (*Republika*, 16 October 2000).

²¹⁶ "Kasus ini penting diangkat . . . karena menjadi contoh bagaimana sebuah penguasa menggunakan perangkat kekuasaan untuk kepentingan kroninya, tanpa menghiraukan publik . . . Karena itu, peradilan Suwondo kelak haruslah peradilan yang mandiri, tidak boleh diatur dan direkayasa untuk kepentingan penguasa. Bukan sekadar taktik dan strategi untuk mengindar dan melemparkan kesalahan kepada orang tertentu baik di pengadilan maupun pada sidang panitia khusus Buloggate oleh DPR yang kabarnya tidak lama lagi digelar" (*Republika*, 16 October 2000).

While welcoming the DPR's decision to form a parliamentary inquiry into Bulog-Bruneigate (30 August 2000) and praising the committee for its persistence (22 November 2000), *Republika* (30 November 2000) is critical as to whether the committee can be strong enough to follow up the case and to resist "a bargain, political bargaining, which ignores the truth of law. We hope that the Buloggate Special Committee is not tempted to get caught in that direction."²¹⁷

Explaining Republika's coverage

As the editorial analysis of Buloggate has shown, *Republika* was more critical of President Wahid than *Media Indonesia* or *Kompas*. This can be explained by *Republika's* ideological affiliation: "*Republika* had a strong association with Habibie and ICMI and was later associated with the leader of PAN, Amien Rais, the Poros Tengah, and Islamic-oriented military officers" (Kingsbury 2005: 127-8). Thus *Republika* was part of a group that was opposed to President Wahid and NU. Furthermore, Wahid had strongly opposed the formation of ICMI in 1991 by "denouncing it as sectarian and a refuge for Islamic fundamentalists" (Hefner 1999: 55).

Hamazaki (1998) described *Republika* as a newspaper that was edited by Muslim intellectuals and protected by Habibie and Suharto along with his cronies.²¹⁸ Habibie's influence over *Republika* – according to Schwarz (1999: 328) Habibie kept "Republika on a tight leash" – also explains why *Republika* did not criticise the government's performance during the Habibie presidency (Nainggolan 2003: 286).

²¹⁷ "sebuah tawar-menawar, bargaining politik, yang mengabaikan kebenaran hukum. Kita berharap Pansus Buloggate tidak tergoda untuk terjebak ke arah itu" (*Republika*, 30 November 2000).

²¹⁸ As quoted in Nainggolan 2003: 264.

Later, with the fall of Habibie and the rise of Wahid as president, *Republika's* editorial policy changed to be often critical of government policy (Nainggolan 2003: 319-320). Mulyanti Syas (2001) also found that *Republika* provided a negative view of President Wahid's policies and a positive representation of President Habibie's policies. Parni Hadi, former chief editor of *Republika* "admits to being strongly critical of the Wahid government through the voice of *Republika*" (Romano and Seinor 2005: 114).

Parni Hadi was removed from his position as *Republika's* chief editor in May 1997 but kept his position as CEO of *Republika* (Kompas, 5 June 1997). Thus, even though Parni Hadi was no longer chief editor of *Republika* in the era of Wahid's leadership, he still had an influence on *Republika's* news content and its attitude towards President Wahid's leadership (Nainggolan 2003: 385). Parni Hadi also had a personal feud with President Wahid. In March 2000 President Wahid had replaced Parni Hadi as the head of the state owned *Antara* news agency after accusations that Parni Hadi lacked the support of the majority of employees and had tried to enforce his plan to transform *Antara* into a private company against the will of those who disagreed with the privatisation plan (AFPR, 24 March 2000). However, the replacement of Parni Hadi might also have been influenced by political concerns (The Jakarta Post, 22 March 2000). First, Hadi's proposed privatization of *Antara* would have decreased the government's influence over the agency (Romano and Seinor 2005: 120). Second, Parni Hadi had been installed by Wahid's predecessor President Habibie as *Antara's* general manager. Both were connected by a long-standing friendship and a shared involvement in ICMI. Given this and the fact that most of the privately owned media were critical of Wahid, the President may have

decided to replace *Antara's* general manager with a candidate of his choice. Furthermore, the fact that Parni Hadi was member of ICMI, a political appointee and close associate of President Habibie, and editor of the *Republika* newspaper (The Jakarta Post, 22 March 2002), and was part of group opposed President Wahid and NU, made his replacement strategic.²¹⁹

President Wahid had shown his animosity for *Republika* in February 2000 when he deliberately did not provide *Republika* with the news that Wiranto was being replaced as TNI General at the State Palace on 13 February 2000 (despite providing this information to *Kompas* and *Media Indonesia*). When asked by journalists why he had only provided this information to *Kompas* and *Media Indonesia* but not *Republika* President Wahid stated that he deliberately did not distribute the information to *Republika* because he regarded it as incompetent (Nainggolan 2003: 87, 320). Furthermore, in 1994 *Republika* had launched a campaign to oust Wahid from the NU leadership (Nainggolan 2003: 269, 270).

Besides such ideological reasons and personal vendettas, financial objectives appear to have played a role in *Republika's* coverage of Buloggate. *Republika* reported on the Bulog scandal much earlier than *Kompas* and *Media Indonesia*. Its first front page report on the scandal was on 7 May 2000 under the headline 'The President denies having received a bribe of Rp 35 billion'²²⁰. Additionally, on this and the following day *Republika* printed front page reports on Banser's occupation of the

²¹⁹ Affiliated with NU and Muhammadiyah respectively, Wahid and Hadi were from politically opposing groups. Furthermore, Wahid had strongly opposed the formation of ICMI in 1991 by "denouncing it as sectarian and a refuge for Islamic fundamentalists" (Hefner 1999: 55).

For further detail on the NU and Muhammadiyah relationship in general and during Wahid's presidency see, for example: The Jakarta Post, 8 January 2001.

²²⁰ 'Presiden Bantah Terima Suap Rp 35 Miliar'.

Jawa Pos offices that mentioned NU leader Hasyim Wahid as beneficiary of the disbursed Bulog Yanatera funds. In so doing, *Republika* connects the scandal disclosure with an outbreak of violence on behalf of those close to Wahid, namely NU Banser. Additionally, as found by Wardhana (2002: 274), at the time the Buloggate case broke, the majority of sources in *Republika* were critical of Wahid (Wardhana 2002: 274). Furthermore, *Republika* was the only newspaper among the three newspapers under scrutiny that kept the scandal alive to the end of June 2000 by reporting on it daily on its front page and during July 2000 by sporadically reporting on its front page. Overall, *Republika* printed more cover page articles on the Bulog scandal than the other two newspapers under investigation.²²¹

Having discussed and explained the editorial position of *Kompas*, *Media Indonesia* and *Republika* the following section contrasts Buloggate to another scandal in which Wahid was implicated, namely Aryantigate.

3.2 Aryantigate

Scandal overview

Aryantigate refers to an alleged affair between Abdurrahman Wahid and a married woman, named Aryanti, between 1995 and 1997. Information on the alleged affair emerged during the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) Annual Session, 7-18 August 2000. At that time Aryanti and her ex-husband Yannur, visited several

²²¹ Whereas *Republika* published 63 cover page articles on the Bulog Yanatera scandal in the period from the scandal's disclosure to the day following the issuance of the First Memorandum (2 February 2001), *Kompas* and *Media Indonesia* only printed 47 and 50 respectively on the issue.

legislators and ministers with a dossier entitled 'Testimony about the behaviour of KH Abdurrahman Wahid'²²² and a photo depicting Aryanti sitting on Wahid's lap.²²³ Soon the photo circulated among DPR and MPR members, and became known to the media.

While the media waited for each other to publish on this case, rumours of the affair continued to spread. When NU executives learned about the affair and that *Panji Masyarakat* was planning to publish the photograph in its forthcoming edition (Gatra, 28 August 2000) they issued a circular telling their followers not to be provoked by this. The circular was distributed to all NU branches in East Java and also to the media which were expected to disseminate its content. The government-owned *Antara* news agency and the NU-owned newspaper *Duta Masyarakat* immediately published the information in an attempt to avoid unrest among NU members (Detikcom, 8 September 2000a; Gatra, 28 August 2000; The Jakarta Post, 30 August 2000).

The news item reported by *Antara* on 23 August 2000 under the headline 'Gus Dur was rumoured to be photographed with a woman who is not a close relative',²²⁴ prompted no immediate media interest among major newspapers and

²²² 'Kesaksian tentang Perilaku KH Abdurrahman Wahid'.

²²³ Among them were MPR speaker Amien Rais (PAN), DPR-speaker Akbar Tanjung (Golkar), Ginandjar Kartasmita (Golkar), Soetipto (PDI-P), Sukron Makmun (PKB), and Hamzah Haz (PPP). At that time some former ministers and MPR member received a dossier containing a written confession by Aryanti that she had sexual intercourse with Wahid and that he had reneged on his promise to marry her, as well as a photograph showing Abdurrahman Wahid with Aryanti on his lap. The dossier was distributed by Aryanti's ex-husband Yannur who, with Aryanti's consent, made the affair public.

²²⁴ 'Gus Dur diisukan berfoto dengan wanita bukan muhrim'.

was only picked up by some online media.²²⁵ The scandal only broke when the news weekly magazine *Gatra* made it the cover story of its 28 August 2000 edition. Soon afterwards the story hit the headlines of numerous print and electronic media.

According to Eriyanto (2002: 203) there were two different views that developed around the Aryanti case. Some construed it as pointing out the depravity of the Wahid government: a government that is not only incompetent in running the economy and the political system, but was also suffering from moral decay. Others claimed that Wahid's political opponents were resorting to a personal problem (*masalah pribadi*) regarding Aryanti to unseat Wahid after some other scandals failed to achieve this. However, some established media like *Tempo*, *Media Indonesia* and *Kompas* did not report the issue at all.²²⁶ This raises the question why certain news organizations stressed or downplayed the alleged affair.

Besides the limited media interest in the issue, legislators did not call for a probe into the affair since they regarded the alleged affair as a personal matter which happened before Wahid became president and thus had no bearing on his duties as president and Head of State. Several usually outspoken legislators and critics of Wahid, also did not use the alleged affair to attack the president (The

²²⁵ Those are Detik.com, 25 August 2000; Berpolitik.com, 25 August 2000; and Panji.co.id, 26 August 2000 (Hartoyo, 2 April 2001).

²²⁶ August Parengkuan, former deputy chief editor of *Kompas*, and current communication director of the Kompas-Gramedia group explained that it was *Kompas* editorial policy not to publish any news on the affair since the issue was very personal, concerning someone's privacy and was not current (Hartoyo, 2 April 2001). *Media Indonesia* did not cover the story but mentioned it twice in the context of listing the problems and controversies surrounding Wahid (9 September 2000; 24 September 2000). Reportedly, Surya Paloh had already – before *Gatra* and *Panji Masyarakat* reported on the alleged affair – warned *Media Indonesia's* editorial office not to publish on it since he didn't want *Media Indonesia* to publish controversial news. For Imam Anshori Saleh, executive editor of *Media Indonesia*, the news did not concern the public interest but was a private matter between Wahid and Aryanti, happened a long time ago, and appeared to be revived suspiciously for a political motive (Hartoyo, 2 April 2001).

Jakarta Post, 7 September 2000; Detikworld, 29 August 2000). NU and PKB officials as well as Wahid's supporters described reports of the alleged affair as slanderous accusations fabricated by certain groups, namely people from the New Order regime, to topple the president (The Jakarta Post, 3 September 2000a; Antara, 30 August 2000; The Jakarta Post, 29 August 2000b). Wahid himself, as well as the public (Reuters, 5 October 2000), widely ignored the allegations of an affair (The Jakarta Post, 30 August, 2000). His only comment was "For something like that, why bother? Who on earth is that woman?"²²⁷ (Adil, 31 August 2000).

Thus the supply of news beyond the scandal's initial disclosure was limited. Such news reports as did appear were mostly sourced from an investigation launched by the police regarding libel against the president that focused on Aryanti and the two magazines, *Gatra* and *Panji Masyarakat*, that had initially reported the alleged affair.²²⁸ Discussion in the media generally focused on journalistic ethics and on the motives of those publications which covered the scandal enthusiastically.²²⁹

Furthermore, the circumstances and the timing of Aryantigate's disclosure had an impact upon some media organisations' decision as to whether to report the news or not. Considering that the relationship between Wahid and Aryanti purportedly occurred in 1995, Aryanti's confession at the time of 2000 MPR Annual Session, in the midst of the tense political rivalry, raised suspicions that there was a

²²⁷ 'Gitu aja kok diurusin. Siapa sih wanita itu?'

²²⁸ It should be noted the police acted on its own initiative in undertaking an investigation. A police investigation of parties spreading slander against President Wahid was supported by the PKB but not by the president himself who insisted that he would ignore rumours about his personal life and allow people to make their own judgment.

²²⁹ See, for example, Qodari 2001; Eriyanto 2002; The Jakarta Post, 31 August 2000; Antara, 30 August 2000; The Jakarta Post, 29 August 2000b; The Jakarta Post, 30 August 2000; The Jakarta Post, 3 September 2000b; The Jakarta Post, 2 September 2000.

political motive behind the scandal's disclosure. Further decisive factors were whether the story was true or not (i.e. determining Yannur's and Aryanti's credibility as well as the photo's authenticity), ethical considerations (whether it's a personal or public matter), and what would be the consequences for a media organization publishing an alleged affair of the president (i.e. physical violence as in the Banser attack on the *Jawa Pos* or libel charges). After all, Aryanti's allegations involved the president and even though press freedom was guaranteed through the 1999 Press Law, defamation of the president remained a criminal offence. Under articles 134, 136, and 137 of the Criminal Code anyone who "disseminates, demonstrates openly or puts up a writing or portrait containing an insult against the president or vice president" could be imprisoned for up to six years (Human Rights Watch 2003).²³⁰

The following paragraphs offer an indication of the actual motives that prompted the weeklies *Gatra*, *Panj Masyarakat*, and *Forum Keadilan* to make the alleged affair a cover story, and *Tempo* to ignore it.²³¹ This is done by first, focusing on how the scandal was covered, if at all, and second by explaining why it was covered in a particular way or, in the case of *Tempo*, why it was not published.

Gatra (28 August 2000), *Panji Masyarakat* (6 September 2000), and *Forum Keadialan* (10 September 2000) gave the story the same priority by featuring it on the front cover illustrated by a close up of Aryanti. However, there were differences in the way in which each magazine presented the information (for example, through the choice of photograph of Aryanti it displayed on its cover and the main cover

²³⁰ These articles, also known as the 'lèse majesté' articles, were annulled in 2006 (SEAPA 2006).

²³¹ See Appendix D for a listing of all the articles analysed.

line), in the amount of space, the number of articles devoted to the scandal, and the selection of sources.²³²

Since the Aryantigate scandal also developed into a controversy among journalists, the editors of the four magazines mentioned above shared their opinions and arguments pertaining to coverage of the issue publicly. This, as well as a particular media's ownership, provides evidence to account for dissimilar interests and positions among news organizations. *Gatra* is owned by Suharto crony Bob Hasan who had been put under house arrest by the attorney general just a few days before *Gatra* broke Aryantigate. By virtue of its ownership *Panji Masyarakat* is close to Wahid's opponents *poros tengah* and Golkar. *Forum Keadilan* is a law and justice magazine considered to be close to former President Habibie and Golkar. *Tempo* was not affiliated with any political group. However, Presidential Protocol bureau chief Wahyu Muryadi was former managing editor of *Tempo*. The following paragraphs discuss and explain the positions of the four magazines.

3.2.1 *Gatra*

Gatra's (28 August 2000) main cover headline 'Uproar about an intimate photo of Gus Dur and Aryanti'²³³ is impartial and value-free. Basically, it only announces the existence of such a photo. *Gatra's* report filled six pages and consisted of three articles. *Gatra's* main report's title 'A tune of conspiracy behind Aryanti's

²³² See Appendix E for a photo of the cover pages.

²³³ 'Heboh foto intim Gus Dur- Aryanti'.

whistleblowing'²³⁴, was selected carefully. It is written in a very polite style that does not contain accusatory terms, like 'affair' or 'infidelity'. According to Qodari (2001: 90-1) this article implies the affair should be ignored, by delegitimizing Aryanti's position. This is done in two ways: First, by printing the comments of sources that questioned or rejected the photo's authenticity. Second, by writing about some theories and evidence about the possibility of a conspiracy to topple Wahid during the Annual MPR session. For example, that Aryanti was said to have received some Rp 100 million from an unidentified party for exposing her alleged close relationship with Wahid. Yet in another article 'Honour a confession'²³⁵ *Gatra* gives a strong impression that the affair between Wahid and Aryanti was true and not a product of imagination. This is done through an interview with Aryanti and an investigation and cross check of the people and locations she mentioned (Qodari 2001: 90-1, 96). In so doing *Gatra* covered both sides. However, there is a third article that consists of an interview with a member of NU's executive board. The interviewee does not believe the affair occurred and is of the opinion that conspiracy to topple Wahid lies behind the revelations of an affair (Gatra, 28 August 2000). This interview clearly supports Wahid. Another study, conducted by the Media Watch Society,²³⁶ assesses *Gatra* as tending to take the side of President Wahid by publishing more interviews and comments from NU figures. Overall, the headlines and reports in *Gatra* gave the impression that the whole issue was merely

²³⁴ 'Nada Konspirasi di Balik Nyanyian Aryanti'.

²³⁵ 'Honor sebuah pengakuan'.

²³⁶ a non-governmental organization whose members consist of lecturers and students from the University of Indonesia's communication studies postgraduate program.

a political stunt and that Aryanti was said to have been paid compensation for disclosing the scandal (The Jakarta Post, 10 October 2000).

Explaining Gatra's coverage

Gatra was established in 1994 by some *Tempo* staff after *Tempo* had been banned. However, *Gatra's* credibility suffered because it was owned by Suharto crony Bob Hasan, a wealthy businessman who was appointed Minister of Trade and Industry by Suharto in 1998. With numerous corruption allegations surrounding him, Bob Hasan had been put under house arrest by the attorney general just a few days before *Gatra* broke Aryantigate (Forum Keadilan, 10 September 2000). This raised suspicions that *Gatra* broke the affair as a kind of counter attack in response to the attorney general's ruling to put its owner Bob Hasan under house arrest. However, *Gatra's* chief editor Widi Yarmanto denied that the publication of the news about the Aryanti affair had anything to do with investigations into allegation of corruption against Bob Hasan, explaining that Hasan never interfered in the magazine's editorial policy (Detikcom, 8 September 2000b).

Kingsbury (2005: 128) noted that although *Gatra* "was formerly owned by Suharto crony Bob Hasan, [it] was funded in the post-Suharto period by Jusuf Feisal, who was deputy chair of Abdurrahman Wahid's PKB." This might explain why, even though *Gatra* was the first print media to make a cover story out of the alleged affair and thus contributed to disseminating the scandal, the magazine did not target the president like, for example, *Panji Masyarakat*, did (Detikcom, 8 September 2000b).

Gatra's decision to make a cover story out of the issue was preceded by a lively discussion among editors. Ultimately, *Gatra* justified its decision by arguing that although the alleged affair was a private matter and happened a long time ago, the public had nevertheless the right to know since it concerned the moral character of a public official who serves as a role model. However, in order to avoid the impression that *Gatra* was reporting the news to attack Wahid, whether as an individual or in his capacity as president (Hartoyo, 2 April 2001), and of being utilized by warring political groups (Detikcom, 8 September 2000b), *Gatra's* chief editor Widi Yarmanto decided that prior to the publication the following considerations had to be met. First, both sides needed to be covered; second, in order to make the story timely or newsworthy the right news peg should be awaited (Hartoyo, 2 April 2001). This explains why— even though it had already collected comprehensive material as well as interviewed Yannur and Aryanti twice by 17 August 2000 – *Gatra* postponed the publication for another week while awaiting confirmation from the palace and the right news peg. Eventually, it was *Antara's* report on the circular that ultimately triggered *Gatra's* publication of its material on the alleged affair as cover story (Hartoyo, 2 April 2001; Detikcom, 8 September 2000b). This, as well as mentioning in its report that *Panji Masyarakat* had initially planned to publish on the affair and to even print the photo of Wahid and Aryanti in its previous issue, gave the story more credibility and allowed *Gatra* (28 August 2000) to protect itself by indicating that if *Gatra* had not broken the scandal, *Panji Masyarakat* would have.

Gatra profited from publishing on Aryantigate first. To meet the heavy market demand, *Gatra* reprinted its edition with the Wahid-Aryanti cover story

(Quodari 2001: 89). This explains the two different publication dates (28 August and 2 September 2000) of *Gatra's* edition on the alleged affair. *Gatra's* circulation soared from about 50,000 to 65,000 copies. Furthermore, this *Gatra* edition was sold for Rp 15,000, rather than the original price of Rp 8,800 (Hartoyo, 2 April 2001). *Gatra* was able to make such profit because it was the first print media to run this affair as its cover story.

While Wahid supporters described *Gatra's* report as character assassination some media figures praised its journalistic quality. For example, praise came from Andreas Harsono (1 June 2001), and *Antara* news agency general manager M. Sobary who commented: "This time the *Gatra* report is very honorable, very ethical. You must read the report in that context, not in another sense" (The Jakarta Post, 30 August 2000).

3.2.2 Panji Masyarakat

Panji Masyarakat's (6 September 2000) main cover line, 'Aryanti Boru Sitepu: Gus Dur lied to me'²³⁷, was provocative and clearly sympathizes with Aryanti. *Panji Masyarakat* covered the story with six articles over 12 pages. *Panji Masyarakat's* main report, 'From an intimate photo to political gossip'²³⁸, stretched over four pages. It follows a five page interview with Aryanti under the headline 'Gus Dur said, later we will repent'²³⁹ and a separate interview with Aryanti's ex-husband Yannur titled

²³⁷ 'Aryanti Boru Sitepu: Gus Dur bohongi saya'.

²³⁸ 'Dari Foto Intim ke Gosip Politik'.

²³⁹ 'Gus Dur Bilang, Nanti Kita Tobat'.

'He said he is already married'²⁴⁰. *Panji Masyarakat* also interviewed Wahid's younger brother, Salahuddin Wahid, and provided an international comparison with a story on sexual affairs of several other heads of state. However, *Panji's* report tended to show partiality towards Aryanti, by giving more space to sources that support her version of the story (Quodari 2001: 91) and only building on Aryanti's confession (The Jakarta Post, 10 October 2000). For example, the magazine consulted a multi-media specialist who confirmed the photo's authenticity, and it printed Aryanti's denial of having received money for her confession. Furthermore, Eriyanto (2002) found that *Panji Masyarakat* framed the scandal as a moral issue by focusing on Wahid's morality at the personal level and in terms of his position as president. Aryanti is viewed as the victim of Wahid's broken promise and as the victim of intimidatory terror by Wahid supporters after the case's disclosure. Consequently, the report stresses that there was no political motive on Aryanti's behalf. Instead, Aryanti's decision to publicly reveal details of the scandal involving someone as important as the president was not because she wanted to be famous or to make money, but was based on noble motivations.

Explaining Panji Masyarakat coverage

After *Gatra*, *Panji Masyarakat* was the second magazine to publish on the affair. *Panji Masyarakat* started as an Islamic magazine in 1959, but following a change of ownership in 1997, became a general news magazine.²⁴¹ *Panji Masyarakat* was one of

²⁴⁰ 'Dia bilang sudah nikah'.

²⁴¹ *Panji Masyarakat* was founded by Muslim scholar and former chairman of the Indonesian Ulema's Council (MUI) Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (Hamka). It first appeared in 1959 and remained under the Hamka's family control until it stopped publication in March 1996. Following a one year hiatus, the

the most anti-Wahid magazines (Coppel, 12 November 2000) and had been particularly negative towards the president during 2000 (Asmarani, 12 November 2000). *Panji Masyarakat's* ownership was close to Wahid's political opponents: *poros tengah* and Golkar (Hartoyo, 2 April 2001). More specifically, *Panji Masyarakat* was associated with the Islamic political alliance of *poros tengah*, being co-owned by Golkar executive member Fahmi Idris and PAN legislator Fuad Bawazier who happened to have been a Minister of Finance under President Suharto. He was also mentioned as one of the most important civilian donors financing Laskar Jihad,²⁴² one of the major Islamic militia groups responsible for the escalation of the Moluccan conflict (Kingsbury 2005: 128; Noorhaidi 2005: 128).²⁴³

Some media also accused Fuad Bawazier of being behind the scandal's disclosure (Hartoyo, 2 April 2001). However, by explaining that "Fuad's interest in *Panji* was purely business and that he never interfered in the magazine's editorial content" (Pit Chen Low 2003: 32), *Panji Masyarakat's* chief editor Uni Z. Lubis rejected those allegations as well as suspicions that the magazine had received bribes from some members of the political elite to exaggerate the case or that the magazine was used by *poros tengah* as a political tool to damage President Wahid's reputation (The Jakarta Post, 10 October 2000, Koridor.com, 30 August 2000).

Panji's decision to publish the story was preceded by deliberations among the editors. First, they considered that news on infidelity could lower *Panji*

magazine reappeared under the new management of PT Panji Media Nusantara. The change of ownership also involved a change in orientation. In order to reach a larger audience the magazine no longer focused its coverage on Islamic oriented news but became a general news magazine (The Jakarta Post, 5 January 2000; The Jakarta Post, 1 August 2011).

²⁴² In April 2000, Laskar Jihad leader Jafar Umar Thalib, stated in an *Panji Masyarakat* interview that Laskar Jihad wanted to remove Wahid (Panji Masyarakat, 26 April 2000).

²⁴³ On the Moluccan conflict see, for example, Van Klinken 2007; Bräuchler 2003.

Masyarakat's prestige and cheapen its reputation. Second, there might become subject to a physical threat in the form of an office occupation by NU Banser as experienced by the *Jawa Pos*. Third, previously such issues of personal morality were not considered explicitly when covering the election or appointment of a president (Hartoyo, 2 April 2001). However, as emphasised by Uni Z. Lubis, those concerns were overridden by the story's high news value (that is, the involvement of a leading public figure) and the existence of factual evidence in the form of Aryanti's confession (Hartoyo, 2 April 2001; Koridor.com, 30 August 2000).

Initially, *Panji Masyarakat* had planned to publish on the affair earlier. By 21 August 2000 *Panji Masyarakat* had already conducted interviews with Yannur and Aryanti as well as collected comprehensive material. However, following Aryanti's request to postpone the publication²⁴⁴ and the wish to give Wahid more time to respond to their request for confirmation, Uni Z Lubis decided not to publish the report in its 24 August 2000 edition (Hartoyo, 2 April 2001). However, *Panji Masyarakat* did expose the issue on its website (26 August 2000) – albeit disguising Wahid's name by only identifying him as a senior government official called 'Cak'²⁴⁵ (Gatra, 28 August 2000; Qodari 2001: 91).

²⁴⁴ Shortly before *Panji Masyarakat's* Tuesday deadline Aryanti reportedly called Uni Z. Lubis requesting in tears that the article be postponed as her son had just returned from being kidnapped by an unknown person for 24hours (Hartoyo, 2 April 2001).

²⁴⁵ Javanese for older brother, respectful title.

3.2.3 Forum Keadilan

Forum Keadilan's (10 September 2000) main cover headline 'Aryanti: Deliberately insulting the President?'²⁴⁶ questions Aryanti's motives. Its report on Aryantigate consisted of four articles spread over six pages. In contrast to the two other magazines that appeared earlier, *Forum Keadilan* framed the scandal from a legal angle. Its main report discusses the legal implications of Aryanti's allegation, more precisely, whether she could be accused of insulting the President.²⁴⁷ The report's legal assessment suggests that Aryanti and Yannur could be accused of libel and defamation towards the president. The report does not discuss whether Wahid could face any legal implications, if he was found to have promised to marry Aryanti but did not do so. *Forum Keadilan* also discusses the possible legal implications for *Gatra* of publishing details of the affair.

Forum Keadialan creates the impression that Aryanti's allegations were true. By presenting sources who claimed they could confirm the photo's authenticity *Forum Keadialan* conveys to the reader that the story of a relationship between Wahid and Aryanti was true. This is done by, first, a comparison of the photo of Wahid and Aryanti with a photo of the hotel room where the portrait was allegedly taken and a comment from the hotel's room boy who claims to have taken a photo of Wahid and 'a woman' in that room; second, interviewing a multimedia specialist who confirms the photo's authenticity. However, this is contrasted with comments from an NU and PKB source who judged the allegations of the affair to be slander or

²⁴⁶ 'Aryanti: Sengaja menghina Presiden?'

²⁴⁷ Writing the article from this angle was only possible since *Forum Keadilan* published later than *Gatra* and *Panji Masyarakat*. In so doing, *Forum Keadilan* had more information than the two other magazines, namely that the police were planning to investigate Aryanti's accusation.

cheap gossip, and an interview with a NU *ulama* (Muslim scholar) who doubts the story's authenticity and suspects it is a means to discredit Wahid. By heading the two-page interview with Aryanti Sitepu 'I am also experiencing mental distress'²⁴⁸, *Forum Keadilan* points to the impact of the scandal on Aryanti. Being asked during the interview with *Forum Keadilan* whether she had been paid for her confession, Aryanti denied the accusation and rejected any other motives other than revealing the truth. The report concludes with an article that discusses the act of adultery from the perspective of Islamic law. Thus, *Forum Keadilan* provided the most impartial coverage of Aryantigate among the three magazines under scrutiny.

Explaining Forum Keadilan's coverage

Forum Keadilan was established in 1988 by Yayasan Keadilan, "a foundation involving senior figures in the Attorney-General's Office" (Sen and Hill 2007: 59-60). It is a law and justice magazine (PWI 2008) that primarily covers the connection between legal issues and politics (Asmarani, 12 November 2000). In 1991 it came under the management of Graffiti Press, publisher of *Tempo* magazine. From this cooperation PT Mandiri Forum Adil was born and became the new management company for the magazine. The stock holdings were as follows: Yayasan Keadilan and Grafiti Pers owned 40 per cent respectively, and the rest was held by *Forum Keadilan's* employees. In fact, when *Tempo* was banned in 1994, *Forum Keadilan* managed to take its role as the leading mainstream critical newsweekly (PWI 2008). Three years later, however, "Graffiti was forced to relinquish its share of Forum to

²⁴⁸ 'Saya juga mengalami tekanan mental'.

PT Larsa, owned by Rahmat Ismail, a businessman from the Bukaka Group, considered close to Habibie" (Sen and Hill 2007: 60) and Golkar (Kingsbury 2005: 128).

Initially, *Forum Keadilan's* chief editor Noorca M. Massardi did not want to report on the Aryanti affair. He considered the alleged infidelity to be private and suspected behind it "low, vulgar, inelegant politics, to bring down the president"²⁴⁹ (Hartoyo, 2 April 2001). While contemplating the alleged affair *Forum Keadilan's* chief editor considered both the impact of the news upon Yannur and Aryanti (i.e. whether they could, for example, be accused of insulting the President), and the consequences for the media publishing the story. Those considerations ultimately triggered him to report on the alleged infidelity from a legal angle. However, the report did not boost *Forum Keadilan's* circulation (Hartoyo, 2 April 2001).

Forum Keadilan wrote "The story of Aryanti-Wahid was first reported by *Gatra* magazine, issue September 2, a few days after businessman Bob Hasan, one of the financiers of the magazine, was put under house arrest by the attorney general."²⁵⁰ In so doing *Forum Keadilan* created the impression that *Gatra* broke the affair as a kind of counter attack in response to the attorney general's ruling to put its owner Bob Hasan under house arrest. Of course, it could also be that *Forum Keadilan* only wanted to provide background information to the reader.

²⁴⁹ "Itu kan cara berpolitik yang rendah dan vulgar, tidak elegan, untuk menjatuhkan presiden".

²⁵⁰ "Kisah Aryanti-Gus Dur itu pertama kali dilansir Majalah *Gatra*, edisi 2 September lalu, beberapa hari setelah pengusaha Bob Hasan, salah seorang pemodal majalah itu, diubah statusnya menjadi tahanan rumah oleh Kejaksaan Agung".

3.2.4 *Tempo*

Tempo did not run the story of the President's alleged affair with Aryanti. According to its chief editor Bambang Harymurti, *Tempo* heard about the alleged affair during the MPR's annual session but decided not to publish the story at that time due to the following considerations: The alleged incident took place five years previously and had nothing to do with Wahid's capacity as President. Furthermore, "[a]s a *kyai* (religious scholar), Abdurrahman never preached or stated his opposition to polygamy, and he is not a hypocrite" (The Jakarta Post, 23 September 2000). Additionally, the motive behind the case was unclear and there were claims that Aryanti had been paid to reveal the affair. Overall, the issue was deemed not to be of public interest and to be more suited to sensationalist media or the so-called 'yellow press'. *Tempo* did not want to compromise its credibility and reputation by reporting rumour or being used in the interests of certain parties attempting to blackmail Wahid (Hartoyo, 2 April 2001). However, according to Harymurti, *Tempo* did not categorically exclude publishing information on the alleged affair. Rather it did not want to publish at the first opportunity. He therefore ordered journalists to keep track of the story by collecting information and conducting interviews with impartial sources in case the story continued to unfold. Harymurti argued that *Tempo* would have taken a different view if Aryanti had been kidnapped, if the issue went to court, or if the DPR summoned the president. If this had been the case the story would warrant public discussion and coverage by *Tempo* (Hartoyo, 2 April 2001). In editorial meetings, *Tempo's* executive editor Toriq Hadad strongly opposed the publication of the news on the alleged affair in order to avoid *Tempo* being

regarded as a political tool of anti-Wahid forces (Hartoyo, 2 April 2001; Detikcom, 8 September 2000b).

In this context it should also be mentioned that Wahyu Muryadi, presidential protocol bureau chief under Wahid and former managing editor of *Tempo*, doubted the compromising photo's authenticity and commented on *Gatra's* report as follows: "It's not news, it is just rumor; cheap gossip which is meant to humiliate the President" (The Jakarta Post, 29 August 2000b).

The example of Aryantigate illustrates that the media adopted principles of press freedom and journalistic ethics to justify their decision on whether or not to publish on the alleged affair. Although the editors of the magazines that published the story explicitly or implicitly admitted that profit-making played a role, none of them admitted that other factors like ownership or ideology might have influenced their respective coverage of Aryantigate. However, in the case of Aryantigate the media's opportunities to promote their interests were limited by the fact that there was not much interest from Wahid's political opponents in the case and thus not enough supply of information to keep the scandal in the headlines.

Conclusion

The analysis in this chapter has shown that all the newspapers under scrutiny saw themselves as the Fourth Estate. By emphasising their check-and-balance role of keeping the government – particularly the President – accountable for their actions *Media Indonesia*, *Kompas*, and *Republika* showed their commitment to *reformasi*.

However, as the editorial analysis has shown, the three newspapers took a different position on Buloggate and on Wahid's involvement in the scandal.

Republika's anti-Wahid stance can be explained by the newspaper's ideological affiliation with ICMI, its association with those critical and opposed to Wahid, namely Amien Rais, the Central Axis, and Wahid's personal differences with *Republika's* former chief editor Parni Hadi.

The interests of *Media Indonesia* and *Kompas* in Buloggate – beyond fulfilling their watchdog role – are less salient. Even though *Media Indonesia* is owned by Surya Paloh, a senior Golkar politician with excellent relationships to the former New Order elite, the newspaper – albeit critical of Wahid's involvement in Buloggate – did not push for Wahid's impeachment over Buloggate nor did it align itself with the DPR. Instead, it rather sees the inquiry into Buloggate as one of the DPR's manoeuvres in its conflict with the President and calls upon both institutions to overcome their power struggle in order to focus on reform. The example of *Media Indonesia's* editorial position in Buloggate indicates that Surya Paloh, despite his political and personal affiliations with the New Order elite, did not utilize *Media Indonesia's* editorial voice to attack Wahid through Buloggate.

Kompas' sympathy towards President Wahid is based on economic and ideological considerations. Namely, concerns that Wahid's resignation could lead to national unrest and an economic downturn, which would also have an impact on the Gramedia Group's business interests, that are not limited to profit maximisation but also include the responsibility to preserve jobs. Indeed, in Jakob Oetama's view "business is also a mission of enlightenment and humanity, not merely to collect

profits indiscriminately.”²⁵¹ Ideologically, Jakob Oetama and Wahid shared the ideal of religious pluralism, and as a Catholic newspaper *Kompas* had an interest in keeping a pluralist president in office.

With regard to Aryantigate the very decision whether or not to publish on the alleged affair has been influenced by ownership and political affiliation. Indeed, all the three magazines that were more or less affiliated with Wahid’s opponents, did publish on the scandal – even though their coverage was significantly different – whereas *Tempo* did not. *Tempo*, whose former managing editor, Wahyu Muryadi, was Wahid’s Presidential Protocol bureau chief at the time the scandal broke, was nonetheless independent of any political grouping.

In sum, this chapter has shown that the media’s contrasting positions in both scandals, particularly in the context of Buloggate, were influenced by professional journalistic considerations as well as the ideological affiliations and politico-economic interests of their respective owners or editors. Having discussed media-elite interactions in the context of Bulog- and Aryantigate, the next chapter moves on to the second case study: Centurygate.

²⁵¹ “berbisnis juga membawa misi pencerahan dan kemanusiaan, tidak melulu mengumpulkan keuntungan tanpa pandang bulu” (*Kompas.com*, 28 September 2015).

4 Elite-Media interaction during the Bank Century scandal

Introduction

This chapter interrogates how those actors and institutions playing a decisive role in the Bank Century scandal interacted with the media. 'Centurygate' centers on the controversial government bailout of the privately owned Bank Century that involved high ranking government officials and allegations that some bailout funds were channeled to President Yudhoyono's 2009 re-election campaign. While the government argued that the bailout was necessary in order to save the national economy amid the 2008 global financial crisis, some legislators raised doubts about the government's assertions and questioned why the bailout costs rose to Rp 6.7 trillion, a far larger sum than initially approved by parliament.

It is argued that the Bank Century scandal is an expression of an intra-elite power struggle over issues of economic policy making, access to political resources, personal animosities, and ideology. This chapter examines how those members of the political elite unhappy with the 2009 election outcome exploited the scandal, utilizing the media in conjunction with parliament to destabilize the Yudhoyono government through allegations of government misconduct in the bailout. The exposure of the scandal only four weeks after Yudhoyono's re-election was an opportunity for those who saw their patronage networks and entrenched elite interests threatened by a continuation of Yudhoyono's reform agenda, particularly in respect to bureaucratic reform and corruption eradication measures.

Cast as an effort to promote good governance and transparency, a highly publicised parliamentary inquiry into the bailout rather served as a vehicle for

legislators to undermine the newly established government and to promote their political parties' agenda. This became particularly evident when legislators began to attack well respected reformers Vice-President Boediono and Finance Minister Sri Mulyani, both of whom had played a key role in authorising the bailout, with publicly voiced allegations of misconduct and repeated calls for their resignation. Using the parliament as a platform the Islamic coalition parties PAN, PKS and PPP mainly aimed to replace Boediono with one of their party members. Coalition partner Golkar instead sought to oust Sri Mulyani, who had become a threat to the business interests of its chairman, Aburizal Bakrie. For the opposition parties (PDI-P, Hanura and Gerindra) the scandal provided an opportunity to erode the government's credibility in combating corruption (Lübke 2010: 85).

This chapter establishes that this coalition of vested interests was more successful in utilizing the media to their advantage than were government actors. This is partly due to the fact that the media shared the parliament's watchdog function in investigating alleged government misconduct and thus had professional incentives to report on the scandal and focus their attention on those government actors who had played key roles in authorizing the controversial bailout. This, in addition to the fact that those two television stations that broadcasted live from the parliamentary hearings were owned by senior Golkar politicians faulting the bailout, limited the opportunities of government actors and institutions to engage positively with the media.²⁵²

This chapter is divided in four parts. Following this introduction, section 4.1 provides a summary of the Bank Century scandal. This section explains how

²⁵² *MetroTV* is owned by Surya Paloh and *TVOne* by Aburizal Bakrie.

Centurygate is rooted in, and an expression of, intra-elite power struggles between those promoting reform in an effort to put an end to Suharto-style KKN and those resisting it. It argues the Bank Century scandal is related to struggles and alliances evident through the political jockeying before and after the 2009 election. Section 4.2 focuses on how elite members, more specifically legislators critical of the bailout, utilized the media to turn the controversy over the Bank Century bailout into a fully-fledged scandal. A milestone in this process was the establishment of a parliamentary inquiry that generated continuing news coverage of the scandal and kept those alleged of wrongdoing in the media spotlight. The last section focuses on how those either directly or indirectly implicated in the Bank Century scandal utilized the media to justify the bailout and defend themselves.

4.1 Centurygate: Development and background

Scandal overview

In 2004 Bank Century was created by a merger of three ailing banks, Bank Century Interinvest Corporation (Bank CIC), Bank Danpac and Bank Pikko. Following Bank Century's liquidity difficulties in late 2008, the Indonesian Central Bank (Bank Indonesia, BI) governor Boediono identified Bank Century as a failed bank and asked the Financial System Stability Committee (Komite Stabilitas Sistem Keuangan, KSSK) to decide on the bank's fate. The KSSK meeting, chaired by Finance Minister Sri Mulyani, took place on the night of 20 to 21 November 2008 and resulted in the decision to bailout Bank Century. This decision was based on the assumption that

the bank's closure during the prevailing global financial crisis would have a systemic impact on the financial sector. Furthermore, the cost of Bank Century's takeover by the government was estimated to be less than the cost of the bank's collapse.²⁵³ Shortly after the meeting, Bank Century's management was taken over by Indonesia's Deposit Insurance Corporation (Lembaga Penjamin Simpanan, LPS), and Robert Tantular, Bank Century's major shareholder, was arrested over fraud allegations (Asia Times, 17 September 2009). During the following months LPS provided capital injections amounting to Rp 6.7 trillion into Bank Century – an amount significantly higher than the initially anticipated bailout cost of Rp 632 billion.

However, it was not until late August 2009 that legislators started questioning why the initially anticipated cost of Rp 632 billion increased to Rp 6.7 trillion. According to newspaper reports, the DPR had only agreed upon Rp1.3 trillion to rescue Bank Century and had not been informed by the LPS during a joint meeting on 26 February 2009 that the disbursements into Bank Century had already reached Rp 6.1 trillion by that time (Rakyat Merdeka, 26 August 2009). In order to clarify the huge bailout funds the DPR's Commission XI, which oversees financial affairs, summoned Bank Indonesia, the Finance Ministry and the LPS on 27 August 2009. Besides querying the bailout costs, legislators also questioned the legalities of the infusions in February and July 2009, noting that they were paid after the DPR had rejected the government's draft for the financial safety net law, a planned law to legitimize such actions. However, Finance Minister Sri Mulyani explained that the government decided to bail out Bank Century because its collapse could have

²⁵³ Rp 632 billion vs Rp 5.5 trillion (KSSK, 21 November 2008).

resulted in a systemic risk to the banking sector. Sri Mulyani also disclosed a chronology of the LPS disbursements to Bank Century that amounted to a capital injection of Rp 6.7 trillion. It was only then that information on the bailout became widely disseminated. Being unsatisfied by the government's explanation, the legislators called for further investigation into the bailout. The parliament then asked the Supreme Audit Agency (Badan Pemeriksaan Keuangan, BPK) to audit the bailout process (BPK RI, 15 September 2009).²⁵⁴

Meanwhile, the case escalated due to media reports that the decision to rescue Bank Century had been made in order to salvage funds belonging to high-profile, well-connected people, and allegations that the bailout had served the interests of Yudhoyono's Democratic Party (Partai Demokrat) during the 2009 election campaign.²⁵⁵ When the BPK audit revealed irregularities and indications of legal violations in the bailout process, opposition parties and government coalition partner Golkar proposed a parliamentary inquiry into the case.²⁵⁶

While initially established to trace the flow of bailout funds the inquiry shifted its focus to the legality of the bailout decision. During the three-month inquiry, the majority of political parties voiced fierce opposition to the government's bailout decision, targeting Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati and Vice-President Boediono who, in their respective roles as KSSK chair and Bank Indonesia

²⁵⁴ Prior to that, on 5 June 2009, the KPK had already requested the BPK to investigate Bank Century. However, due to Bank Indonesia's resistance the BPK only started its preliminary investigation on 26 August 2009. The BPK received the DPR's request for an investigative audit of Bank Century on 1 September 2009 (BPK RI, 15 September 2009).

²⁵⁵ See for example: The Jakarta Post, 1 September 2009; The Jakarta Post, 4 September 2009; Lübke 2010: 81-2.

²⁵⁶ The BPK audit investigation report was crucial because now not only rumours but proven irregularities justified a further investigation into the case.

governor, had authorized the bailout, by launching vague corruption allegations against them. Eventually, the special inquiry committee (Panitia Khusus Hak Angket, Pansus) proposed two conflicting recommendations to the DPR: one that faulted the bailout (Option C) and one that justified it (Option A).²⁵⁷ Of the 537 legislators attending the DPR's plenary session on 3 March 2010, 325 voted for the Option C and 212 for Option A.²⁵⁸ This meant that the majority of DPR members, including legislators from government coalition parties (Golkar, PKS, and PPP), condemned the government's decision to bailout Bank Century and recommended further legal measures against those alleged of wrongdoing.

The DPR's recommendations, however, had no legal impact on the status of Sri Mulyani and Boediono since none of the official legal and prosecutorial institutions had yet found evidence implicating them in corruption (Castle and Manuwoto 2011: 60). Furthermore, President Yudhoyono expressed his confidence in Sri Mulyani and Boediono. Several legislators nevertheless kept demanding Sri Mulyani's resignation and continued to harass her by, for example, disrupting legislative hearings involving her and using the discovery of a syndicate of corrupt tax officials in the tax department against her. Eventually, on 5 May 2010, Sri Mulyani resigned to join the World Bank.²⁵⁹ Soon afterwards President Yudhoyono's cabinet was restructured with the formation of a 'joint secretariat' (Sekretariat Gabungan, Setgab) of coalition parties. Though officially chaired by Yudhoyono, the secretariat was managed by Golkar chairman Aburizal Bakrie and thus widely considered a concession to Golkar.

²⁵⁷ For details on the content of the two proposed options see: Koran Tempo, 3 March 2010.

²⁵⁸ For a split-up on the parliamentary vote on the Bank Century bailout see: Lübke 2010: 83 (Table 2).

²⁵⁹ For interpretations of the exact circumstances of Sri Mulyani's resignations see Tomsa 2010b: 313.

A coincidence of media and elite interests

How did the Bank Century bailout become defined as a scandal? What are the factors that guaranteed ongoing media attention? Initially, as an economic issue, the Bank Century bailout did not receive much attention. The majority of media reports on Bank Century centred on the bank's mismanagement and financial crimes conducted by the bank's owners as well as on the capture and trial of Bank Century's largest shareholder, Robert Tantular.²⁶⁰ Even though media reports that the DPR wanted to call KSSK and Bank Indonesia to account for the bailout disbursements had already circulated in July 2009,²⁶¹ it was only after the meeting in parliament on 27 August 2009 when Commission XI criticised the government over the lack of transparency in disclosing the cost of the bailout that the issue was covered on newspaper front pages for several consecutive days and became known as 'Centurygate'.²⁶²

This means that the Bank Century bailout was turned into a scandal by legislators who suddenly started questioning the government as to why the cost to bail out Bank Century had increased from Rp 1.3 trillion to Rp 6.7 trillion without the parliament's approval (The Jakarta Globe, 27 August 2009). The media neither uncovered the story nor initiated coverage. The media coverage of the Bank Century scandal began with the reporting of information which came through routine channels and was simultaneously available to a number of media outlets which

²⁶⁰ In September 2009 Robert Tantular was convicted of banking fraud and sentenced to jail (The Jakarta Globe, 10 September 2009).

²⁶¹ For example: Koran Tempo, 3 July 2009; Media Indonesia, 29 July 2009; Kompas, 29 July 2009; Koran Tempo, 29 July 2009. All three newspapers covered the issue in their business section.

²⁶² See for example, Media Indonesia (31 August-5 September 2009); The Jakarta Post (1-9 September 2009); Kompas (28 August-5 September 2009); Republika (28 August-5 September 2009); Rakyat Merdeka (26 August-2 September 2009).

have their ‘parliamentary beat’ reporters. From its beginning the Bank Century case was of sufficiently high news value – the alleged misuse of public funds, the involvement of high-profile officials, and the fact that the issue was discussed in parliament – that the media could seemingly not ignore the story.

The involvement of Sri Mulyani and Boediono in the scandal as well as rumours that some of the bailout funds had been channelled to Yudhoyono’s election campaign increased the media’s interest in the scandal. Following Waisbord (2004: 1076), “[s]candals originate in the publication of information that contradicts what is publicly known about certain individuals and institutions”. This is particularly important for the persons who were at the centre of the Bank Century scandal, namely Boediono and Sri Mulyani, who were widely perceived as highly qualified and experienced economists in public service. Both had impeccably clean track records, international reputations, and were widely respected for their success in reducing opportunities and incentives for corruption during their respective ministerial terms.²⁶³ In particular, Sri Mulyani was widely known as an anti-corruption and reform champion due to her reform of the tax and customs office in her role as Finance Minister under Yudhoyono’s first administration (The Age, 5 August 2009).²⁶⁴ Others, for example bureaucrats within the Finance Ministry as well as businessmen and politicians who had profited from the *status quo*, saw their interests endangered by Sri Mulyani’s ruthless implementation of the government’s reform program.

²⁶³ Boediono had been Finance Minister under President Megawati (2001-2004).

²⁶⁴ For further details on Sri Mulyani’s reforms in the Finance Ministry see McLeod 2008: 197-201; Majeed 2012; LaForge 2016. From Sri Mulyani’s perspective on the reforms and the challenges of their implication see Indrawati, 14 July 2009; Indrawati, 29 March 2012.

As pointed out by Bubandt (2014: 33), the Bank Century case was particularly sensitive and complex because it raised the probability “that the two most prominent reformers of the government were actually ‘vampires’ leaching on state funds (as protestors repeatedly pictured Vice-President Boediono and Minister of Finance Sri Mulyani); or that the President's election on an anti-corruption platform was, in reality, funded through corruption”. Thus, the actual motives that prompted newspapers and newscasts to follow the scandal lay in the media’s self-perception as public watchdog.

However, the media, particularly television, were also driven by economic interests and treated the case as a commodity (Paok 2012: xxv; Heryanto 2010). News coverage of the Bank Century scandal was very popular and received high audience ratings.²⁶⁵ This attracted advertisers and generated profit for media organisations in turn. Thus, the profit orientation was definitely a factor that encouraged TV stations to broadcast on the Bank Century case and in so doing keep the scandal alive.²⁶⁶ Additionally, Indonesia’s two national news channels were owned by Golkar senior politicians who had their own agenda in the scandal.

Conducive to the scandal’s occurrence and sustainability was that, in addition to the media, political parties from within and outside of the government coalition also had an interest in seeing the scandal escalate that went beyond their “professional incentives to investigate and publicize alleged misconduct by the president and his administration” (Nyhan 2015: 438). The involvement of vested political interests in the Bank Century scandal was crucial because it affected both

²⁶⁵ Shanti Ruwyastuti, Deputy News Director, *MetroTV* during a Q&A session in the context of an open forum held by The United States-Indonesia Society (USINDO Brief, 31 March 2010).

²⁶⁶ Interview with Rojes Saragih, producer, *TV One*, Jakarta, 14 June 2010.

whether media attention could be sustained and influenced the direction in which the scandal developed. The Bank Century bailout gained intensive news attention because it could be given a political focus and it was within various political parties' interests to see it escalate. As pointed out by Patunru and von Lübke (2010: 12):

For the Islamic parties (PKS, PAN, PPP and PKB), who were unhappy with SBY's choice of the technocrat Boediono as his vice-presidential running mate, the case provided a useful platform from which to press for his replacement. For the opposition parties (PDI-P, Hanura and Gerindra), the parliamentary inquiry offered an opportunity to undermine the government's anti-corruption image. And for Golkar, which remained a somewhat reluctant coalition partner at best, it provided a possible means to unseat Mulyani, who had become *persona non grata* for the party's chair, Aburizal Bakrie.

This coincidence of interests between the political elite and the media over the Bank Century case was essential for transforming the controversial bailout into a scandal and crucial for its perpetuation after its initial disclosure (Nyhan 2015; Tiffen 1999: 48). Those members of the elite who had an interest in seeing the Bank Century scandal escalating utilized this coincidence of interests to their advantage. The media, even though promoting a thorough investigation into the bailout and supporting the establishment of a parliamentary inquiry as a means to do so, also scrutinized the various political parties' interests in the scandal and raised doubts about their rhetoric that they were merely performing their oversight function through parliament.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁷ See chapter five.

Before elaborating on how the elite utilized the media the following section explains how the Bank Century scandal is rooted in, and an expression of, intra-elite power struggles before and after the 2009 national elections.

Centurygate: An intra-elite power struggle

In going beyond media coverage and addressing the politics that generate events for media coverage, this subchapter aims to show that the Bank Century scandal was triggered because it served particular interests in the struggle for power (Esser and Hartung 2004: 1066). For those unhappy with the 2009 election outcome and Yudhoyono's choice of cabinet the controversy surrounding the Bank Century bailout provided an opportunity to attack Boediono and Sri Mulyani (Patunru and von Lübke 2010: 7) and "to undermine the government's anti-corruption image" (Patunru and von Lübke 2010: 12). From the very beginning there were concerns that the Bank Century scandal was aimed at Sri Mulyani to prevent her from being re-appointed Finance Minister. Sri Mulyani, reportedly unpopular in business circles because of her reformist anti-corruption policies at the tax and customs offices (The Jakarta Post, 4 September 2009; ABC, 28 October 2008), not only had a number of policy disagreements with Golkar's chairman Aburizal Bakrie but also had tense relationships with PDI-P and PKS (Tempo, 10 May 2010). However, in order to comprehend the root cause of the Bank Century scandal it is necessary to review Yudhoyono's first administration (2004-2009).

The roots of this intra-elite struggle: Yudhoyono's first term (2004-2009)

Among other things, the Bank Century scandal exemplifies intra-elite struggles between market-oriented technocrats and those opposing it due a preference for “[p]opulism – in Indonesia usually referring to economic nationalism, i.e. protectionism for *pribumi*” (Chua 2008: 96). This conflict became obvious in the economic team of Yudhoyono’s first administration, in particular between technocrats Sri Mulyani and Boediono on the one hand versus indigenous politico-businessmen Jusuf Kalla and Aburizal Bakrie on the other (Asia Times, 12 May 2007; Asia Times, 4 August 2007). President Yudhoyono was caught between those forces. Whereas he needed Boediono and Sri Mulyani to bolster his international reputation and achieve more effective national economic policies, he had needed Bakrie to finance his 2004 presidential election campaign and Kalla as vice-presidential candidate to secure Golkar’s support.²⁶⁸

Yudhoyono had won his 2004 presidency on an anti-corruption platform and the promise of better governance. However, his Democratic Party controlled less than 10 per cent of the parliamentary seats. In order to reach a stable parliamentary majority President Yudhoyono had to make concessions in the selection of his ministers. The PKS’s threat to withdraw its support if he picked ‘pro-IMF’ candidates for the key positions in the economics team prevented Sri Mulyani, who at that time held an executive position in the IMF, becoming either

²⁶⁸ In the beginning of his first term Yudhoyono could not rely on majority support in parliament. Golkar, the largest faction in parliament only moved away from its initial opposition to president Yudhoyono when Vice-President Jusuf Kalla became Golkar chairman in December 2004. Only then did the president gain a sufficient majority in the DPR (Ufen 2009: 166; Ziegenhain 2009: 39). Jusuf Kalla’s election a Golkar chairman strengthened the party’s strategic position in Indonesia’s political system (Tomsa 2009: 176) and secured it the benefits of governing, i.e. that is, ministerial posts (Ufen 2009: 166-7).

Coordinating Minister for the Economy or Finance Minister (The Jakarta Post, 20 October 2004).²⁶⁹ The appointment of Sri Mulyani as Finance Minister had also been opposed by Vice-President Kalla by reason of her closeness to the IMF (Liddle 2005: 331). Furthermore, President Yudhoyono and Vice-President Kalla had reportedly made an agreement that Kalla would oversee economic policy making (Liddle 2005: 328). Kalla's control over economic management was achieved through appointing his close political associates Aburizal Bakrie and Jusuf Anwar, both members of Golkar, as Coordinating Minister for the Economy and Finance Minister respectively (Asia Times, 12 May 2007).²⁷⁰ Thus the economic policy-making process was dominated by Golkar and two of Indonesia's most successful indigenous (*pribumi*) entrepreneurs, namely Jusuf Kalla and Aburizal Bakrie (Hill and Shiraishi 2007:130).

Kalla's control over economic management only weakened in December 2005 following a cabinet reshuffle focusing on key economic posts. Among other factors, the reshuffle was a response to slow economic growth in 2005, unpopular decisions to increase domestic fuel prices, and "considerable unease in relation to possible conflicts of interest faced by the then Coordination Minister for Economic Affairs, Aburizal Bakrie, because of his extensive business operations" (Kuncoro and Resosudarmo 2006: 8). By shuffling Aburizal Bakrie and Jusuf Anwar out of their positions as Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs and Finance Minister,

²⁶⁹ Instead, she was appointed State Minister for National Development Planning and chairperson of the National Development Planning Agency (Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional, Bappenas) (The Jakarta Post, 20 October 2004).

²⁷⁰ *Tempo* (17 November 2008) suggested that Bakrie's financial support of the 2004 presidential campaign of Yudhoyono and Jusuf Kalla earned him the position of Coordinating Minister for economy in President Yudhoyono's first cabinet.

and replacing them with Boediono and Sri Mulyani, Yudhoyono gained greater control over economic affairs and demonstrated his preference for liberal economic policy (Hill and Shiraishi 2007: 130) as well as his commitment to reform and corruption eradication.

Consequently, the remainder of the term of Yudhoyono's first Indonesian Cabinet was characterised by conflicts over economic policies between Sri Mulyani and Boediono on the one hand and Kalla's camp, including Aburizal Bakrie who was given the post of the Coordinating Minister for Welfare instead of being removed from the cabinet in order to placate Kalla and Golkar, on the other. Sri Mulyani and Boediono, both technocrats and neither directly affiliated with any political party nor owning one of Indonesia's top conglomerates, "have strongly argued that economic policymaking should be insulated from politics to ensure economic and financial stability" (Asia Times, 12 May 2007). This policy directly clashed with the interests of Kalla's camp since "Kalla and Bakrie have been stung by media criticism of big state infrastructure contracts that their respective families' businesses have won through allegedly opaque bidding procedures" (Asia Times, 12 May 2007). One case, the Jakarta monorail project brought Kalla – who was involved in the project through his business unit, PT Bukaka – into direct conflict with Mulyani and Boediono (Asia Times, 12 May 2007). Arguing that the project did not conform to existing regulations both technocrats refused to issue a government loan blanket guarantee for the project as demand by Kalla. Eventually President Yudhoyono stepped in by issuing a Presidential Decree on the provision of

government guarantees for the Jakarta Monorail Project (Tempo, 7 May 2007; Asia Times, 12 May 2007).²⁷¹

A helicopter deal through the Kalla family's Bukaka group led to another clash with Sri Mulyani. In 2006 as head of the National Disaster Management Coordinating Board (Badan Koordinasi Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana, Bakornas PB), Kalla ordered the purchase of 12 helicopters from Germany through a subsidiary of his family's Bukaka group. In order to cover the purchase costs Kalla planned to lease the helicopters to Bakornas to fight forest fires. When the helicopters arrived, customs officials under Sri Mulyani's Ministry of Finance seized the shipment since Bukaka refused to pay the import tax of Rp 2.1 billion on the helicopters.²⁷²

²⁷¹ The Jakarta Monorail was a projected monorail network in Jakarta. Construction began in 2004 after then-Jakarta Governor Sutiyoso had appointed PT Jakarta Monorail, a consortium of private investors, to develop the monorail project. The project, however, stalled over the issue of financial guarantees to secure overseas loans. The main financier behind the project, the Dubai Islamic Bank consortium, had requested such a guarantee from PT Jakarta Monorail (PT JM), the project developer (Tempo, 7 May 2007; The Jakarta Post, 5 August 2006). Whereas Vice-President Kalla, whose business unit, PT Bukaka, was also among the companies involved in the project, favoured a government loan blanket guarantee to PT Jakarta Monorail, Finance Minister Sri Mulyani refused the request in August 2006. Sri Mulyani's decision was based on existing regulations – among others Presidential Regulation No. 67/2005 on public-private partnerships for the provision of infrastructure projects and the Finance Ministry Regulation No. 38/2006 on the control and management of infrastructure risks – stating that a government guarantee could only be given to developers appointed through a competitive bidding process/public tender, not based on direct appointment as in the case of PT Jakarta Monorail (The Australian Financial Review, 20 September 2006; The Jakarta Post, 6 November 2006). Kalla subsequently redirected the guarantee request to the Policy Committee for the Acceleration of Infrastructure Provision (Komite Kebijakan Percepatan Penyediaan Infrastruktur, KKPPI), that was chaired by Boediono, Coordinating Minister of Economic Affairs. Arguing that the monorail project did not meet certain government-specified requirements, the KKPPPI also refused to endorse the government guarantee. Being furious upon the KKPPPI rejection Kalla blasted that the KKPPPI's job was to accelerate projects, not delay them. In subsequent meetings with Boediono and Mulyani, Kalla continued to push for a government financial guarantee. In December 2006 President Yudhoyono eventually issued Presidential Decree No. 103/2006 on the provision of government guarantees for the Jakarta Monorail Project (Tempo, 7-13 May 2007; Asia Times, 12 May 2007).

²⁷² For details see *Tempo's* cover story 'Kisruh Helikopter Kalla', 26 March 2007.

As these conflicts have shown it was less the question of the preference for economic policies but issues of transparency and accountability, including adherence to existing rules and regulations, which were the issue of contention between Kalla and Sri Mulyani.

Policy disagreements between Sri Mulyani and Aburizal Bakrie

Having analysed the conflict over economic policies in Yudhoyono's first administration the following section elaborates on the troubled relationship between Sri Mulyani and Aburizal Bakrie that became public during the course of the Bank Century scandal. The conflict between Sri Mulyani and Aburizal Bakrie developed over a series of issues. Sri Mulyani repeatedly stated that the Bakrie-owned company PT Lapindo should take responsibility for the 2006 Sidoarjo mudflow disaster²⁷³ and opposed Bakrie's wish to buy shares of PT Newmont Nusa Tenggara, one of the country's largest gold mines, arguing that all of the company's divestment shares should be bought by state companies (Tempo Interaktif, 5 May 2010). Tensions further increased following Sri Mulyani's issuance of travel bans on executives from Bakrie group companies accused of tax evasion. However, the biggest conflict arose in 2008 and was related to the trading suspension of shares in the Bakrie group-owned coal mining firm, PT Bumi Resources.²⁷⁴

Amidst the global financial crisis in late 2008 the Indonesian stock market dropped by more than ten per cent and trading was suspended for three days to

²⁷³ The disaster is also known as Lapindo mudflow. For more details on the disaster see: Schiller, Lucas, and Sulistiyanto 2008; McMichael 2009.

²⁷⁴ Bumi Resources accounts for 70 per cent of the Bakrie Group's business (Forbes Asia, 22 December 2008).

prevent further damage. The decline in the price of shares in Bakrie-owned companies (following rumours they were having trouble repaying debt) played a central role in the index's massive fall (The Jakarta Post, 9 October). After the Indonesian Stock Market resumed trading on 13 October, trading in shares of some major Bakrie — owned companies (such as PT Bumi Resources, PT Energy Mega Persada, and PT Bakrie & Brothers) remained suspended. The suspension provided Bakrie with valuable time to arrange refinancing while containing nervous creditors (Davidson 2015: 172). The prolonged suspension of Bumi shares was controversial and accompanied by friction within Yudhoyono's cabinet, particularly "between the old guard, patronage-driven forces of Bakrie and the clean and accountable ways of Indrawati, the reformer", for there were suspicions that the government was using the suspension to help Bakrie to unload some of his company's debt (The Jakarta Post, 13 October 2008) by allowing state-owned companies to purchase stakes in PT Bumi Resources (Witoelar, 20 October 2008). Sri Mulyani opposed the prolonged suspension of Bumi shares and the use of state funds to rescue the Bakrie group.²⁷⁵

On 6 November 2008 the trading suspension of PT Bumi resources was lifted following intra-governmental bickering between Sri Mulyani who had ordered trading resumption and Yudhoyono, Kalla and State Enterprises Minister Sofyan Djalil who tried to overturn her decision. Sri Mulyani reportedly threatened to resign if Yudhoyono kept protecting the Bakrie group and undermining her authority (The Jakarta Post, 8 November 2008; Tempo, 17 November 2008). The

²⁷⁵ She made her standpoint clear by reportedly telling "Kadin, Indonesia's crony-heavy chamber of commerce" (Asiasentinel, 24 October 2008) during a speech "I am the Finance Minister. My job is to protect the state fund. Companies have a job to protect their own financial affairs. If they fail, it is their fault and they deserve to go bust" (The Jakarta Post, 22 October 2008).

resumption, that prompted a free fall of Bumi shares, contradicted the Bakrie company's wish to maintain the trading suspension for an additional 21 to 28 days until a deal to sell a 35 per cent stake in PT Bumi Resources could be closed.

As pointed out by Hal Hill (17 May 2010), "[t]he trading suspension of Bumi shares was highly politicized and had been the subject of a conflict of opinion between Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati, Aburizal Bakrie, and President Yudhoyono." As later in the Bank Century case President Yudhoyono was caught between two antithetical forces personified in Sri Mulyani and Aburizal Bakrie. Aburizal Bakrie is a *pribumi* businessman linked to the New Order regime's KKN-culture. Sri Mulyani was a non-party technocrat, who stood for a 'clean, accountable, transparent and efficient' bureaucracy. Due to her widespread public national and international popularity as a crusading anti-corruption reformer, Sri Mulyani's resignation during the height of the financial crisis would have had a negative impact on Indonesia's economy and was thus something Yudhoyono sought to avoid. Aburizal Bakrie, on the other hand, was a senior Golkar politician and held a cabinet post as Coordinating Minister for People's Welfare and had financially supported Yudhoyono's 2004 election campaign (The Jakarta Post, 16 October 2008).

After the 2009 elections

As the winner of the 2009 elections the Democratic Party was the strongest political force in the parliament. Even more significant, by winning 26 per cent of parliamentary seats the Democratic Party met the minimal requirement to name its own presidential candidate pair (without having to collaborate with another

political party by giving them the vice-presidential post).²⁷⁶ This result enabled Yudhoyono to make Bank Indonesia governor Boediono his running mate, and to be independent of Golkar and outgoing Vice-President Kalla. However, Yudhoyono's decision to partner with Boediono,²⁷⁷ was met with resistance by his coalition partners. Representatives of the Muslim Parties PKS, PPP and PAN all disapproved Boediono's selection, rather than a choice of one of their own candidates²⁷⁸. They raised doubts of Boediono's ability to represent Islam and argued that "Boediono's 'neo-liberal Western economic perspective' was not suited for Indonesia's economic situation" (Asia Times, 11 June 2009).

Following his re-election with more than 60 per cent of the vote Yudhoyono formed a coalition with Golkar, PKS, PKB, PAN and PPP. The three remaining parties – PDI-P, Hanura and Gerindra – made up the opposition. Accommodating the interests of six out of nine political parties the Second United Indonesia Cabinet (Kabinet Indonesia Bersatu II) was dominated by political party officials. However, Yudhoyono's subsequent retention of Finance Minister Sri Mulyani and Trade Minister Mari Pangestu, in addition to his selection of Boediono as vice-president, signalled a continuation of liberal economic policy making (Chandra 2011: 15) and re-affirmed the Yudhoyono administration's "agenda of reforming the structure of government to eliminate the networks of patronage and corruption that have

²⁷⁶ Only parties, or a coalition of parties, that win at least 20 per cent of votes in the parliamentary election, or 25 per cent of the parliamentary seats, can nominate candidates for the presidential election (Law No. 42/2008).

²⁷⁷ In 2008, Boediono, then Coordinating Minister for the Economy, had been elected Governor of the Indonesian Central Bank, Bank Indonesia by the DPR. This prompted him to step down as Coordinating Minister for the Economy. After he was selected by Yudhoyono as a running mate in the 2009 presidential election, Boediono submitted his resignation from the central bank post.

²⁷⁸ The PKS had proposed Hidayat Nur Wahid, the PPP Akbar Tandjung, and the PAN Hatta Radjasa.

dominated policy-making and the wider political culture” (Sherlock 2009: 18). Furthermore, by giving economic ministries to technocrats he cut off indigenous businessmen-turned-politicians who favoured “economic nationalism, i.e. protectionism in favour of *pribumi*” (Chua 2008: 96) from economic policy-making. Indeed, without Kalla as Vice-President and Bakrie in the cabinet following the 2009 election both individuals and Golkar had lost access to resources. This was crucial since Kalla, during his vice-presidency, had a strong influence on economic policy and had also kept facilitating Bakrie's businesses, albeit facing a lot of opposition from Sri Mulyani (Rendi A. Witular²⁷⁹, interview, Jakarta 24 June 2009; The Jakarta Post, 31 August 2009).

However, in October 2009 Bakrie regained power when he became chairman of Golkar, the second largest party in the DPR with 106 seats, and announced that Golkar, despite having joined the government coalition, would continue to criticise the government policies. Consequently, Golkar demanded the government investigate the bailout thoroughly (The Jakarta Post, 9 October 2009) and joined the opposition in their call for a parliamentary inquiry into the bailout only a few days after the inauguration of the new cabinet with Sri Mulyani as finance minister. In early November 2009 Yudhoyono reportedly tried to reconcile tensions between Bakrie and Mulyani which had intensified following “attempts by Mulyani to proceed with an investigation into alleged tax violations by Bakrie mining companies” (The Jakarta Post, 16 December 2009b). The meeting, however, ended in a deadlock and Golkar intensified its push for an inquiry. Thus, the controversy around Bank Century cannot be separated from the troubled relationship between

²⁷⁹ journalist, The Jakarta Post.

Mulyani and Bakrie and “the sharp rivalry between the group of Kalla and the Boediono camp, including Sri Mulyani”²⁸⁰ (Koran Tempo, 1 September 2009a). Indeed, as the following discussion will show, Kalla played a significant role in the scandal’s escalation by objecting to the government’s justification of the bailout. However, as discussed previously those with interests in escalating the Bank Century controversy to undermine the second Yudhoyono administration went beyond those of Golkar or its individual members.

4.2 Keeping the scandal alive

The following section discusses how the controversy around the bailout developed into a scandal and how elite members – particularly political parties from within and outside of the coalition – utilized the media to turn the controversy over the Bank Century bailout into a fully-fledged scandal. The most vocal critics in the Bank Century scandal were a mix of opposition and coalition parties who were less successful than the Democratic Party in the 2009 election and aimed to undermine the legitimacy of the government. Their motives were political, or in other words, their aim was to increase their power.²⁸¹

Comments by outgoing Vice-President Jusuf Kalla, who was also the last-placed presidential candidate in the 2009 elections, immediately after the Bank

²⁸⁰ “persaingan sengit kelompok Jusuf Kalla dan kubu Boediono, termasuk di dalamnya Menteri Keuangan Sri Mulyani” (Koran Tempo, 1 September 2009a).

²⁸¹ Which meant here – as opposed to the Wahid case – not to overthrow the government but to gain better access to the government. Due to constitutional changes impeachment in 2009 was far more difficult than in 2001. For a detailed discussion on constitutional provisions on presidential impeachment see Butt and Lindsey 2011: 40-8.

Century scandal's disclosure, heightened the controversy's news value. During an impromptu press conference on the handling of the bailout Kalla fuelled the controversy by publicly stating:

The matter of Bank Century, I say, is not a matter of the economic crisis, but is criminal. It is robbery because the owners of the bank were taking customers' money . . . That is the weakness of BI's supervision.²⁸²

I say, the solution is not to bailout. The solution is to arrest this guy (the owner of Bank Century, Robert Tantular – Red) first for robbery . . . But, Boediono said there was no legal basis. I was forced to take over. I immediately telephoned the Police to arrest Robert Tantular and the directors deemed responsible to prevent their escape.²⁸³

In so doing, Kalla contradicted the government's statement that justified the bailout by saying that there was a danger of a systemic impact should the government let Bank Century default. Furthermore, by accusing Bank Indonesia of weak supervision Kalla placed the blame for the bank's failure on his successor Boediono who was the then Bank Indonesia governor (Koran Tempo, 1 September 2009b). Kalla, who was acting president at the time the decision to bail out Bank Century was taken, also publicly denied that he had prior knowledge of the bailout as claimed by Finance Minister Sri Mulyani.²⁸⁴ By further saying that, if he had known

²⁸² "Soal Bank Century itu saya katakan bukan masalah krisis ekonomi, melainkan kriminal. Itu perampokan karena pemilik bank ini mengambil uang nasabah . . . Itulah kelemahan pengawasan BI" (Media Indonesia, 1 September 2009).

²⁸³ "Saya bilang, penyelesaiannya bukan dengan bailout. Penyelesaiannya, ini orang (pemilik Bank Century, Robert Tantular – Red) harus ditangkap dulu karena perampokan . . . Tapi, Boediono bilang tidak ada dasar hukumnya. Terpaksa saya ambil alih. Saya langsung telepon Kapolri untuk tangkap Robert Tantular dan direksi yang bertanggung jawab agar tidak melarikan diri" (Republika, 1 September 2009).

²⁸⁴ Sri Mulyani's chronology of the bailout stated that she had met then Vice-President Jusuf Kalla on the 22 November 2008 to inform him about the bailout was publicly denied by Kalla. This gave him the opportunity to enter the controversy. By arguing that this meeting took place on the 25 November

about it beforehand he would not have approved it and by being the one who had initiated Robert Tantular's arrest, Kalla avoided criticism. Kalla's description of the Bank Century issue as a criminal case that caused losses to the state contributed to media publicity (Kompas.com, 31 August 2009; Koran Tempo, 2 September 2009) and provided the ammunition for legislators to attack the government.

In addition to accusing the government, Bank Indonesia and the LPS of not having been transparent (The Jakarta Post, 28 August 2009), questioning the justification of a systemic threat, the legal grounds used for the bailout, and how the initially anticipated cost of Rp 632 billion could jump to Rp 6.7 trillion, legislators also started questioning the government's motivation for the bailout decision. They raised suspicions that Bank Century was bailed out not in order to protect the national economy but to protect politically connected major depositors whose assets exceeded the maximum Rp 2 billion per individual guaranteed by the government (The Jakarta Post, 4 September 2009, Asia Times, 17 September 2009). In this context, members of the DPR's Commission XI publicly stated that there were indications that big depositors, including some donors to Yudhoyono's 2009 election campaign, might have forced Bank Indonesia to bailout Bank Century which in turn then had pressed the government to rescue Bank Century (The Jakarta Post, 2 September 2009; The Jakarta Post, 4 September 2009; The Jakarta Post, 3 September 2009) This, in combination with allegations that bailout funds were channelled to finance certain political activities (Republika, 3 September 2009) or to party political activities (Republika, 5 September 2009), extended the Bank Century controversy to

2008, which was later confirmed by Sri Mulyani, Jusuf Kalla denied that he had prior knowledge of the bailout.

also implicate President Yudhoyono and his Democratic Party as well as giving rise to the belief that there was a conspiracy behind the decision to bailout Bank Century instead of letting it collapse.

Leaking confidential information to the media or making statements that were directly addressed to harm particular actors were further strategies adopted by legislators to raise suspicion that there was something inappropriate with the bailout. PAN legislator Drajad Wibowo, for example, leaked to the media the minutes of the 21 November 2008 KSSK meeting, which was the last meeting before the decision to bailout Bank Century. Those minutes reveal that Bank Indonesia insisted on saving Bank Century and indicated that then Bank Indonesia governor, Boediono, apparently did not provide sufficient data to support the claim that Bank Century's collapse could lead to a systemic threat to the country's banking system (The Jakarta Post, 19 November 2009).

In order to promote their parties' political interest, legislators also used the media to create the impression that the government was hampering an investigation into the case. For example, following the Attorney General's Office statement in October 2009 that no unlawful act could be found in the disbursement of the Rp 6.7 trillion bailout funds (Republika, 24 October 2009), some legislators raised concerns. PDI-P legislator Maruarar Sirait, for example, told the press he suspected the statement was an attempt to protect those who collectively made the decision to bail out Century, namely officials from the Finance Ministry, BI and LPS (The Jakarta Post, 27 October 2009). Former PAN legislator Drajad Wibowo interpreted the AGO's statement as reflecting systemic efforts to terminate the case in the public interest (Detiknews, 26 October 2009). Although those efforts by individual

legislators to pursue the case were important, it was their lobbying for a parliamentary inquiry that secured ongoing media attention.

Lobbying for a parliamentary inquiry: Team 9

Behind the move to initiate a parliamentary inquiry into the Bank Century bailout was a group of nine legislators across all parliamentary factions, except Yudhoyono's governing Democratic Party.²⁸⁵ They called themselves 'Team 9 for the Truth'.²⁸⁶

Encouraged by the BPK's preliminary audit²⁸⁷ of the bailout – that had revealed a number of violations in the bailout and an indication of criminal conduct in the disbursement of bailout funds (Koran Tempo, 30 September 2009) – those nine legislators, who had only just met each other following the inauguration of the new legislature on 1 October 2009, initiated a petition for a parliamentary inquiry to be established, and distributed it among legislators (Soesatyo 2010: 38). The media followed up on the petition and kept the readership updated on its progress by announcing the number of legislators who had signed it.²⁸⁸ Thus the petition became

²⁸⁵ The members of Team 9 are: Maruarar Sirait (PDI-P), Bambang Soesatya (Golkar), Ahmad Muzani (Gerindra), Akbar Faisal (Hanura), Andi Rahmat (PKS), Mukhamad Misbachun (PKS), Candra Tirtawijaya (PAN), and Liliy Wahid (PKB), Ahmad Kurdi Moekri (PPP) (Inilah.com., 30 November 2009).

²⁸⁶ 'Tim 9 untuk kebenaran'.

²⁸⁷ The Supreme Audit Agency (BPK) revealed its preliminary audit on the bailout on 28 September 2009.

²⁸⁸ See, for example: *Republika*, 11 November 2009; *Republika*, 12 November 2009; *Republika*, 14 November 2009; *Republika*, 15 November 2009; *Republika*, 18 November 2009; *The Jakarta Post*, 12 November 2009; *The Jakarta Post*, 18 November 2009; *The Jakarta Post*, 19 November 2009b; *The Jakarta Post*, 20 November 2009; *The Jakarta Post*, 25 November 2009; *The Jakarta Post*, 1 December 2009; *Media Indonesia*, 5 November 2009; *Media Indonesia*, 11 November 2009; *Media Indonesia*, 14 November 2009; *Media Indonesia*, 17 November 2009; *Media Indonesia*, 18 November 2009; *Media Indonesia*, 24 November 2009; *Koran Tempo*, 12 November 2009; *Koran Tempo*, 16 November 2009; *Koran Tempo*, 25 November 2009.

an indicator of the support for an inquiry among legislators. The issue also made headlines when legislators successfully pushed the DPR's deputy speakers to read out the petition in parliament. On orders of the absent DPR speaker Mazurkie Ali (Democratic Party) the DPR's deputy speakers had initially refused to read out the petition during a plenary session (The Jakarta Post, 18 November 2009).

Furthermore, the DPR's proposed inquiry received positive feedback from the media.²⁸⁹ Parliamentary support for the inquiry grew when, in late November 2009, the BPK's final audit confirmed irregularities in the bailout. Even legislators from the Democratic Party signed the petition after the BPK's revelation. Given that the number of signatures had surged to more than 400 out of the 560 DPR legislators, the establishment of an inquiry looked inevitable (The Jakarta Post, 25 November 2009). However, in order to press the DPR to establish the inquiry during its forthcoming plenary session, Team 9 decided to intensify their efforts. Indeed, given that the majority of political parties were supporting the Yudhoyono administration, the DPR's willingness to establish a special inquiry remained uncertain (Media Indonesia, 30 November 2009).

From the outset, Team 9 was aware that the media were crucial in ensuring the establishment of a parliamentary inquiry into the bailout, and integrated the media in that effort. Two members of Team 9, Akbar Faizal (Hanura) and Bambang Soesatyo (Golkar), were former journalists who knew exactly how the media worked.²⁹⁰ Prior to the plenary session on 1 December 2009 where the decision about

²⁸⁹ This refers to a media analysis of five national newspapers (*Kompas*, *Koran Tempo*, *Media Indonesia*, *Republika*, and *Seputar Indonesia*) conducted between 11-17 November 2009 by LSI Network (Detiknews, 19 November 2009).

²⁹⁰ Interview with Akbar Faizal and Bambang Soesatyo, Jakarta, 27 May 2010.

the forming of a special inquiry committee was scheduled, Team 9 created various activities with the sole purpose of attracting media coverage. These activities that aimed to sway public opinion (and thus parliamentarians) in favour of an investigation included the establishment of Team 9 itself and meetings with public figures and the media (The Jakarta Globe, 30 November 2009). On 29 November 2009 nine members across political fractions staged a media event within which they gave their group the name 'Team 9 for truth'²⁹¹ and made a joint pledge to investigate the Bank Century scandal thoroughly. The event was staged in a restaurant in Senayan close to the DPR and thus within easy reach of the press gallery. Consequently, the establishment of Team 9 received the desired media publicity (Tempo Interaktif, 29 November 2009).

Dubbed 'Road show Team 9' or 'Safari of Truth'²⁹² in the Indonesian media, Team 9 also met with leaders and senior political figures. The figures whose support was sought by Team 9 had a strong reputation for moral politics in their respective fields.²⁹³ In addition to the influence on their respective communities, their support also had an impact both on the internal politics of parliament and outside

²⁹¹ 'Tim 9 untuk kebenaran'.

²⁹² 'Safari Kebenaran'.

²⁹³ Those figures included Gus Dur, Amien Rais, Ahmad Syafii Maarif, Jusuf Kalla, Hasyim Muzadi, Din Syamsuddin, Wiranto, Aburizal Bakrie, Hilmi Aminuddin, Jakob Oetama, and Prabowo. Tim 9 also met with Surya Paloh, Rikard Bagun, Editor in Chief *Kompas*, and a number of national mass media leaders (Soesatyo 2010: 48). Tim 9 also met with civil organisations, for example with Koalisi Masyarakat Sipil Anti Korupsi (Kompak) on 26 November 2009 (Kompas.com, 3 December 2009; Republika Online, 26 November 2009).

Towards the final vote of the Bank Century inquiry committee in March 2010 Team 9 conducted another *saferi kebenaran* similar to the one in December 2009. They started on 18 February by visiting Muhammadiyah patron Syafi'i Ma'arif and NU chairman Hasyim Muzadi. They also met with the chairman of Hanura, Wiranto, former chairman of the People's Consultative Assembly, Amien Rais, and chairman of the National Demokrat organisation and media owner Surya Paloh (The Jakarta Post, 27 February 2010).

parliament (Inilah.com, 30 November 2009). Team 9 also visited media companies and provided them with data and print-ready material that supported their call for an investigation. Because of its news value and importance for the public, Team 9's lobbying tour was covered intensively by the media.²⁹⁴ The meetings themselves and the public figures' opinions and recommendations became further raw material for the media. Surya Paloh, for example, owner of *Media Indonesia* and *Metro TV*, printed a photo of his meeting with Team 9 members on the cover page of *Media Indonesia* (4 December 2009).²⁹⁵ With their decision to meet with Team 9 these public figures showed their support for an investigation into the Bank Century scandal. Finally, on 1 December 2009, the DPR approved the proposal for an inquiry into the Bank Century case with an overwhelming majority – 503 out of its 560 members.²⁹⁶

The establishment of the Bank Century committee received mixed reactions. Whereas Scherlock (2010: 171) describes it as "a textbook example of effective parliamentary oversight of the executive" others were more critical. Political analyst Boni Hargens (The Jakarta Post, 3 December 2009) saw the inquiry as a 'bargaining chip against Yudhoyono' to achieve Sri Mulyani's removal from her post as Finance Minister (The Jakarta Post, 3 December 2009). However, regardless of its agenda, the formation of the inquiry was an important step. Indeed, as argued by Tiffen (1999: 93) parliamentary inquiries bring "an authority and integrity to public reporting

²⁹⁴ See for example: Antara, 28 November 2009; Kompas.com, 3 December 2009; VIVAnews, 28 November 2009; Antara, 3 December 2009.

²⁹⁵ See also: Detik.com, 24 November 2009.

²⁹⁶ The event marks the first time the DPR of the 2009-2014 period exercised its right of inquiry. The DPR of the 2004-2009 period used this right several times on different issues. The composition of the 30-member inquiry committee was based on the proportionality principle, with the number of faction representatives in the committee determined in accordance with the size of the factions concerned. The Democratic Party got eight seats, Golkar six seats, PDI-P five, PKS three, PKB two, PAN two, PPP two, Gerindra one, and Hanura one seat (Penerbit Buku Kompas 2010: 337).

where before there had existed suspicion and contention“, and guarantee continuing routine news supply. This was amplified following the decision to make the hearings open to the public and to the media.

The special inquiry committee and publicity

From its very beginning the Bank Century case was ‘newsworthy’ and full of controversy. It met the media’s criteria of newsworthiness or news value (Heryanto, 2 March 2010). The Bank Century scandal enabled the media to show themselves as an important ‘pillar of democracy’ by informing the public and ‘watching’ the government. In so doing, the media created political transparency and public accountability (Mu’ti, 9 November 2010). The mass media coverage of the Bank Century scandal reached its climax from December 2009 to early March 2010. This was the period of the Bank Century parliamentary inquiry. During this time the media were constantly fed new information that kept the story running and interesting. News of Bank Century was broadcast every day on almost all national television stations and filled the front pages of the newspapers. Often the news was accompanied by in-depth analysis from various perspectives, special features and talk shows.

Beneficial to the Bank Century scandal’s ongoing media presence was the decision to hold the committee hearings open to the public. Committee members had started debating whether the committee hearings should be open or closed immediately after the committee’s establishment (Republika, 9 December 2009). During the debate legislators from PDI-P, PKS, Golkar, PAN and Hanura turned to the media to promote committee hearings that were open to the public (Republika,

14 December 2009; *Republika*, 18 December 2009) in order to create transparency, to dismiss concerns that the committee has a hidden agenda, to establish credibility in the new DPR, and to avoid backdoor dealings.²⁹⁷ This move was clearly aimed at gaining public support and trust. Although the media supported a parliamentary investigation into the Bank Century case, they were sceptical of the inquiry's ability and commitment.²⁹⁸ Those concerns derived from the failure of previous parliamentary inquiries (*Media Indonesia*, 11 December 2009a) and were enforced by the election of a legislator from the government coalition as chairman²⁹⁹ (*Republika*, 14 December 2009, *Media Indonesia*, 8 December 2009) and Sri Mulyani's subsequent allegation that the Bank Century probe was an attempt to discredit her (*Asian Wall Street Journal*, 10 December 2009).

To allow even privately owned television stations to broadcast live from special committee hearings was a precedent in Indonesia's history, and exemplified media freedom and the democratisation of politics. The live broadcasts raised the political awareness of the public (*The Jakarta Post*, 31 January 2010), created publicity for the conflicting elite factions, and more profit for media organisations. As the following discussion will show, the live broadcasts benefitted both the committee members and the media. Mutually reinforcing strategies of legislators and media transformed the hearings into an entertaining spectacle worth watching and easy to follow for people of diverse educational backgrounds, economic status, political and religious views (*Mu'ti*, 19 January 2010).

²⁹⁷ See, for example, Suwarna, 24 January 2010; *The Jakarta Post*, 12 December 2009; *Mu'ti*, 9 November 2010; *Fajar*, 5 March 2010.

²⁹⁸ See for example: *Media Indonesia*, 29 October 2009; *Media Indonesia*, 8 December 2009; *Kompas*, 7 December 2009; *Koran Tempo*, 19 December 2009.

²⁹⁹ Namely Golkar legislator Idrus Marham.

The hearings provided attractive content for television and other mass media. What made the hearings interesting for the media and the public? First of all, the hearings were full of sensation and dramatization, akin to a telenovela or reality show with the revelation of new information in each episode (Heryanto, 2 March 2010). Heated debate among committee members and testimonies or quarrels among the members of the committee transformed the hearings into an entertaining spectacle and gave the impression that there was a conflict between a pro-bailout and a counter-bailout block, with another group floating in between (Hudijono, 25 January 2010). Viewers could see the drama, conflict, hostility, in such scenes as the legislators yelling at each other (Suwarna, 24 January 2010). In so doing committee members simplified the story of a complicated political and financial scandal into something more akin to a soap opera plot (Mu'ti, 19 January 2010; Suwarna, 24 January 2010). Thus the hearing was interesting in itself. Indonesia's leading news channels, *MetroTV* and *TVOne*, deemed it worth broadcasting live and in full. The production costs in broadcasting the hearings were cheap. The only thing the TV producers had to do was to vary the camera and picture angles (Suwarna, 24 January 2010). Television amplified the hearing's entertainment value by presenting it in diversified formats and as events that were important to follow. For example, by showing close-up images of politicians, split-screen, in order to give the impression that they are facing each other while arguing (Hudijono, 25 January 2010). Both television stations often supplemented the live broadcasts from the hearings with talk show programs (Suwarna, 24 January 2010).

A survey conducted by AGB Nielsen showed that coverage of the Bank Century controversy, in particular live broadcasts from the parliamentary hearings

and the subsequent parliament plenary session (Sidang Paripurna DPR) on the Century Bank bailout (2 to 3 March 2010), had high ratings.³⁰⁰ All Indonesian TV stations receive viewer ratings from AGB Nielsen on a daily basis in order to verify a program's selling power and internal program evaluations.³⁰¹ According to *TVOne's* general manager, the committee hearings were so popular among viewers that *TVOne's* live broadcast of the testimony of Sri Mulyani, Boediono and the questioning of Kalla, for example, achieved an audience rating and share that equalled those of the generally more popular entertainment programs (Suwarna, 24 January 2010). This attracted advertisers and generated profit for media organisations. A producer at *TVOne* said that as long as ratings were high, the Bank Century case would be covered.³⁰² However, *TVOne's* and *MetroTV's* interest in the Bank Century scandal went beyond financial objectives.

The respective owners of *TVOne* and *MetroTV* had political interests in the case. While both stations were anti-bailout, their focus was upon different

³⁰⁰ ABG Nielsen, January 2010: 3.

According to the study, the audiences of special news programs increased from 9.6 per cent in December 2009 to 12.6 per cent in January 2010 and 12.9 per cent in February 2010. The survey also showed that the total duration of news programs in January 2010 was 116 hours, 128 percent higher than in December 2009. In March 2010 the number of those watching news programs increased by 20 per cent compared to the previous month. The Parliament plenary session (Sidang Paripurna DPR) on the Century Bank bailout (2 to 3 March 2010) was among the national events that lead to an increased interest in news programs. On 2 March, during the first day of the plenary session 33,000 people followed the news on TV. On the following day, when the House of Representatives decided that the Bank Century bailout was illegitimate, approximately 59,000 people watched news. This number means that news viewing almost doubled compared to the average news audience in March which was around 30,000. The President's speech to the conclusions and recommendations of the DPR also boosted the number of viewers up to 43,000 people, or 43 per cent above the average news audience in March (ABG Nielsen, March 2010: 5).

³⁰¹ *Interview* with Rojes Saragih, producer, TV One, Jakarta, 14 June 2010. AGB Nielsen is not the only company providing TV audience measurement (TAM). But it is the one with the highest standards and thus the most trusted. This explains why all the TV stations use AGB Nielsen's service. Thus, even if the media market is open for competition, AGB Nielsen Media Research (Indonesia) has the absolute monopoly on TV audience measurement (TAM) in Indonesia (Wibisono, 19 February 2007).

³⁰² *Interview* with Rojes Saragih, producer, TV One, Jakarta, 14 June 2010.

individuals: *TVOne* was aiming primarily at Sri Mulyani, while *MetroTV* was aiming at President Yudhoyono and Boediono.³⁰³ This can be explained with reference to the TV station's ownership. *TVOne* is owned by the Bakrie group whose head is Golkar chairman Aburizal Bakrie. Due to his troubled relationship with Sri Mulyani, who had been responsible for a number of ministerial decisions that harmed Bakrie-owned companies, Bakrie had a personal interest in ousting Sri Mulyani. Studies have shown that *TVOne* presented Sri Mulyani as the individual most responsible for the bailout (Setiawan 2011: 440) and was biased towards Golkar in its presentations (Farhanah 2010: 23). *TVOne* producer Rojes Saragih, however, denied that Bakrie had actively intervened in *TVOne's* coverage on Centurygate. Instead, he argued, the coverage on Centurygate and the conflict among Sri Mulyani and Bakrie was rather influenced by common sense among *TVOne's* personnel that the station is owned by Bakrie.³⁰⁴

MetroTV, while opposed to the bailout, broadcasted interviews with Sri Mulyani and government funded advertisements that aimed to strengthen the pro-bailout opinion (Tempo, 4 January 2010).³⁰⁵ Surya Paloh, the owner of *MetroTV* and *Media Indonesia*, had a personal rift with President Yudhoyono because the President had supported Bakrie's candidature during the Golkar chairmanship election in October 2009.³⁰⁶

³⁰³ Interview with Rendi A. Witar, journalist, The Jakarta Post, Jakarta, 24 June 2010.

³⁰⁴ Interview with Rojes Saragih, producer, TV One, Jakarta, 14 June 2010.

³⁰⁵ More specifically, the advertisement explained the issue of bank restructuring as a way to overcome the 2008 global financial crisis. The advertisement was produced by Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat (LSM) Peduli (Metro TV, January 2010) and aimed to assert that the government's decision to bail out Bank Century was correct and based on rational analysis (Metro TV, January 2010).

³⁰⁶ As a consequence of his loss against Bakrie, Paloh started to prepare his own political movement, National Democrat (Nasional Demokrat, Nasdem).

Legislators were aware that television provided a political stage upon they could star. Consequently, they sought to employ the live broadcasts from the committee hearings as a means to increase their popularity as well as to convey a positive image to their electorate. As stated by *The Jakarta Post* (20 February 2010):

The (over) exposure of the House of Representatives Bank Century inquiry committee in the national press has catapulted some of its 30 members to stardom, without having to go through an energy-zapping, nerve-wracking audition. Few might have known who Golkar's Bambang Soesatyo and Akbar Faisal of the People's Conscience Party (Hanura) were before they joined the inquiry. The two politicians are now among the familiar faces whose popularity may currently outshine soap opera stars.

Whereas some committee members, like Bambang Soesatyo (Golkar) and Ruhut Sitompul (Democratic Party), were vocal, excessively asking questions to increase their profile, others were more subtle in their efforts. Andi Rahmat (PKS), for example, used the Bank Century hearings to convey the image of being a fresh young politician, idealistic, and full of energy (Suwarna, 24 January 2010). Others simply avoided creating any negative impression by paying close attention to their on-screen behaviour. When Ganjar Pranowo (PDI-P), for example, was caught on camera playing with his Blackberry, one of his staff who was following the live broadcast, sent him a text message advising him not to use his Blackberry when on camera.³⁰⁷ Committee members also appeared on talk shows discussing the bailout and were sought after sources by the media in their scandal coverage (Suwarna, 24 January 2010).

³⁰⁷ Ganjar Pranowo, personal communication, Jakarta, 10 June 2010.

The live broadcast of the Bank Century inquiry hearings changed the relationship between the media and the elite. Whereas previously legislators could influence media coverage only by revealing particular information from closed meetings, legislators were now able to focus media attention by asking particular questions or pointing out particular issues during the inquiry. Previously, for example in the Bulog-Bruneigate inquiry committee proceedings, the media relied on commentary by those participating in the closed sessions. The live broadcast enabled the public to receive their information with less filtering by the media. However, the TV stations that broadcast live still filtered by deciding when to take a commercial break or what camera angles to use to show the witnesses or investigators. Their choices can either be favourable or unfavourable. The live coverage can also be influenced by the presenter's comments or additional information provided, during or after the live coverage. In short the live broadcasts shifted the power from the elite to the media, or more precisely to the politico-business elite who owned those television stations broadcasting live from the hearings.

Individual attacks

During the ongoing investigation, committee members and their respective political parties utilized the media to disseminate their views. This included statements about their current stance in the inquiry, comments on new findings and revelations, the sharing of incriminating or exculpating material, and alleged wrongdoing of individuals.

In an effort to discredit Sri Mulyani, Golkar legislator Bambang Soesatyo, for example, alleged Sri Mulyani had conspired with Robert Tantular, the former owner of Bank Century. Soesatyo claimed to have a recording of a conversation purportedly between Sri Mulyani and Robert Tantular that had allegedly taken place a few hours before the decision to bail out the bank was made on 21 November 2008. Soesatyo supported his allegations with a transcript of the alleged recording. After learning about the allegations through the media Sri Mulyani, Boediono and Robert Tantular immediately denied that such a conversation had taken place prior to the bailout decision. A few days later, on 13 December Sri Mulyani disproved the allegations with supporting material. In late February 2010 Bambang Soesatyo also alleged that there was a report indicating that Vice President Boediono's spokesman, Yopie Hidayat, had received money from the Bank Century bailout fund (The Jakarta Post, 24 February 2010a).

As the following quotes show, legislators and their respective political parties also used the media to affirm that they were only using the inquiry to exercise their control function and to encounter allegations that they were using the inquiry to pursue their own agenda.

Gayus Lumbuun (PDI-P): "There is no intention to topple the government through the right of inquiry into Century"³⁰⁸ (Republika, 15 November 2009).

Mahfud Siddiq (PKS) "We want to make the Century case as clear as possible. We don't want the public to think that coalition parties also received funding from Century" (The Jakarta Post, 30 November 2009).

³⁰⁸ "Tidak ada niat menjatuhkan pemerintah lewat hak angket Century".

Bambang Soesatyo (Golkar): "We are not targeting Mulyani. Our goal is to thoroughly investigate violations in the channelling of the bailout funds" (The Jakarta Post, 3 December 2009).

Aburizal Bakrie (Golkar) "Golkar is going to be at the frontline in the inquiry committee at the House of Representatives. However, it is very important not to let the committee move to an impeachment agenda. Whatever the reasons, Pak SBY [Yudhoyono] and Boediono are the symbols of the nation. Therefore, they must be saved" (The Jakarta Post, 4 December 2009).

Idrus Marham (Golkar): "It is an understatement if Golkar was only thinking about Sri Mulyani"³⁰⁹ (Media Indonesia, 11 December 2009b).

However, during the course of the inquiry, it became evident that the various parties were using the inquiry to exert pressure on the government. Tactics included raising calls for Boediono's and Sri Mulyani's temporary suspension during the ongoing investigation process (Koran Tempo, 5 December 2012) as well as starting a discussion on the possible impeachment of the president and vice-president over the scandal. Furthermore, PDI-P and Golkar, for example, announced amidst the ongoing investigation that Sri Mulyani and Boediono were to blame for the bailout (Koran Tempo, 28 January 2010); committee member Gayus Lumbuun (PDI-P) called for President Yudhoyono's testimony (Republika, 13 December 2009; The Jakarta Post, 17 January 2010), and Golkar executive Setya Novanto stated that Golkar would recommend Boediono be impeached over his role and Bambang Soesatyo announced that Golkar would propose a forensic audit of the bailout disbursements (The Jakarta Post, 18 February 2010).

³⁰⁹ "Terlalu kecil kalau Partai Golkar hanya memikirkan Sri Mulyani".

4.3 The government's strategies

Even though it was a government decision to bailout Bank Century, the decision to do so was taken by particular institutions and actors: namely, Bank Indonesia, KSSK, and LPS; and those who held key positions in one of these institutions that decided to bailout Bank Century. From the very beginning the media focus was on individual actors, particularly on Finance Minister Sri Mulyani – who in her role as head of the KSSK had initiated the bailout.³¹⁰ However, President Yudhoyono and the Democratic Party were implicated in the scandal due to allegations that some of the bailout funds had been channelled to the Democratic Party to finance Yudhoyono's 2009 election campaign. The following paragraphs examine how these institutions and actors who played a decisive role in the bailout and the subsequent parliamentary inquiry reacted to media scrutiny and used the media to launch attacks against those faulting the bailout.

Sri Mulyani Indrawati

Sri Mulyani came into the media spotlight following a meeting with the DPR's financial commission on 27 August 2009 within which legislators questioned the Department of Finance, Bank Indonesia, and LPS over the Bank Century bailout. During that meeting she disclosed the chronology which led to the bailout of Bank Century amounting to Rp 6.7 trillion. She defended the bailout by arguing that it was done to save the national economy since Bank Century's collapse could have

³¹⁰ However, the decision to bailout Bank Century was based on data provided by Bank Indonesia, the institution that was fully responsible for supervising and handling bank issues, including Bank Century.

resulted in a systemic risk to the banking sector (Rakyat Merdeka, 28 August 2009). She further asserted that the bailout had been conducted following proper procedures and that all decisions made by her as the chair of the Financial System Stabilization Committee (KSSK) were based on sound legal grounds, namely by Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (Peraturan Pemerintah Pengganti Undang-Undang, Perppu) No 4/2008 regarding the Financial System Safety Net (Jaring Pengaman Sistem Keuangan, JPSK) and Law No.24/2004 on Deposit Insurance Corporation (Lembaga Penjamin Simpanan, LPS) (Kompas.com, 30 August 2009). However, she pointed out that the decision to rescue Bank Century was made by Bank Indonesia and that the data provided by Bank Indonesia on Bank Century were incomplete. Given the economic uncertainty at that time she believed Bank Indonesia's data and agreed to the bailout (Media Indonesia, 28 August 2009; Koran Tempo, 16 September 2009). A few days later, in an effort to shift the blame to Bank Indonesia, she admitted having been unaware of both Tantular's fraud at the time of the bailout (Media Indonesia, 2 September 2009) and of his close ties with high-ranking Bank Indonesia officials since the 1990s (The Jakarta Post, 4 September 2009).

In response to the high cost of the bailout Sri Mulyani argued that the injected Rp 6.7 trillion bailout funds did not come from the pockets of the state (Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Negara, APBN) but from LPS (Republika, 28 August 2009) and that, provided it was managed well, Bank Century had the potential of being sold at a good price within the next five years (Republika, 6 September 2009).

Sri Mulyani also denied rumours that President Yudhoyono was involved in the Bank Century case (Koran Tempo, 8 September 2009, Media Indonesia, 10 September 2009) or that Bank Century was rescued in order to salvage its major depositors (Media Indonesia, 9 September 2009, Koran Tempo, 28 September 2009). In so doing she dismissed allegations that there was “political deal behind the rescue of ailing Bank Century”(The Jakarta Post, 8 September 2009).

Based on the conviction of not having committed any wrongdoing and that investigations would remove suspicions, Sri Mulyani was consistent in her demands to investigate the case fully. Consequently she welcomed efforts by the Supreme Audit Body (BPK), the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), and the Attorney General's Office (AGO) to conduct a full investigation (Bisnis Indonesia, 31 August 2009; Koran Tempo, 28 August 2009). Sri Mulyani also interpreted the controversy over the bailout “as the inevitable criticism of ministers who manage economic and finance portfolios and take crucial decisions to maintain systemic stability during times of crisis” (Asia Times, 17 September 2009). In late September 2009 Sri Mulyani gave an interview about Bank Century to *Tempo* staff. She used the interview, that was published in both *Koran Tempo* (28 September 2009) and *Tempo* magazine (28 September), to justify the bailout and to elaborate on the bailout policy. In sum, Sri Mulyani offered an open, detailed and active defence that aimed to demonstrate that there was no case to answer.

Following the establishment of the parliamentary inquiry committee in early December 2009 Sri Mulyani started lobbying and actively approaching the media. She met with academics, analysts, political parties and the media, among others with *Kompas'* editorial staff, in order to explain that the bailout policy was in

accordance with the law (Inilah.com, 8 December 2009). A senior journalist at one of Indonesia's quality national newspapers³¹¹ stated that Sri Mulyani had visited *Kompas* to ask why the newspaper was attacking her. During this visit she reportedly tried to persuade *Kompas* owner Jakob Oetama that she had not done anything wrong. But Jakob Oetama declined to support her and got offended when a member of Sri Mulyani's staff identified the Kompas-Gramedia group as a tax evader. If this account is true it implies that Sri Mulyani's camp threatened *Kompas* to get it to change its coverage in favour for Sri Mulyani in exchange for waiving of the paper's tax obligations. *Kompas* staff, however, denied the occurrence of such a threat and emphasised that Agung Adiprasetyo (CEO and member of Board of Director Kompas Gramedia) has been awarded best tax payer of the year.³¹²

Meanwhile, some media had started to link Golkar's aggressive stance in Centurygate to the well-known animosity between Bakrie and Sri Mulyani that stemmed from a series of policy disagreements during Yudhoyono's first administration. Suspicions that Bakrie was indeed trying to oust Sri Mulyani over Centurygate was reinforced by Bakrie's statement that Golkar would not use the inquiry to go after Yudhoyono or Boediono, nor would it start impeachment proceedings through the inquiry (The Jakarta Post, 4 December 2009). Additionally, media reports interpreted the election of Golkar's secretary general Idrus Marham as inquiry Chair as being the result of negotiations between Golkar and the Democratic Party in order to prevent the inquiry from being chaired by the opposition who aimed for a thorough investigation into the possible flow of bailout

³¹¹ Interview Jakarta, 24 June 2009. The source wished to stay anonymous.

³¹² Mardiana Estilistiati, senior journalist Kompas, conversation, Perth, 20 March 2014.

funds to Yudhoyono's inner circle and the Democratic Party (The Jakarta Post, 30 November 2009).

This meant that Sri Mulyani was virtually left alone in her defense. Thus, a few days after Idrus Marham's election as committee chairman which raised the possibility of Bakrie having "major influence in determining the committee's agenda" (The Jakarta Post, 2 December 2009) as well as calls for her and Vice-President Boediono's suspension during the course of the inquiry, Sri Mulyani changed her strategy and started a counter attack against her critics.³¹³ In an exclusive interview with the *Wall Street Journal* (10 December 2009) Sri Mulyani not only restated that the bailout was the right decision and legal, but also claimed: "'Abuizal [sic] Bakrie is not happy with me . . . I'm not expecting anyone in Golkar will be fair or kind to me' during the probe" (The Wall Street Journal, 10 December 2009). She also pointed out that tensions between her and Aburizal Bakrie dated back to 2008 when she opposed the closure of Indonesia's stock exchange amid a run on PT Bumi Resources, a Bakrie group owned mining company (The Wall Street Journal, 10 December 2009).³¹⁴ In so doing, Sri Mulyani alleged that the Bank Century probe was an attempt to discredit her by politicians who opposed her reform agenda, notably leaders of Golkar, including chairman Aburizal Bakrie.

Why did Sri Mulyani speak out to the *Wall Street Journal* and not in the Indonesian media? Why did she openly talk about her tensions with Bakrie? In

³¹³ Counter-attack is an active defence that re-directs attention back upon the accusers, rather than addressing the accusations. This can be done by questioning the accuser's motives and methods, discrediting them in order to destroy their credibility and alleging wrongdoing (Tiffen 1999: 124, 129).

³¹⁴ Another issue of contention that Sri Mulyani highlighted in the interview was that she had imposed a travel ban on a number of coal-mining executives, including those in Bakrie owned companies, after a dispute over the refusal of the companies to pay royalties on the sale of coal to the government (The Wall Street Journal, 10 December 2009).

Indonesian culture generally and even in public politics, personal conflicts are not usually discussed in public, with behind-the-scenes political deals more common. Wimar Witoelar, who developed into a kind of media advisor for Sri Mulyani during the Bank Century case, explained Sri Mulyani's behaviour as follows: "Oh, that is not Indonesian, that is Sri Mulyani"³¹⁵. According to Witoelar, Sri Mulyani was culturally an academic who prefers straight talk, and not the obtuse language so often used by Indonesian officials who are obfuscating. Sri Mulyani may also have wanted to show the world what was going on in Indonesia. Furthermore, given Sri Mulyani's position as Finance Minister and her international reputation, she may have regarded it as important to give a signal to foreign investors.³¹⁶ According to *Koran Tempo* journalist Metta Dharmasputra (interview, 7 June 2009, Jakarta), Sri Mulyani had also spoken with Indonesian media about the issue, but always 'off the record'. When Indonesian journalists later asked Sri Mulyani why she finally had spoken out in the foreign media she reportedly attributed it to a mere coincidence.³¹⁷

Although the interview sparked outrage among Golkar legislators (The Jakarta Globe, 11 December 2009), presenting herself as a victim of party-political power plays also gained Sri Mulyani more sympathy among journalists.³¹⁸ This was crucial for Sri Mulyani, whose political communication – due to her personality and role as a technocrat – was regarded by journalists as less guarded than most

³¹⁵ Interview with Wimar Witoelar, public relations and communications expert, Jakarta, 22 May 2009

³¹⁶ Interview with Wimar Witoelar, public relations and communications expert, Jakarta, 22 May 2009.

³¹⁷ Interview with Metta Dharmasputra, journalist, *Koran Tempo*, Jakarta, 7 June 2009.

³¹⁸ In discussion with AJI members, Jakarta, May 2010 and Hadi Rahman, journalist, Jakarta 18 May 2010.

politicians, but instead 'mood driven'.³¹⁹ Mulyani's counter-attack, however, was also criticised by the media and legislators, who described the disclosure of her personal conflict with Bakrie as inappropriate.

The conflict between Sri Mulyani and Bakrie further intensified when allegations of Bakrie being involved in tax evasion suddenly hit the news. On 11 December 2009, only one day after Sri Mulyani had disclosed her troubled relationship with Bakrie, a subordinate of Sri Mulyani, the director-general of taxation Mochamad Tjiptardjo, publicly disclosed that the tax office was investigating three Bakrie Group-owned companies³²⁰ for possible tax evasion totalling around Rp 2.1 trillion.³²¹ If the allegations were proven, the three companies would be liable for both their taxes plus a 400 per cent penalty. This would total approximately Rp 10 trillion (The Jakarta Globe, 11 December 2009) significantly higher than the Rp 6.7 trillion cost of the Bank Century bailout.

Given the fact that the case had been investigated since March 2009, the disclosure of this information at this particular point in time may have been intended not merely to showcase the government's commitment to eradicate graft. Rather, although denied by Tjiptardjo (The Jakarta Post, 14 December 2009), a link between the tax evasion allegations and the inquiry into the Bank Century bailout seems obvious.³²² The tax evasion allegations against Bakrie triggered some momentary critical press coverage, particularly from *Koran Tempo* and *Media*

³¹⁹ In discussion with AJI members, Jakarta, May 2010 and Hadi Rahman, journalist, Jakarta 18 May 2010.

³²⁰ PT Kaltim Prima Coal (KPC), PTArutmin Indonesia and parent company PT Bumi Resources.

³²¹ The investigation into possible irregularities of these Bakrie-owned companies had officially started in March 2009 and was related to the three companies' tax obligations in 2007.

³²² See, for example, Rakyat Merdeka Online, 16 December 2009; Detikfinance, 17 December 2009; The Jakarta Post, 16 December 2009a.

Indonesia, focusing on his conflicts of interest in politics and business (O'Rourke, 18 December 2009) as well as his ulterior motives in the Bank Century inquiry (Media Indonesia, 13 December 2009).

Overall, Sri Mulyani's opportunities to utilize the commercial mainstream media were limited. This was mainly due to media ownership. As pointed out by O'Rourke (18 December 2009) "Bakrie and opposition parties such as PDI-Perjuangan tend to exert influence over several major media outlets, which limits scrutiny of Bakrie's interests". Furthermore, *Kompas*, Indonesia's most prominent and widely read newspaper, decided not to pick up on the tax evasion allegations against Bakrie other than commenting on it in its satirical corner (pojok) on its opinion page: "Three of Bakrie's companies are alleged to have manipulated tax of Rp2.1 trillion. Each rival holds their own trump card"³²³ (Kompas, 16 December 2009).³²⁴ Thus, *Kompas* saw the tax allegations against Bakrie only as a bargaining chip among rival forces.³²⁵

Furthermore, television, in particular the two news channels *TVOne* and *MetroTV* which broadcast live from the Bank Century inquiry hearings, built up the perception that Sri Mulyani was guilty (Witoelar 2010; Harap, 6 May 2010). Given that both stations were owned by Golkar politicians, Sri Mulyani's opportunities to benefit from coverage on either station were limited. Due to her personal feud with

³²³ "Tiga usaha Bakrie diduga memanipulasi pajak Rp 2,1 triliun. Setiap peseteru masing-masing punya kartu truf".

³²⁴ In February 2010, when the case re-entered the media *Kompas* only covered the Bakrie tax issue in the context of the tension in the ruling coalition and in relation to lobbying efforts by the government.

³²⁵ *Kompas* stance will be discussed and explained in detail in section 5.2 of this thesis.

Aburizal Bakrie she could not risk appearing on the Bakrie-group owned *TVOne*.³²⁶ The reasons were twofold: first, Sri Mulyani's camp did not want to give *TVOne* credibility by showing up to their shows; second because of concerns that *TVOne* might edit the information provided.³²⁷ However, in early January and February 2010 Sri Mulyani gave two exclusive interviews to *MetroTV* that she used as a platform to defend herself.³²⁸

Boediono

Vice-President Boediono, who due to his role as Bank Indonesia governor at the time of the bailout had also come under increasing media scrutiny and had become the subject of headlines as the Bank Century case unfolded, instead chose to 'stonewall' (Tiffen 1999: 124-5) in the hope allegations would disappear. Boediono might have feared that any comment in his defence would stoke the controversy in undesired ways, so he tried to reduce media coverage by not making any comments and replying only with a smile to journalists' questions (Detikfinance, 4 September 2009). Boediono had no special staff to manage the media at the time the bailout came to light. It was only on 21 October 2009 that Yopie Hidayat, former editor of the business newspaper *Kontan*, became his spokesperson (Kompas.com, 21 October 2009).

³²⁶ Shanti Ruwyastuti, Deputy News Director, *MetroTV* during a Q&A session in the context of an open forum held by The United States-Indonesia Society (USINDOBrief, 31 March 2010).

³²⁷ Interview with Yopie Hidayat, vice-presidential spokesman, Jakarta, 19 May 2010.

³²⁸ The exclusive interview was divided in to two parts broadcasted on 3 and 4 January 2010 respectively. Both interviews were broadcasted in the Program Metro Hari Ini. The 3 January 2010 interview had a duration of 14 minutes. The 4 January 2010 interview had a duration of 31 minutes. As shown in a study by Alderina (2010) *MetroTV* presented Sri Mulyani as knowing those involved in and saved by the Bank Century bailout, as being responsible for the bailout, and as putting the blame for bailout decision on the president, vice-president and DPR.

In early November 2009 Boediono gave an interview to *Tempo* magazine. When asked what really happened in the Bank Century case, Boediono explained that the economic situation at that time resembled the conditions during the 1997-1998 period and that Bank Century was rescued in order to avoid a domino effect within the banking system. He argued that not all the bailout funds had been lost and that if Bank Century had been closed down, the cost would still have been almost Rp 6 trillion (*Tempo*, 9 November 2009). Being the centre of media attention over this matter was obviously an uncomfortable situation for Boediono (*Detiknews*, 12 December 2009).

In mid-December 2009 Boediono criticised the press for not being balanced. During an event marking the 72nd anniversary of the state news agency *Antara*, Boediono argued in a speech that media coverage by privately owned media companies was unbalanced and dictated by the market. Although the Vice President did not make any direct references to the Bank Century case it was widely assumed that he was alluding to coverage of that as unbalanced. He also suggested that the government-owned media, *RRI*, *TVRI*, and *Antara*, should cooperate with one another to counterbalance coverage by private media (*The Jakarta Globe*, 15 December 2009).

Yudhoyono and the Democratic Party

The following section discusses how the government, particularly President Yudhoyono and his Democratic Party, interacted with the media in order to counter allegations of misconduct in the Bank Century bailout.

Following Centurygate's initial disclosure President Yudhoyono distanced himself from the controversy arguing that such issues were not in the president's domain since it was the Financial System Stability Committee and Bank Indonesia that control and supervise the banking sector (The Jakarta Post, 3 September 2009; Koran Tempo, 28 August 2009). However, he defended the bailout as a correct decision to save the banking sector and stated that legal action should be taken against all those alleged to have committed criminal acts in the scandal (The Jakarta Post, 27 September 2009). Furthermore, President Yudhoyono and the Democratic Party repeatedly denied allegations that Bank Century was saved to protect depositors who were major financiers of Yudhoyono's recent presidential campaign (The Jakarta Post, 29 September 2009) or that any of the bailout funds had been channelled to the Democratic Party to finance Yudhoyono's 2009 election campaign.

Only in late November 2009, following the BPK's audit into the bailout that had revealed irregularities and indications of legal violations, did President Yudhoyono express his support for an inquiry to "gain clarity as well as well as to determine whether the measures taken were wrong and improper"³²⁹ (Pidato Presiden, 23 November 2009). He ordered the Democratic Party to follow his example. This indicated that the government had shifted its emphasis from countering the establishment of an inquiry towards influencing its direction and outcome. This became evident in the Democratic Party's support for coalition partner Golkar to chair the committee. However, during the course of the inquiry it became evident that the coalition parties did not defend the government's position

³²⁹ "mendapatkan kejelasan serta sekaligus untuk mengetahui apakah ada tindakan-tindakan yang keliru dan tidak tepat".

in the bailout but were pursuing their own agendas instead. Furthermore, allegations that Yudhoyono's inner circle had benefited from the bailout funds did not cease.³³⁰

In mid-January 2010 the pressure on the government increased when committee members from the opposition insisted that Yudhoyono be summoned (Koran Tempo, 15 January 2010, The Jakarta Post, 16 January 2010) and voiced the possibility of launching impeachment proceedings through the inquiry (The Jakarta Post, 28 January 2010; Koran Tempo, 5 February 2010). Furthermore, with committee members from Golkar and PKS directing harsh questions and accusations at Vice-President Boediono and Finance Minister Sri Mulyani during the committee's hearings (The Jakarta Post, 17 January 2010) it became evident that both parties would defect from the coalition. To counter those moves and to prevent the inquiry from concluding that the bailout was wrong and from calling for legal measures against those responsible for the bailout, the Palace and the Democratic Party applied various strategies.

Here, the media played an important role. Wanting to clarify their actions in the Bank Century bailout and to refute allegations against the government that it had benefited from the bailout, some of the institutions accused – notably Bank Indonesia and the Finance Ministry – released explanations in the form of 'White

³³⁰ For example, on a press conference, held on 30 November 2009, Bendera (People's Bastion of Democracy), a ultranationalist youth group, raised that several members of his Yudhoyono's inner circle, including his son Edhie Baskoro Yudhoyono, and the Democratic Party's presidential campaign team, had received a total of Rp 1.8 trillion from the Bank Century bailout money (Republika, 4 December 2009). This was further accelerated due to the publication of a controversial book claiming that the bailout money was channelled through several foundations and Bank Century depositors with close links to the President's family in order to financially support his re-election campaign (Aditjondro 2009).

Papers' (Buku Putih).³³¹ Besides promoting these white papers through the media, the government also funded a television advertisement that explained the issue of bank restructuring as a way to save the economy from the monetary crisis. This mechanism was used to assert that the government's decision to bail out Bank Century was correct and based on rational analysis (Metro TV, January 2010).³³²

Following the inquiry's conclusion that declared Vice-President Boediono and Sri Mulyani to be responsible for the 'illegal' bailout (The Jakarta Post, 28 February 2010), Yudhoyono sent two of his special staff to lobby several political leaders, community leaders and public figures regarded as critical of the President and the bailout decision.³³³ The presidential special staff emphasised that the allegations that Yudhoyono and his inner circle had profited from the bailout money could not be proved since the inquiry failed to trace the flow of money. They further emphasised that the bailout should be viewed in the context of the global economic crisis, namely that the government was rescuing a banking system that

³³¹ In early January 2010, the Department of Finance published a white paper to explain the government's effort to save the Bank Century. The paper elaborated the process of decision making of the Committee for Financial Sector Stability (KSSK) to grant the bailout for Century Bank and emphasised the government's success in avoiding having the Indonesian economy drawn into the global financial crisis. The paper drew heavily upon newspaper clippings or supporting data, such as that from the IMF, World Bank, or Bank Indonesia (For a summary of the book see Kompas.com, 13 January 2010; Media Indonesia, 13 January 2010). Soon afterwards Bank Indonesia launched a white paper giving its version of the bailout. Bank Indonesia, which had been accused of weak supervision of the banking sector, sought to dismiss these accusations. The White Paper outlined the quality of bank supervision, the handling of the troubled bank, Bank Century's failures, systemic category consideration of a bank, then the softening of the rules providing Short Term Financing Facility (Pemberian Fasilitas Pendanaan Jangka Pendek, FPJP), until the final evaluation of the cost-benefit analysis of a rescue package (Jairis, 20 January 2010).

³³² The advertisement was produced by Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat (LSM) Peduli (Metro TV, January 2010).

³³³ Namely, Priyo Budi Santoso (Golkar, DPR deputy speaker) and Akbar Tandjung (Golkar), Amien Rais (PAN and former MPR chairman), Pramono Anung (PDI-P secretary-general), Syafi'i Ma'arif (former chairman of Muhammadiyah), chairman of the People's Conscience Party (Hanura), Wiranto, and chairman of the National Democrat organization, Surya Paloh (The Jakarta Globe, 1 March 2010; The Jakarta Post, 27 February 2010).

was affected by the crisis (Jawa Pos National Network, 28 February 2010). Most importantly, however, the media were also used to attack political parties and legislators opposed to the bailout. The following section discusses this in detail.

Pressure and threats against political parties and legislators critical of the bailout

While the Democratic Party's secretary-general used the media to propose a Cabinet reshuffle to President Yudhoyono to replace ministers from those coalition partners that faulted the bailout, Yudhoyono began to politicise the issue of tax evasion by publicly affirming his support for an offensive against tax evaders. He attributed the problem of tax evasion to, among other causes, politico-business collusion (Koran Tempo, 12 February 2010), and called upon tax authorities and the police to take firm action against businesspeople who had avoided their taxes (Koran Tempo, 9 February 2010; The Jakarta Post, 24 February 2010b).

Further indications that the President and the Democratic Party were attacking Golkar Chairman Aburizal Bakrie through allegations of tax evasion derived from the following statements. For example, a committee member of the Democratic Party accused Golkar of having a hidden agenda in the committee, namely to replace Sri Mulyani due to Bakrie's conflict with her regarding tax issues (Detiknews, 21 January 2010; Koran Tempo, 1 February 2010). In a similar vein, albeit without mentioning any names, Denny Indrayana, a legal adviser to Yudhoyono, claimed:

Anti-corruption fighters the calibre of Boediono and Sri Mulyani are even criminalized. Yet, it is quite possible that those who orchestrated their take down are those who have legal issues, like not paying their taxes regularly . . . In other words, the criminalization of Boediono and Sri Mulyani is, for the umpteenth time, an effort by the corruptors to fight back (corruptors fight back [sic]).³³⁴

Although Yudhoyono and Indrayani did not mention any specific names, the media interpreted those statements as directed to Aburizal Bakrie and brought the alleged tax evasion of Bakrie-owned companies back in the headlines. However, above all, those statements suggest that the government utilized the media to discredit the inquiry through creating the impression that those critical of the bailout had politicised the inquiry in order to pursue particular interests and to increase their bargaining power vis-à-vis the government instead of thoroughly investigating the case as a means to control the government. Indeed, allegations that Bakrie was utilising the inquiry as a means to exert pressure upon the president to remove Sri Mulyani can be seen as an effort to reduce the inquiry to a personal conflict between Bakrie and Sri Mulyani.

Counter-attacks

With the political battle surrounding the Bank Century case intensifying, corruption allegations against legislators, particularly committee members, opposing the government's stance suddenly appeared in the media. Since those attacks only

³³⁴ Pejuang antikorupsi selevel Boediono dan Sri Mulyani justru dikriminalkan. Padahal, amat mungkin yang mendesain justru adalah kelompok-kelompok yang punya masalah hukum, tidak taat membayar pajak . . . Dengan kata lain, kriminalisasi terhadap Boediono dan Sri Mulyani adalah bentuk kesekian dan upaya para pelaku korupsi menyerang balik (corruptors fight back)" (Kabarnet, 8 February 2010).

focused on PDI-P, Golkar, and PKS legislators, it was widely regarded that the government and its supporters, as well as the Democratic Party, were behind those sudden revelations and were using them to intervene in the Bank Century investigation process.³³⁵ More precisely, the attacks seemed designed to undermine individual committee members' credibility, to divert or stop the Bank Century inquiry committee's work, to influence the committee's final conclusion on the bailout, and the political parties' subsequent vote on this during the DPR's forthcoming plenary session on 3 March 2010.

Committee members Andi Rahmat (PKS) and Ganjar Pranowo (PDI-P), for example, were accused of having accepted a gratuity from Bank Indonesia in the form of funded travel to London in 2006. The trip took place when both were sitting on the DPR's Commission XI during the 2004 to 2009 legislature, and details had already been made public in 2008. However, the case re-entered the headlines in January 2010 following the KPK's announcement that it was re-checking the case. Soon news that the chairman of the Bank Century inquiry committee, Idrus Marham, and legislator Setya Novanto, both from the Golkar, were reported to the National Police for corruption and unresolved tax cases appeared in the media.³³⁶

Then allegations against PDI-P³³⁷ senior politician Emir Moeis also hit the media. A document anonymously distributed to journalists and published on Facebook suggested that Moeis made several suspicious transactions with Bank

³³⁵ See for example: Media Indonesia, 16 February 2010; Media Indonesia, 18 February 2010; Tempo, 22 February 2010; The Jakarta Post, 23 February 2010; Republika, 23 February 2010.

³³⁶ Both were reported to the National Police by the Association of Village Unit Cooperatives (Inkud) on graft allegations surrounding the procurement of transportation for 60,000 tons of rice from the customs office in 2003 (Rakyat Merdeka Online, 18 February 2010).

³³⁷ As an opposition party, the PDI-P had been among the most vocal parties opposing the bailout and had promoted the DPR's right of inquiry (hak angket) into the case.

Century. Among other assertions, the document claimed that in 2007-08 Moeis had routinely received foreign-currency deposits in his Bank Century account, and that more than Rp 10 billion in cash had been deposited into one of his accounts in 2008 (The Jakarta Globe, 16 February 2010; Koran Tempo, 16 February 2010). Around the same time the wealth report of BPK chairman Hadi Purnomo, who had been dismissed by Sri Mulyani from his position as tax chief for alleged corruption in early 2006 (McLeod, 19 May 2010), was leaked to the media. The report revealed that Hadi had accumulated enormous assets and properties in the form of grants (Koran Tempo, 17 February 2010).

On 22 February 2010, PKS' Mukhammad Misbakhun, one of the initiators of the bailout inquiry, found himself in the media over allegations he held a fictitious letter of credit from Bank Century. Andi Arief, President Yudhoyono's special staff for social affairs and natural disasters, picked up on the allegations implicating Misbakhun in the Bank Century scandal during a press conference by revealing evidence allegedly showing that Misbakhun had provided a fictitious letter of credit in order to obtain a loan amounting to \$22.5 million from Bank Century (Koran Tempo, 22 February 2010). A few days later Arief reported the case to the police accusing Misbakhun of money laundering and bank fraud (Detiknews, 1 March 2010; VIVAnews, 28 February 2010).³³⁸

In another effort to disparage disloyal coalition partners, Denny Indrayana, Yudhoyono's special adviser for legal affairs, claimed that some coalition parties had offered to the president that they would change their stance on the Century case

³³⁸ "According to the Supreme Audit Agency's (BPK) audit into Bank Century, Misbakhun's company, PT Selalang Prima International (SPI), was one of ten companies that allegedly received loans from Bank Century by using fictitious letters of credit" (The Jakarta Post, 2 March 2010).

if legal cases against their party members were dropped (The Jakarta Post, 28 February 2010). While refusing to disclose the parties or the particular legal cases, Indrayana emphasised that Yudhoyono would never intervene in legal matters. As an example, he referred to the fact that the father of Yudhoyono's daughter-in-law, former Bank Indonesia deputy governor Aulia Pohan was sentenced to 4.5 years prison for corruption in 2009 (The Jakarta Post, 17 June 2009).³³⁹

However, the presidential aide's strategies can also be interpreted as an attempt to defame those political parties who were opposed to the bailout decision. The coalition parties were quick to deny the allegations publicly and emphasised that they would not change their opinion on the bailout despite the government's various threats. Overall, the Democratic Party's and the Palace's strategies were viewed by their opponents as attempts to undermine the inquiry team's efforts to reveal the truth, and thus as a confirmation that the government had something to hide. This impression was further enforced by the fact that the majority of the major media groups were owned by either Golkar politicians or the opposition.

Conclusion

We have seen in this chapter that the Bank Century scandal was an intra-elite power struggle over key positions and access to political resources, and how those involved in the Bank Century scandal and its investigation both skilfully utilized the media to pursue their causes.

³³⁹ However, in August 2010 Aulia Pohan was released on parole (The Jakarta Globe, 20 August 2010).

Using the DPR as a forum, Yudhoyono's opponents progressively pushed the controversy from questioning the bailout cost to allegations of the misappropriation of state funds by those who had authorized the bailout and by Yudhoyono's Democratic Party. The establishment of a parliamentary inquiry was a milestone in keeping the scandal alive since it enabled the opposition and coalition parties to promote their interests under the guise of exercising their duty to oversee government. While the opposition aimed to undermine government's credibility in corruption eradication, the disaffected coalition parties aimed to undermine Yudhoyono's reform agenda by attacking Sri Mulyani and Boediono.

That the parliamentary inquiry mainly served as a bargaining chip to gain concessions from the government became increasingly evident when legislators and government actors incorporated the media in their power struggles through various means. Those included attacking each other by leaking damaging information to the press. These leaks included, for example, the tax ministry making public its investigation into alleged tax evasion allegations against Bakrie-owned companies, and Golkar legislator Bambang Soesatyo leaking a transcript suggesting that Sri Mulyani had conspired with Bank Century's owner. Entering 2010 those efforts increased.

While the parliamentary inquiry and government coalition parties intensively used the media to disseminate their position on the bailout, in so doing putting pressure on the government, the government counter-attacked. The Democratic Party started to contemplate publicly the reshuffling of Cabinet ministers from disloyal coalition parties, while President Yudhoyono used the media as a platform to promote stricter measures against tax evaders. The latter was

particularly aimed at Aburizal Bakrie in order to encourage him to soften Golkar's position towards the bailout and efforts to topple Sri Mulyani. Other government-initiated attacks included the sudden disclosure of corruption and tax evasion allegations against critical committee members from PKS, PDI-P and Golkar.

In sum, this chapter has reinforced the argument that the contesting elite has integrated the media as a means to redistribute power among themselves. That is, in this case, to change the composition of government by removing a Finance Minister who, due to her profound anti-corruption stance and reform drive, endangered predatory elite interests deeply rooted in Indonesia's political economy. Similar to the findings of the first case study (in chapter two) those interests benefited from the parliament's and the media's shared watchdog-function towards the government. In addition, the government's opportunities to utilize the media were limited since the majority of the commercial mainstream news media were either owned or influenced by elite interests opposed to the bailout.

Having focused on how the elite integrated the media in their power struggle, the following chapter examines the positions and interests of particular publications in Centurygate.

5 The media's role in the Bank Century scandal

Introduction

Following the analysis in the previous chapter of how the elite integrated the media in their power struggle over the Bank Century scandal, this chapter analyses the interests and contrasting positions of particular media organisations in the scandal by examining editorial commentary in four national news publications. It is argued that their positions in the Bank Century scandal can be best explained through the politico-economic interests and ideological affiliations of their owner or prominent editors.

The selection of the three daily newspapers *Media Indonesia*, *Kompas*, *Koran Tempo* and the weekly *Tempo* is based on the following considerations: During the time of the Bank Century scandal, *Media Indonesia's* owner, Surya Paloh, cherished political ambitions. Having chaired Golkar's advisory board since 2004, Surya Paloh lost the battle for Golkar chairmanship in October 2009 against Aburizal Bakrie who was supported in this challenge by President Yudhoyono. Subsequently, in February 2010, Surya Paloh, established the mass organisation National Demokrat (Nasional Demokrat, Nasdem) that aimed to 'restore' Indonesia.³⁴⁰ Furthermore, in contrast to the 2004 presidential elections, Surya Paloh did not support Yudhoyono. Instead he coordinated the advisory board of the Jusuf Kalla-Wiranto campaign

³⁴⁰ According to the movement's own website "RESTORATION Indonesia is a movement to recover, restore, and promote the functions of the Indonesian government to the ideals of the Proclamation of 1945, which protects the whole Indonesian nation, promotes public welfare, the intellectual life of the nation, and participates in the establishment of a new world order." ("RESTORASI Indonesia adalah gerakan memulihkan, mengembalikan, serta memajukan fungsi pemerintahan Indonesia kepada cita-cita Proklamasi 1945, yaitu melindungi segenap bangsa Indonesia, memajukan kesejahteraan umum, mencerdaskan kehidupan berbangsa, dan ikut melaksanakan ketertiban dunia.") (Nasdem n.d.).

team during the 2009 presidential elections (Pemilu Indonesia, 3 June 2009; Okezone, 2 June 2009) and used his media empire to support Golkar and its presidential candidate. This was partly due to his close relationship with Jusuf Kalla and his disappointment with the 2004-2009 Yudhoyono government (Hisyam 2014). It is argued in this chapter that *Media Indonesia's* editorial coverage of Centurygate was determined by the political ambitions of its owner and his personal relations to some of the decisive actors in the Bank Century scandal and its investigation.

Kompas is generally accepted as maintaining a relatively neutral political position and being non-partisan and non-party political. However, its owner Jakob Oetama, as well as *Tempo's* Goenawan Mohamad and Fikri Jufri, were part of the so-called 'liberal epistemic community'³⁴¹ that, in conjunction with the technocrats, had pushed the New Order state since the 1980s to liberalise the economy through deregulation. *Kompas* and *Tempo* were crucial in this process since they provided the platform for disseminating and promoting liberal economic ideas (Mallarangeng 2000: 136-172).

Koran Tempo and *Tempo* are closely affiliated and share the same publisher, PT Tempo Inti Media Tbk. It is argued in this chapter that the stance of both publications in the Bank Century scandal was influenced by the Tempo Media Group's affinity towards the broad values of the technocrats and the ideological affiliations of its prominent personnel. Furthermore, Goenawan Mohamad, co-founder and former chief editor of *Tempo*, did support Boediono's candidacy during

³⁴¹ Rizal Mallarangeng calls this group 'Komunitas Epistemis Liberal'. Its members are outside of the government and include among others economists that have been educated in the US, intellectuals and leading/prominent editors. For a listing of the group's members and their respective affiliation see Mallarangeng 2000: 129-30 (Table 4.1.).

the 2009 elections (Mohamad, 18 May 2009) and Bambang Harymurti, *Koran Tempo's* corporate chief editor, supported the bailout of Bank Century in an opinion column published in *Tempo* (Harymurti, 7 September 2009).

In order to explain how and why those factors influenced the position of the four publications under scrutiny this chapter analyses their editorial commentary on key issues in the Bank Century scandal. The editorial material selected for analysis covers the period from the Bank Century scandal's disclosure in late August 2009 until the editorial following the DPR's acceptance of the Bank Century committee's final report on 4 March 2010. Every editorial that mentions the words 'Century' in the context of the Bank Century scandal (Centurygate) was selected for analysis, even if the editorial might not be directly on the scandal itself.³⁴² This rather broad analysis is done in an attempt to avoid missing a comment crucial to the respective newspaper's point of view on the issue and in order to show that the media kept the Bank Century scandal alive by incorporating it as an example when discussing other broader concerns like corruption eradication or law enforcement. Selected in that way, the following numbers of editorials were identified: *Kompas* 42, *Media Indonesia* 52, *Koran Tempo* 28 and *Tempo* 27.³⁴³ With regard to the readership and

³⁴² The Bank Century scandal was most prominent in editorials from December 2009 to March 2010. This reflects the period from the parliamentary investigation committee's establishment until its final conclusion and the DPR's vote on the committee's report. However, as the accompanying table in Appendix F illustrates, the Bank Century case was also sporadically discussed in editorials from late August to November 2009.

³⁴³ Of *Media Indonesia's* 52 editorials on the Bank Century controversy, 18 have the word 'Century' in the title. Of *Kompas'* 42 editorials on the Bank Century controversy, five have the word 'Century' in the title. Of *Koran Tempo's* 28 editorials on the Bank Century controversy six have the word 'Century' in the title. *Tempo* magazine published a total of 27 editorials on the Bank Century controversy, of which nine have the word 'Century' in the title. See a list of all the editorials in Appendix G.

In this context it should be mentioned that *Tempo's* editorial is called 'opini'. Stretched over three pages there are four editorial articles per edition. The first editorial stretches over one page and refers to the

popularity of the various publications, in 2009, when Centurygate was disclosed, *Kompas* had a readership of 1,611,000; whereas *Media Indonesia* and *Koran Tempo* had a readership of 275,000 and 193,000 respectively.³⁴⁴ The weekly *Tempo* had an estimated readership of 640,000 in mid-2008 (Silaban 2012: 329).

Following this introduction, section 5.1 and 5.2 examine and explain *Media Indonesia's* and *Kompas's* editorial coverage of Centurygate respectively. Section 5.3 and 5.4 examine *Koran Tempo's* and *Tempo's* coverage respectively, while Section 5.5 explains the coverage of both these latter publications.

5.1 *Media Indonesia*: Anti-bailout and anti-Yudhoyono

Overview of *Media Indonesia's* position

In summary, *Media Indonesia's* editorial position was anti-bailout and anti-government. *Media Indonesia* does not agree with the government's justification for the bailout. Instead, *Media Indonesia* supports the view of those who faulted the bailout, namely Jusuf Kalla, the opposition and the initiators of the parliamentary inquiry into the bailout (Team 9). *Media Indonesia* argues that the Democratic Party and Yudhoyono are trying to hamper a proper investigation into the case and have something to hide. *Media Indonesia* sees the decision by Sri Mulyani and Boediono to bail out Bank Century as enforced by an 'invisible hand' pursuing a hidden agenda (Media Indonesia, 8 December 2009). In so doing *Media Indonesia* implicitly targets

cover story. The remaining three editorials are distributed over two pages and inform the reader about other important issues.

³⁴⁴ All quoted from Asril and Hudrasyah 2013: 891.

the president. *Media Indonesia* is critical of the inquiry and depicts it as hijacked by the Democratic Party. Its view only changes following the inquiry's preliminary conclusion that criticises the bailout. Consequently, *Media Indonesia* welcomes the DPR's decision to criticise the bailout. The following sections will elaborate on those findings in detail.

Editorial analysis

In its first editorial following the scandal's disclosure *Media Indonesia* (1 September 2009) raises doubts about the government's assertion that Bank Century's failure would have posed a systemic threat to the national economy, that the bailout was legal, and that the bailout money was not state money.³⁴⁵ *Media Indonesia's* critical stance towards the bailout is enforced by interpreting Jusuf Kalla's comment that he had not been informed about the bailout decision, as follows:

It is strange, that a vice-president who is known as a driving force [sic] in economic policy did not know and was not informed. The nescience of the vice-president is proof that transparency is a serious problem that must be resolved in this bailout issue.³⁴⁶

Media Indonesia (5 September 2009) accuses government authorities and bank supervisors of negligence by referring to the police findings that Bank Century was already bankrupt before the government decision to rescue it. However, the paper's

³⁴⁵ In subsequent editorials it becomes clear that *Media Indonesia* does not accept this position as the paper refers to the bailout money as "uang negara" [state money] (29 October 2009, 2 March 2010) or "duit negara"[state cash] (25 November 2009, 11 December 2009, 11 January 2010).

³⁴⁶ "Adalah aneh, seorang wakil presiden yang selama ini dikenal sebagai driving force dalam kebijakan ekonomi tidak mengetahui dan tidak dilaporkan. Ketidaktahuan Wapres menjadi bukti bahwa transparansi menjadi persoalan serius yang harus dituntaskan dalam isu bailout ini" (*Media Indonesia*, 1 September 2009).

main concern is the large amount of bailout money and where that Rp 6.7 trillion ended up. In order to avoid speculations that this money “was just poured into the pockets of ‘big fish’ depositors”³⁴⁷ *Media Indonesia* (5 September 2009) promotes the Supreme Audit Agency’s (Badan Pemeriksaan Keuangan, BPK) investigative audit while simultaneously raising concerns about the BPK’s impartiality. Furthermore, *Media Indonesia* suspects the government of being involved in the Bank Century scandal:

Again, the case of Century shows us that the dark room game is still going on in the banking world. That space is very fertile for the emergence of an affair between power and money.³⁴⁸

Media Indonesia’s (25 November 2009) stance emerges more clearly following the BPK’s audit:

The Bank Century – a small and ailing bank – was engineered to exploit state money of Rp 6.7 trillion in the interest of its customers and its owner through the hands of the holders of authority within the government, especially the Ministry of Finance and Bank Indonesia.³⁴⁹

Those suspicions further crystallize during the scandal when *Media Indonesia* advances the view that the Democratic Party and Yudhoyono had benefited from the Bank Century bailout. This is evident in *Media Indonesia’s* (26 November 2009) call upon the PPATK to disclose its data on the flow of the Bank Century funds:

³⁴⁷ “hanya mengalir deras ke kantong deposan kakap” (*Media Indonesia*, 5 September 2009).

³⁴⁸ “Sekali lagi, kasus Century menunjukkan kepada kita bahwa ruang gelap permainan di dunia perbankan masih terjadi. Itulah ruang yang amat subur bagi munculnya perselingkuhan antara kekuasaan dan uang” (*Media Indonesia*, 5 September 2009).

³⁴⁹ “Adapun Bank Century – sebuah bank kecil dan sedang sakit – direkayasa untuk mengeruk duit negara Rp 6,7 triliun demi kepentingan para nasabah dan pemilik melalui tangan-tangan pemegang otoritas di dalam pemerintahan, terutama Bank Indonesia dan Departemen Keuangan” (*Media Indonesia*, 25 November 2009).

Disclose in order to confirm the issue that is already circulating widely in the community, namely that the flow of funds from Bank Century entered the Democratic Party's campaign fund.³⁵⁰

In linking the bailout funds to Yudhoyono, *Media Indonesia* (3 February 2010) is less direct and only points out that "long before the special committee was formed, information had circulated that the bailout was flowing to various parties, even mentioned also into the pockets of a presidential candidate's campaign team."³⁵¹

Media Indonesia implies that the Democratic Party and Yudhoyono were trying to hamper a proper investigation into the case and have something to hide. Consequently, *Media Indonesia* (7 December 2009) doubts the will of the government and pro-government parties to investigate thoroughly the Bank Century case, and the flow of the bailout money.

Why? That is because of the appearance of covert efforts by the power holders to not settle the Bank Century case.³⁵²

For *Media Indonesia* those 'covert efforts' are evident in Yudhoyono's publicly voiced affirmation to support a thorough investigation while simultaneously trying to hamper such an investigation by not forcing the PPATK to reveal the flow of the Bank Century bailout funds (26 November 2009; 7 December 2009). In addition, the paper suspects the Democratic Party's moves to control the investigation and its

³⁵⁰ "Dibuka agar bisa memberi konfirmasi isu yang telanjur beredar luas di tengah masyarakat bahwa aliran dana dari Bank Century masuk dana kampanye Partai Demokrat"(Media Indonesia, 26 November 2009).

³⁵¹ "jauh hari sebelum pansus dibentuk sudah beredar informasi bahwa dana talangan itu mengalir ke berbagai pihak, bahkan disebut-sebut pula masuk ke kantong tim sukses calon presiden"(Media Indonesia, 3 February 2010).

³⁵² "Mengapa? Hal itu karena muncul upaya-upaya terselubung dari tangan-tangan kekuasaan untuk membuat kasus Bank Century tidak tuntas" (Media Indonesia, 7 December 2009).

outcome by endorsing Golkar secretary general Idrus Marham to chair the committee. Besides highlighting coalition hegemony (5 December 2009), *Media Indonesia* (17 December 2009) also highlights that, due to Idrus Marham's closeness to Yudhoyono, there are suspicions that "under the leadership of Idrus, the special committee investigation only stops at Finance Minister Sri Mulyani or at Vice-President Boediono at the highest."³⁵³ In short, based on the assumption that the committee was chaired by a legislator from the government coalition, that the majority of committee members were from government coalition parties, and that the government coalition also held the majority in the DPR, *Media Indonesia* proposed the view that first, Yudhoyono would be safe; and that, second, the inquiry would automatically support the government's stance on the bailout instead of being objective in finding the truth.

Distrust, scepticism, and bias towards the Bank Century inquiry in particular and parliamentary inquiries in general were evident in *Media Indonesia* editorials.³⁵⁴ Though supporting a parliamentary inquiry *Media Indonesia* (29 October 2009) raises strong doubts about whether the DPR will do it properly due to "its longstanding habit of turning the right to question into a forum for bargaining and an arena for idle threats."³⁵⁵ In the course of the investigation *Media Indonesia* continues to

³⁵³ "di bawah kepemimpinan Idrus, penyelidikan pansus hanya berhenti pada Menteri Keuangan Sri Mulyani atau paling tinggi pada Wakil Presiden Boediono" (*Media Indonesia*, 17 December 2009).

³⁵⁴ In the course of the investigation *Media Indonesia* continues to scrutinize the committee. For example, by criticising the behaviour of its individual members (15 December 2009; 9 January 2010), describing it as reality show (3 February 2010), by pointing out its lacking of focus (15 December 2009; 22 December 2009; 20 January 2010; 3 February 2010), particularly in investigating where the money went (26 January 2010; 3 February 2010; 12 February 2010), and raising concerns that coalition interests blur the inquiry's objectivity (26 January 2010).

³⁵⁵ "kebiasaan lama menjadikan angket sebagai wadah tawar-menawar dan arena gertak sambal" (*Media Indonesia*, 29 October 2009).

scrutinize the committee. For example, by criticising the behaviour of individual committee members (15 December 2009; 9 January 2010), describing it as reality show (3 February 2010), by pointing out its lacking of focus,³⁵⁶ particularly in investigating where the money went (26 January 2010, 3 February 2010, 12 February 2010), and raising concerns that coalition interests blur the inquiry's objectivity (26 January 2010).

Media Indonesia implicitly supports the inquiry's calls to suspend Sri Mulyani and Boediono (22 December 2009). Furthermore, in contrast to *Kompas*, *Media Indonesia* describes Yudhoyono's comment that there was no legal basis to suspend Sri Mulyani and Boediono as suspicious by asking why there was no fuss when others were suspended during ongoing investigations. However, *Media Indonesia* does not want the investigation to stop with Sri Mulyani and Boediono. *Media Indonesia* (8 December 2009) suggests that there was an "invisible hand" that made both implement the bailout:

[T]he flow of funds was enforced by an invisible hand . . . This invisible hand caused people like Boediono, then Governor of Bank Indonesia, to dispense with caution and approve the bailout. This invisible hand also caused people like Sri Mulyani to feel to have no other choice but to disburse the Rp 6.7 trillion in funds.³⁵⁷

Media Indonesia argues the bailout is wrong and those related to this case must be investigated further. However, as the main person responsible *Media Indonesia* does

³⁵⁶ See for example the *Media Indonesia* editorials of 15 December 2009; 22 December 2009; 20 January 2010; and 3 February 2010.

³⁵⁷ "kucuran dana itu dipaksakan oleh tangan yang tidak kelihatan . . . Tangan yang tidak terlihat itulah yang menyebabkan orang seperti Boediono yang waktu itu menjadi Gubernur Bank Indonesia kehilangan kehati-hatian sehingga menyetujui bailout. Tangan yang tidak terlihat itu juga yang menyebabkan orang seperti Sri Mulyani merasa tidak memiliki pilihan lain kecuali menggelontorkan dana Rp 6,7 triliun" (*Media Indonesia*, 8 December 2009).

not identify Sri Mulyani and Boediono, but rather the president. Thus, *Media Indonesia* (24 February 2010) wants Sri Mulyani and Boediono to be named as those responsible in the committee's final report in order to be able to take the matter further, right to the president:

[I]f the majority of factions state Sri Mulyani and Boediono are allegedly guilty, the hot ball will pass on to President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. In presidential systems, the vice-president and the minister are servants carrying out the orders of their boss. Presidential impeachment will be a hot agenda as a consequence.³⁵⁸

Media Indonesia's disagreement with the government's position that Bank Century had to be bailed out because of a systemic threat and that the bailout was conducted according to the law is evident in its frequent and unquestioning reference to Jusuf Kalla. In contrast to the government, Kalla criticised the bailout, saying there was no danger of a systemic impact should the government let the bank default, and that the bank was robbed by its owners. From the very beginning *Media Indonesia* uses Kalla to express its criticisms of the bailout and to point to the ambiguity. For example, by interpreting the fact that Jusuf Kalla was not informed about the bailout decision as "strange"³⁵⁹ and pointing to a lack of transparency in the bailout (1 September 2009).³⁶⁰

³⁵⁸ "kalau mayoritas fraksi menyebut Sri Mulyani dan Boediono sebagai pihak yang diduga kuat bersalah, bola panas akan mengalir ke Presiden Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Dalam sistem presidensial, wakil presiden dan menteri adalah pembantu yang melaksanakan perintah atasan mereka. Pemakzulan presiden akan menjadi agenda panas sebagai konsekuensinya" (*Media Indonesia*, 24 February 2010).

³⁵⁹ "aneh"

³⁶⁰ See section 4.2 of this thesis.

Furthermore, by heading an editorial with the question “Will the Century inquiry block JK [Jusuf Kalla] ...?”³⁶¹ *Media Indonesia* (8 December 2009) raises concerns that the committee (under the leadership of Idrus Marham) might not invite Jusuf Kalla to give testimony since “[a]s vice president in charge of the economy and as a person who has the experience and instincts of trading, JK might know about the game of the invisible hand”³⁶² (8 December 2009).

However, *Media Indonesia*'s anti-bailout and anti-government stance is most profoundly exemplified during the period between the announcement of the parliamentary inquiry's preliminary conclusion on 8 February 2010 and the DPR's vote on the inquiry's final report on 3 March 2010. When it became apparent that the PKS and the Golkar deviated from the government's stance, *Media Indonesia* praises both parties for advancing a contrary view to the government's despite being a coalition member. Consequently, *Media Indonesia* condemns the Democratic Party's suggestion of a cabinet reshuffle as a means to change the stance of the PKS and the Golkar on the bailout. Following the committee's preliminary conclusion revealing that the majority of political parties – including coalition partners Golkar and PKS – opposed the bailout, *Media Indonesia* (10 February 2010) is critical of whether the political parties only deviated from the government's stance in order to increase their “bargaining power”³⁶³ or whether they will maintain their stance.

³⁶¹ “Angket Century mencekal JK [Jusuf Kalla]...?”

³⁶² “Sebagai wakil presiden yang menangani bidang ekonomi dan sebagai orang yang memiliki pengalaman dan naluri per dagangan, JK mungkin tahu tentang permainan tangan yang tidak terlihat itu.”

³⁶³ “menaikkan posisi tawar” (Media Indonesia, 10 February 2010).

Can they maintain consistency in their stance towards the Bank Century scandal or will they, in the end, rather be subdued by the swift seduction to political compromise?³⁶⁴

Will they [the parties] be consistent with their final view in the plenary meeting of the committee or bought by lobbying?³⁶⁵

That implies that *Media Indonesia* supports the preliminary conclusion of the committee to fault the bailout. Furthermore, *Media Indonesia* pictures any deviation from the committee's preliminary conclusion as a foul compromise enforced by threats from the Democratic Party and the government. Consequently, *Media Indonesia* pushes the political factions to condemn the bailout. Simultaneously, *Media Indonesia* (16 February 2010) pictures Yudhoyono's and the Democratic Party's efforts to pull the coalition parties onto their side prior to the committee's final conclusion as measures to put pressure on the coalition members.

From threats of a cabinet reshuffle to the order to investigate tax offenders that are detrimental to the country . . . The political interest of the Democrats is that the committee will come to a conclusion that is pleasing the government of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.³⁶⁶

By encouraging the factions to maintain their preliminary stance while simultaneously condemning the government's and the Democratic Party's lobbying efforts to change those stances, *Media Indonesia* reveals its position as being anti-bailout and anti-government. Consequently, *Media Indonesia* (25 February 2010)

³⁶⁴ "Bisakah mereka tetap menjaga konsistensi sikap terhadap skandal Bank Century itu atau malah pada akhirnya takluk oleh rayuan derasnya politik kompromi?" (*Media Indonesia*, 25 February 2010).

³⁶⁵ "Apakah mereka konsisten dengan pandangan akhir di rapat pleno pansus atau terbeli oleh lobi?" (*Media Indonesia*, 2 March 2010).

³⁶⁶ "Dari ancaman reshuffle kabinet sampai perintah mengusut para pengemplang pajak yang merugikan negara . . . Kepentingan politik Demokrat adalah pansus menghasilkan kesimpulan yang ramah bagi pemerintahan Presiden Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono" (*Media Indonesia*, 16 February 2010).

welcomes the committee's final conclusion that "there are irregularities and violations both before and after the bailout process."³⁶⁷

Following the DPR's vote that condemns the bailout, *Media Indonesia's* (5 March 2010) scepticism towards the legislature vanishes and it now speaks highly of the parliamentary inquiry and the DPR:

The Century inquiry committee which ended on Wednesday (3/3) evening reversed all the bad assumptions about the DPR . . . The majority of the factions showed consistency. They gave a lesson that the voice of the people is above all and cannot be bartered with ministerial seats or offers of money. The coalition must be a meaningful repository to stand up for truth and justice, not a conspiracy to conceal decay. The Century inquiry committee raised our optimism that a new generation has been born in the DPR.³⁶⁸

Explaining *Media Indonesia's* coverage

As previously discussed *Media Indonesia's* editorial stance is intrinsically tied to its owner's interests and personal relationships. In order to explain *Media Indonesia's* stance the following paragraphs focus on Surya Paloh's political ambitions and his relationship to Jusuf Kalla, President Yudhoyono, and Golkar since 2004.

Surya Paloh had utilized his media empire to campaign for Golkar during the 2004 legislative elections (Luwarso 2004: 144-6), but did not support the campaign of Golkar's presidential candidate Wiranto. Instead, he supported the campaign of Jusuf Kalla who had paired with Yudhoyono as the latter's vice-

³⁶⁷ "ada penyimpangan dan pelanggaran baik sebelum maupun sesudah proses bailout" (*Media Indonesia*, 25 February 2010).

³⁶⁸ "Pansus Angket Century yang berakhir Rabu (3/3) malam membalikkan semua anggapan buruk tentang DPR . . . Mayoritas fraksi menunjukkan konsistensi. Mereka memberi pelajaran bahwa suara rakyat di atas segalanya dan tidak bisa dibarter dengan kursi menteri ataupun tawaran fulus. Koalisi haruslah bermakna berhimpunan untuk membela kebenaran dan keadilan, bukan persekongkolan untuk menyembunyikan kebusukan. Pansus Angket Century membangkitkan optimisme kita bahwa sebuah generasi baru telah lahir di DPR." (*Media Indonesia*, 5 March 2010).

presidential candidate. Some of the reasons for Paloh's stance on this were related to his failure to be nominated as Golkar's presidential candidate through the party's convention in April 2004, and his close relationship to Kalla. He had also been approached by former *Media Indonesia* journalist and then PR-manager of Yudhoyono's campaign team, Usamah Hisyam, with the request to support Yudhoyono's election campaign through his media empire (AJI 2004: 27). Reportedly, Yudhoyono had offered Paloh the position as Minister of Communications and Information Technology in return for his media support. Paloh, however, had no intention to become minister and Yudhoyono agreed to promise him the position of Chairman of the Presidential Advisory Council instead (Hisyam 2014: 101-14).

Paloh's support for the Yudhoyono-Kalla government was not limited to mobilising his media empire. He also tried to change Golkar's oppositional stance towards the Yudhoyono-Kalla government into a position of loyal support. When perceived too weak to win the Golkar chairmanship Paloh dropped out of the competition to pave the way for his close confidant Kalla who was more likely to outmanoeuvre incumbent party chairman Akbar Tandjung.³⁶⁹ Following Kalla's election as Golkar chairman, Paloh became chairman of Golkar's advisory board and his media company was given the exclusive right to advertise all the government's procurement projects.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁹ Weakening the opposition and strengthening their support in the DPR was crucial for the Yudhoyono-Kalla government since even though Yudhoyono had overwhelmingly won the presidency in October 2004, his political vehicle PD was too weak to contend with the legislative power of Golkar and PDI-P which intended to play the role of a serious opposition (Hadi 2011: 193).

³⁷⁰ Interview with Rendi A. Witar, journalist, *The Jakarta Post*, Jakarta, 24 June 2009.

Meanwhile, the relationship between Yudhoyono and Paloh deteriorated when Yudhoyono broke his promises to make Paloh chairman of the Presidential Advisory Council, to award him a service medal for his humanitarian aid for Aceh tsunami victims, and to implement Paloh's concept of a 'National Restoration'³⁷¹ program for a better Indonesia. The latter concept particularly had reportedly been the decisive factor in getting Paloh to back Yudhoyono's 2004 presidential campaign (Hisyam 2014: 160).

During the 2009 elections Paloh threw his support behind Golkar and its presidential candidate Jusuf Kalla (Saptono 2010: 36, 39-42) who had decided not to continue his partnership with Yudhoyono but to run for the presidency himself. Thus, Surya Paloh has been consistent in utilizing his media empire to support Golkar and Jusuf Kalla in all his presidential and vice-presidential ambitions (Kompas.com, 22 September 2015; Hisyam 2014: 170-9). However, following Kalla's defeat Paloh lost access to lucrative government resources since the new Yudhoyono-Boediono government wanted to adopt open tendering rather than giving exclusive rights to certain media. Therefore, *Media Indonesia* would lose an effective monopoly of advertising for government procurement projects and thus an income source.³⁷² Furthermore, Surya Paloh was upset that during the 2009 Golkar

³⁷¹ According to the movement's own website "RESTORATION Indonesia is a movement to recover, restore, and promote the functions of the Indonesian government to the ideals of the Proclamation of 1945, which protects the whole Indonesian nation, promotes public welfare, the intellectual life of the nation, and participates in the establishment of a new world order." ("RESTORASI Indonesia adalah gerakan memulihkan, mengembalikan, serta memajukan fungsi pemerintahan Indonesia kepada cita-cita Proklamasi 1945, yaitu melindungi segenap bangsa Indonesia, memajukan kesejahteraan umum, mencerdaskan kehidupan berbangsa, dan ikut melaksanakan ketertiban dunia.") (Nasdem n.d.).

³⁷² Interview with Rendi A. Witular, journalist, *The Jakarta Post*, Jakarta, 24 June 2009.

chairmanship elections Yudhoyono supported Aburizal Bakrie as new Golkar chairman rather than him.³⁷³

Those factors contribute to explaining why Surya Paloh had an interest in ousting Yudhoyono and to explain why *MetroTV* took aim at the president and vice-president over the Bank Century scandal, and (unlike the Bakrie-owned *TVOne*, for example) did not only target Sri Mulyani.³⁷⁴ *Media Indonesia* also covers the alleged Bakrie-group tax evasion on its cover page,³⁷⁵ but solely in order to attack Bakrie to whom Paloh had lost the Golkar's chairmanship in October 2009, and not (as *Koran Tempo* does) also to support Sri Mulyani. Indeed, *Media Indonesia* describes Sri Mulyani's public disclosure of her personal conflict with Bakrie as inappropriate (12 December 2009) and warns against using the Bakrie tax evasion issue for political bargaining (5 January 2010; 11 February 2010). During Centurygate Paloh even redefined his stance on the scandal and used his power and influence to support Sri Mulyani (Witoelar, 3 February 2010).³⁷⁶ Another factor that contributes to *Media Indonesia's* anti-government stance is Paloh's long standing friendship with Kalla who openly faulted the bailout.

Media Indonesia's depiction of the parliament, political parties, the government, and the political process gives the overall impression that the whole system is corrupt. In so doing, *Media Indonesia* lays the ground for Surya Paloh's political ambitions, namely the establishment of his social movement – National Democrats (Nasional Demokrat, Nasdem) – that aims to 'restore' Indonesia.

³⁷³ Interview with Rendi A. Witar, journalist, *The Jakarta Post*, Jakarta, 24 June 2009.

³⁷⁴ Interview with Rendi A. Witar, journalist, *The Jakarta Post*, Jakarta, 24 June 2009.

³⁷⁵ 14-17 December 2009; 9-12 February 2010.

³⁷⁶ Paloh's rift with Bakrie might have also played a role in his decision to support Mulyani.

5.2 *Kompas*: Avoiding conflict and prioritizing stability

Overview of *Kompas*' position

In summary, *Kompas* wanted Centurygate to be solved but not at the expense of destroying the government. *Kompas* hoped the case would be solved quickly so it would not affect the new government's performance. From the outset, *Kompas* took the view that a parliamentary investigation would attract unwarranted attention to the case. This fear becomes particularly true when the coalition seems to fall apart over the fiasco. For *Kompas* it is not only the performance of the government that was at stake but democracy in general. *Kompas* repeatedly emphasised that Indonesia has a presidential system and that Yudhoyono and Boediono were elected democratically and with a majority. Within this context it is also understandable that *Kompas* supports calls for Yudhoyono to step in and resolve the issue.

In conformity with its generally cautious editorial policy, *Kompas* avoids taking a clear position on the Bank Century controversy. However, since its main concern is to resolve the case as soon as possible and to keep the government stable and functioning effectively, *Kompas* criticises everything – for example, the parliamentary inquiry and renegade coalition partners – that endangers this stability. *Kompas* does not support Yudhoyono, Boediono or Sri Mulyani because the paper shares their assertions about the bailout but rather because *Kompas* wants a stable government that is doing its job and managing the economy effectively.

Editorial analysis

Following the scandal's disclosure, *Kompas* (29 August 2009) writes "the government and BI are placed in a position that should be held accountable because they decided to rescue Bank Century"³⁷⁷ and deems Bank Indonesia to have been "negligent and indecisive since the beginning"³⁷⁸ in overseeing Bank Century. In respect to the bailout money *Kompas* disagrees with the government's assertion:

Although the Finance Minister said the funds that were used were not state funds, LPS funds are nonetheless government or state funds, and therefore must be accountable to the public.³⁷⁹

When the Bank Century case had widened, *Kompas'* position becomes more apparent. *Kompas* (7 September 2009) supports the government's assertion that it had to bail out Bank Century in order to avoid a systemic threat to the banking sector. This becomes clear when *Kompas* attributes Yudhoyono's and Boediono's election victory to the public's confidence in the pair's ability to lead the government and by pointing out the Yudhoyono government's success in overcoming the global economic crisis. Additionally, *Kompas* offers Sri Mulyani's justification:

[T]ime and the context of the crisis that hit Bank Century coincided with the global economic crisis. Viewed in such a context, measures to help a bank in trouble are assessed to prevent the collapse of other banks.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁷ "Pemerintah dan BI ditempatkan dalam posisi yang harus bertanggung jawab karena mereka dulu yang memutuskan melakukan penyelamatan Bank Century" (*Kompas*, 29 August 2009).

³⁷⁸ "lalai dan tidak tegas sejak awal" (*Kompas*, 29 August 2009).

³⁷⁹ "Meski Menkeu mengatakan dana yang dipakai bukan dana APBN, tetap saja dana LPS adalah dana pemerintah atau negara, karena itu harus dipertanggungjawabkan kepada masyarakat" (*Kompas*, 29 August 2009).

³⁸⁰ "waktu dan konteks terjadinya krisis yang menimpa Bank Century bersamaan dengan munculnya krisis ekonomi dunia. Dipandang dalam konteks seperti itu, langkah membantu bank yang tertimpa masalah dinilai bisa mencegah jatuhnya bank lain" (*Kompas*, 7 September 2009).

Although writing in the next paragraph that “the Bank Century leadership acted against the law,”³⁸¹ *Kompas* focusses on the need to take legal action against the bank’s owners, and deflects attention from the government.

Kompas is not in favour of a parliamentary inquiry. This is because *Kompas* (30 November 2009) sees the Bank Century case first and foremost as a disruption to the government’s performance and urges against any measures that might prolong the case:

There is no other way; the Bank Century matter should be clarified, fairly and properly. Pursued through the use of the right of inquiry by the DPR in accordance with its authority . . . Meanwhile, it is sensible and easy to understand that the case itself and the issues surrounding Bank Century are sensitive, even complicated, because it involves the names of high-ranking officials. It is understandable that the impact of this complicated issue will also have some impact upon the government’s performance. In fact, the people’s expectations of the new government are high and pressing. The situation we may encounter could become crisis-prone.³⁸²

Kompas does not state explicitly that it is against a parliamentary inquiry. However, it argues that “[w]e would take a long sigh . . . if this case is to be made clearer, for example through the parliamentary inquiry initiative”³⁸³ (30 November 2009), and notes that the case gained in complexity following the DPR’s manoeuvre to propose an inquiry (3 December 2009). Further, it supports Vice-President Boediono’s

³⁸¹ “pimpinan Bank Century melakukan tindakan melanggar hukum” (*Kompas*, 7 September 2009).

³⁸² “Tidak bisa lain, masalah Bank Century harus dibuat jelas, adil, dan benar. Ditempuh jalur penggunaan hak angket oleh DPR sesuai dengan wewenangnya . . . Sementara itu, masuk akal dan juga segera bisa kita tangkap bahwa kasus dan masalah sekitar Bank Century ini masalah yang peka, bahkan masalah rumit karena disebutkan nama-nama pejabat tinggi. Masuk akal jika pengaruh yang rumit itu sedikit banyak akan menerpa pula kinerja pemerintah. Padahal, harapan masyarakat pada pemerintahan baru tinggi dan mendesak. Suatu situasi yang bisa rawan akan kita hadapi” (*Kompas*, 30 November 2009).

³⁸³ “Keluhan panjang perlu kita . . . jika kasus itu dibuat jelas di antaranya lewat prakarsa angket DPR” (*Kompas*, 30 November 2009).

suggestion that the case should be settled as soon as possible through legal proceedings without waiting for the result of a parliamentary investigation (3 December 2009; 4 December 2009). By adopting such a stance, *Kompas* clearly opposes establishing a parliamentary inquiry. *Kompas'* (3 December 2009) support for the government's preference to resolve the Bank Century case quickly, and its efforts to deflect attention away from the case is also evident in the paper's observation that the Yudhoyono has already publicly denied any involvement in the case:

The president explicitly and clearly assessed the news [that the Bank Century bailout funds assisted his campaign in the last presidential election] as a slander that does not hold any truth.³⁸⁴

Consequently *Kompas* does not call upon the PPATK to disclose its data on the flow of the Bank Century bailout funds in order to quash those rumours but places its trust in the president by regarding his denial as sufficient. Overall, *Kompas* indicates it will trust the government and leave it up to the government and the courts to solve the case.

Although disenchanted with the personnel in the committee and the election of Idrus Marham as its chairman (7 December 2009) *Kompas'* main concern is the very existence of the committee. More specifically, *Kompas* fears that a parliamentary inquiry would politicise the issue and guarantee prolonged attention while simultaneously deflecting the government's attention from more important policy matters.

³⁸⁴ "Secara tegas dan gamblang Presiden menilai kabar itu [kabar tentang aliran dana talangan Bank Century untuk kebutuhan tim kampanyenya dalam pemilihan presiden lalu] sebagai fitnah yang tak mengandung kebenaran" (Kompas.com, 3 December 2009).

During the course of the investigation it becomes clearer that *Kompas*' main concern is the desire to get beyond the scandal as soon as possible in order to keep the government and the economy running optimally. Consequently, *Kompas* constantly criticizes the parliamentary inquiry over its handling of the case³⁸⁵ and emphasises that the Bank Century case is distracting the government from other more important issues. The paper urges the political elite to settle the case quickly. Editorial headlines³⁸⁶ as well as the following quotes show the prominence of this demand by *Kompas*, and manifest its negative stance towards the committee:

Without people realising, the Bank Century bailout case has broken the concentration on implementing various important nation-building agendas. The polemic of the Bank Century case has taken a lot of attention, and set back the work program of the nation, including the 100-day program of the Cabinet . . . So, once again, the Bank Century case that is so complex and sensitive needs urgently to be solved openly, quickly, accurately, and wisely, always referring to and prioritizing the much larger interests of the nation.³⁸⁷

Increasingly the question is heard, how far might the Bank Century case disrupt or threaten the existence of Indonesian democracy? . . . The settlement of the Bank Century case is still unclear despite much wasted time and energy . . . An immediate settlement of the Bank Century case will certainly help to ease the

³⁸⁵ For example, *Kompas* is critical of the disclosure of non-verified information (15 December 2009), argues the style of questioning the witnesses is impolite, lacks focus and gives the impression that the "special committee has become a courtroom" ("Pansus telah menjadi ruang pengadilan") (14 January 2010).

³⁸⁶ For example, 'Concentration is indispensable' ('Konsentrasi sangat diperlukan') (14 December 2009), 'Get this into proportion' ('Kembali ke proporsi') (28 December 2009).

³⁸⁷ "Tanpa banyak disadari, kasus dana talangan Bank Century telah memecah konsentrasi pelaksanaan berbagai agenda penting pembangunan bangsa. Polemik kasus Bank Century telah menyita banyak perhatian, mendesak jauh ke belakang program kerja bangsa, termasuk Program 100 Hari Kabinet . . . Maka, sekali lagi, kasus Bank Century yang begitu kompleks dan sensitif sungguh mendesak untuk segera diselesaikan secara terbuka, cepat, cermat, dan arif dengan selalu mengacu dan mendahulukan kepentingan bangsa yang jauh lebih besar" (14 December 2014).

tasks and responsibilities of government, and society can then settle other complicated issues, such as poverty, social inequality, and unemployment.³⁸⁸

We are included among those concerned at the effect of the inquiry upon the ability of the government to concentrate on implementing programs such as improving the economy of the people and democratic governance processes that are effective and efficient.³⁸⁹

The direction of the Special Committee is not yet clear, but it has distracted the government from carrying out its work program.³⁹⁰

The Bank Century case has become loose cannon that has destabilized the cohesiveness of the coalition.³⁹¹

Kompas' main concern is to keep the government running. Consequently, it also objects to the DPR's call to suspend Boediono and Sri Mulyani during the ongoing parliamentary inquiry. Furthermore, *Kompas* (21 December 2009) praises Yudhoyono's statement that there is no legal basis to suspend the vice-president or finance minister as strengthening his leadership. *Kompas* (28 December 2009) also supports Boediono and Sri Mulyani by describing them positively (30 November 2009) and by emphasizing that the inquiry's "approach should not be accompanied

³⁸⁸ "Semakin terdengar pertanyaan, seberapa jauh kasus Bank Century berpotensi mengganggu atau mengancam kehidupan demokrasi Indonesia . . . Arah penyelesaian kasus Bank Century masih belum jelas sekalipun sudah banyak membuang-buang waktu dan energi . . . Penyelesaian segera kasus Bank Century sudah pasti akan turut membantu meringankan tugas dan tanggung jawab pemerintah dan masyarakat membereskan berbagai persoalan rumit lainnya, seperti kemiskinan, kesenjangan sosial, dan pengangguran" (Kompas, 5 January 2010).

³⁸⁹ "Kita termasuk yang risau atas pengaruh proses angket terhadap konsentrasi pelaksanaan program pemerintah seperti memajukan ekonomi rakyat serta proses pemerintahan demokrasi yang efektif dan efisien" (Kompas, 18 January 2010).

³⁹⁰ "Arah Pansus belum begitu jelas, tetapi telah mengganggu konsentrasi pemerintah dalam menjalankan program kerjanya" (Kompas, 1 February 2010).

³⁹¹ "Kasus Bank Century memang telah menjadi bola liar dan juga panas, yang menggoyahkan kekompakan koalisi" (Kompas, 24 February 2010).

by prejudice against key officials in the government, who apparently also have a reputation, a history of integrity, and credibility”³⁹².

A further indication of *Kompas*’ support of Sri Mulyani and Boediono is evident in an editorial published in mid-January 2010. Framed in a general discussion about ‘Legalism and Leadership’³⁹³ *Kompas* (16 January 2010) argues:

In dealing with various problems and crises, leaders can no longer simply act normatively, based on the norms or rules, but must dare to be circuit-breakers albeit with occasional risks. Leaders who are not willing to take risks will tend to play it safe. If a leader is not willing to take responsibility, the process of development and change will only be slowed down naturally. The expression of courage is not primarily presented in words, but in the policy, which is needed to overcome a critical situation or to spur progress . . . So the Bank Century case must not only be seen from its legal aspects, but needs to be assessed from the aspects of leadership management that refer to the ethics of responsibility.³⁹⁴

Kompas (1 March 2010) argues that the bailout decision and the legal violations that followed need to be differentiated, and that Sri Mulyani and Boediono cannot be held responsible for what happened after the bailout policy decision.

In early 2010, when it becomes clear that the Bank Century crisis has not only compromised the Yudhoyono-Boediono government but also endangers its

³⁹² “Pendekatannya tidak disertai sikap prasangka terhadap pejabat-pejabat kunci yang duduk dalam pemerintahan, yang ternyata juga punya reputasi, riwayat integritas, dan kredibilitas” (Kompas, 28 December 2009).

³⁹³ ‘Legalistik dan Kemimpinan’ (Kompas, 16 January 2010).

³⁹⁴ “Dalam menghadapi berbagai persoalan dan krisis, pemimpin tidak bisa lagi hanya bertindak normatif, berdasarkan norma atau aturan saja, tetapi berani melakukan terobosan yang terkadang penuh risiko. Pemimpin yang tidak mau mengambil risiko akan cenderung bermain aman. Jika seorang pemimpin tidak berani mengambil tanggung jawab, proses perkembangan dan perubahan hanya akan berjalan pelan secara alamiah . . . Maka kasus Bank Century tidak boleh hanya dilihat dari aspek hukum, tetapi perlu dikaji dari aspek manajemen kepemimpinan yang mengacu pada etika tanggung jawab” (Kompas, 16 January 2010).

existence *Kompas* intensifies its calls to end the matter. For *Kompas*, the Bank Century case threatens Indonesian democracy because it destabilises the democratically elected Yudhoyono-Boediono government (5 January 2010). *Kompas* urges both the government and the legislators to end the case. In its editorial 'Needs to be solved immediately',³⁹⁵ *Kompas* (20 January 2010) urges the parliamentary inquiry to "immediately come to a conclusion."³⁹⁶ The editorial 'Let the president take over'³⁹⁷ (18 January 2010) is a plea for Yudhoyono to take control of the Bank Century case.

More specifically:

We also argue that if the president intervenes, the attitude of the coalition parties, including its representatives in the DPR, would be more unified. The Bank Century case must be clarified, focusing on its main issue and the question of responsibility. At the same time, do not let its handling unintentionally affect the performance of a government that is backed by a majority coalition. This opinion is expressed as we – as well as expert observers – see the possibility that the handling of the Bank Century is spinning out of control, without any direction.³⁹⁸

Kompas (4 January 2010) wants the Yudhoyono-Boediono coalition government to continue in its current form. In order to achieve that and prevent it fracturing over the Bank Century case *Kompas* simultaneously calls upon the president to show leadership and upon the coalition parties to "uphold truth and

³⁹⁵ 'Perlu segera diselesaikan' (*Kompas*, 20 January 2010).

³⁹⁶ "segera mengambil kesimpulan" (*Kompas*, 18 January 2010).

³⁹⁷ 'Presiden agar ambil alih' (*Kompas*, 18 January 2010).

³⁹⁸ "Kita juga berpendapat, jika Presiden turun tangan, sikap partai-partai anggota koalisi termasuk wakilnya di DPR bisa lebih kompak. Kasus Bank Century harus dibuat jelas duduk perkaranya dan pertanggungjawabannya. Pada waktu yang sama, jangan sampai penanganannya tanpa sengaja memengaruhi kinerja pemerintah yang didukung koalisi besar. Pendapat itu dikemukakan ketika kita seperti halnya para pengamat ahli melihat kemungkinan penanganan kasus Bank Century berputar-putar tanpa arah dan tak terkendali" (*Kompas*, 18 January 2010).

justice, but also deal with other existing challenges, namely the continuation of the government that needs the coalition.”³⁹⁹

Kompas (29 January 2010) repeats its call to urge the president to intervene and unify the government in late January 2010 by demanding

[s]trong and solid leadership of President Yudhoyono as the head of government in a presidential system is needed to localize the case in order that it does not widen . . . Constitutional political steps need to be taken by the president to find solutions so that we can get out of the entanglement of the Bank Century case.⁴⁰⁰

In *Kompas'* (27 February 2010) point of view, Yudhoyono should take responsibility for the bailout:

Our Constitution affirms the presidential system of government . . . In a presidential system, the responsibility of government is in the hands of the president. Vice-president and the minister are assistants to the president.⁴⁰¹

Consequently, *Kompas* (1 March 2010) welcomes Yudhoyono's announcement to take responsibility for the bailout decision. Besides emphasizing that Indonesia has a presidential system⁴⁰² *Kompas* also repeatedly emphasizes that Yudhoyono and Boediono have been elected “in accordance with the provisions of the

³⁹⁹ “tetap berpegang pada kebenaran dan keadilan, tetapi tetap pula disertai tantangan lain yang dihadapi, yakni berlanjutnya pemerintahan yang memerlukan berlanjutnya koalisi” (*Kompas*, 4 January 2010).

⁴⁰⁰ “Kepemimpinan kukuh dan solid Presiden Yudhoyono sebagai kepala pemerintahan dalam sistem presidensial dibutuhkan untuk melokalisasi kasus agar tidak melebar . . . Langkah politik konstitusional perlu diambil Presiden untuk mencari solusi agar kita bisa keluar dari belitan kasus Bank Century” (*Kompas*, 29 January 2010).

⁴⁰¹ “Konstitusi kita menegaskan sistem pemerintahan presidensial . . . Dalam sistem presidensial, tanggung jawab pemerintahan ada di tangan presiden. Wakil presiden dan menteri adalah pembantu presiden” (*Kompas*, 27 February 2010).

⁴⁰² See for example the editorials of 18 January 2010; 23 January 2010; 29 January 2010; 27 February 2010.

constitution"⁴⁰³ (21 December 2009) and with a majority (7 September 2009; 30 November 2009).

Based on its support for the Yudhoyono-Boediono government *Kompas* (21 December 2009) encourages the coalition parties to follow their agreement:

The coalition of parties that support and participate in the United Indonesia Cabinet II holds a majority vote in the DPR. From that standpoint, it would be strange, if, for example, in the case of Bank Century the government would be under pressure in the ballot.⁴⁰⁴

In late February 2010 when it became apparent that the coalition parties would deviate from the government's stance in the Bank Century case, *Kompas* (24 February 2010) calls upon the coalition to reach an agreement and work together for the greater good instead of engaging in political bargaining.

Kompas sees the lobbying efforts as a means to find a "collective solution"⁴⁰⁵ (27 February 2010). Since *Kompas* wants the coalition to continue, it implicitly supports a reshuffle in order to enable the coalition government to work effectively and efficiently. The coalition should work together because it supports the government:

Presumably it would be better if the government continues in accordance of the constitutional term. Personnel improvement within the cabinet is considered because the ability of some ministers is less convincing. However, the continuity of the coalition remains necessary . . . To achieve a coalition, moreover to strengthen and make it more effective, cohesiveness and a leadership that is confident, effective and efficient are needed. It is the

⁴⁰³ "sesuai dengan ketentuan konstitusi"(Kompas, 21 December 2009).

⁴⁰⁴ "Koalisi partai-partai yang mendukung dan berpartisipasi dalam Kabinet Indonesia Bersatu II menguasai mayoritas suara di DPR. Dari sudut pandang itu, aneh jika misalnya dalam kasus Bank Century pemerintahannya terdesak dalam pemungutan suara" (Kompas, 21 December 2009).

⁴⁰⁵ "solusi bersama"(Kompas, 27 February 2010).

coalition's duty to support and to carry out the implementation of governance that is united and authoritative.⁴⁰⁶

Kompas (4 March 2010) sees the committee's final vote as the result of the Yudhoyono-Boediono government camp's failure "to ensure cohesiveness among coalition parties"⁴⁰⁷ and criticizes the coalition parties for deserting the coalition. As the consequence, *Kompas* suggests those parties resign from the coalition. Following the DPR's vote on the committee's report *Kompas* (5 March 2010) highlights that the Bank Century case is far from resolved and raises concerns of further political and economic complications.

Explaining *Kompas*' coverage

The characteristics of *Kompas* and of its owner, Jakob Oetama, have been discussed in detail in the introduction to this thesis. *Kompas*' reluctance to take a clear position in the Bank Century scandal may be explained by its non-confrontational style of journalism. *Kompas* managing editor Budiman Tanuredjo (interview, Jakarta, 16 June 2009) stated that *Kompas*' main emphasis was on keeping a neutral position in the Bank Century scandal and to cover both sides. In this context, he admits that people involved in the Bank Century case and its investigation tried unsuccessfully to influence *Kompas*' editorial policy in their favour. For example, Sri Mulyani,

⁴⁰⁶ "Kiranya lebih baik jika pemerintahan ini berlangsung terus sesuai periode konstitusionalnya. Perbaikan personalia dalam kabinet dipertimbangkan karena sejumlah menteri memang kurang meyakinkan kemampuannya. Akan tetapi, koalisi tetap diperlukan kelanjutannya . . . Untuk mendapatkan koalisi, apalagi memperkuat dan membuatnya lebih efektif, diperlukan kekompakan dan kepemimpinan yang percaya diri, efektif, dan efisien. Koalisi bertugas untuk mendukung dan membuat terselenggaranya pemerintahan yang kompak dan berwibawa itu"(Kompas, 8 February 2010).

⁴⁰⁷ "menggalang kekompakan di kalangan partai-partai koalisi" (Kompas, 4 March 2010).

President Yudhoyono, and legislators of Team 9 all met with members of *Kompas* editorial staff to promote and elaborate on their view. Sri Mulyani, for example, complained to a *Kompas* journalist that *Kompas* was always allocating too much space to Team Nine and the Bank Century inquiry.⁴⁰⁸

However, the editorial analysis has shown that *Kompas*' main concern was to resolve Centurygate quickly and to keep the government stable and working effectively. Consequently, *Kompas* criticises any action or behaviour – for example the parliamentary inquiry and renegade coalition partners – that endangers this stability. *Kompas* does not support Yudhoyono, Boediono or Sri Mulyani, because it shares their belief that the bailout was essential. Rather it took this stance because it supports Sri Mulyani's policies which were threatened by the attacks made against her.⁴⁰⁹

Kompas support for, and promotion of, a liberal economic policy dates back to the 1980s when it established a strategic linkages with economic technocrats through housing periodic economic discussion panels, which continued to be convened after the fall of Suharto (Hadiz and Dhakidae 2005: 43), with reports of these panel discussions appearing periodically on the paper's front page. In addition, *Kompas* disseminated and promoted market-orientated policy reforms and de-regulation through its editorials, and its intensive coverage of, for example, the visits of IMF and World Bank officials (Mallarangeng 2000: 144, 161, 166-7). The

⁴⁰⁸ Interview with Budiman Tanuredjo, managing editor, *Kompas*, Jakarta, 16 June 2009.

Tanuredjo elaborated that in order to uphold its neutral position, *Kompas* closely monitored its coverage of the Bank Century scandal. Its in-house Research and Development department (Pusat Informasi Kompas, Litbang Kompas) conducted a daily content analysis of *Kompas*' coverage on the Bank Century case and compared it with several national newspapers.

⁴⁰⁹ Personal communication with Vedi Hadiz, Perth, 24 September 2015.

Kompas Gramedia Group (KGG) itself profited from this policy to increase the role of private business since this allowed it to expand and to develop into Indonesia's biggest conglomerate. A market-orientated and prosperous economy is crucial for the KGG and its diversified business interests. This explains why *Kompas'* main emphasis was on ensuring a stable government that is able to function effectively and maintain a sound economy.

Finally, it should also be mentioned that *Kompas* did not mix up the Bank Century scandal with the longstanding tensions between Sri Mulyani and Bakrie, nor did it raise the tax evasion allegations against Bakrie as a means to discredit the Golkar chairman or to pressure him to soften Golkar's stance in the Bank Century inquiry.

However, *Kompas'* neutrality in the Bank Century scandal and its decision to not pick up on the tax evasion allegations against Bakrie also attracted criticism.⁴¹⁰ For example, Yopie Hidayat (interview, Jakarta, 19 May 2010), spokesperson for Boediono and former chief editor of *Kontan*, a business newspaper in the KKG, argues "if *Kompas* had defended Sri Mulyani from the beginning, there wouldn't have been a Bank Century case," and adds:

I complained to Jakob Oetama that *Kompas* didn't carry a word about the Bakrie tax... Nobody argues with Jakob Oetama, he is like a god...Jakob Oetama said he doesn't want to stir up the conflict, making it worse, doesn't want to give it a personal touch between Ical [Aburizal Bakrie] and Sri Mulyani... Even though

⁴¹⁰ In contrast to *Media Indonesia* and *Koran Tempo*, *Kompas* did not prominently report on the alleged tax evasion against the three Bakrie owned coal mining companies. *Kompas* only made a comment on the issue in its satirical corner ('pojok') on its opinion page: "Tiga usaha Bakrie diduga memanipulasi pajak Rp 2,1 triliun. Setiap peseteru masing-masing punya kartu truf" (*Kompas*, 16 December 2009). In February 2010 *Kompas* only covered the Bakrie tax issue in the context of the tension in the ruling coalition and in relation to lobbying efforts by the government in the Bank Century scandal.

the tax investigation was already a legal case and covered in all other media Jakob Oetama said “no”.

Budiman Tanuredjo (interview, Jakarta, 16 June 2009), *Kompas* managing editor, admits that many people including *Tempo* staff, sent him text messages, asking why *Kompas* did not report Bakrie’s alleged tax fraud. He explained that the issue was discussed in the *Kompas* newsroom. For *Kompas* the question was first, if Bakrie has a tax problem why don’t the police or the director general of taxation resolve it, and why do the media need to be involved? Second, *Kompas* regarded the playing out of the tax issue to be part of a political manoeuvre, in contrast to the conflict between Bakrie and Sri Mulyani which the paper regarded as essentially a private issue.

5.3 *Koran Tempo*: Pro-bailout, pro-Boediono and pro-Sri Mulyani

Overview of *Koran Tempo*’s position

Koran Tempo’s editorial position is pro-bailout and protective of Sri Mulyani and Boediono. *Koran Tempo* supports the government’s position on the bailout and is convinced of Sri Mulyani’s and Boediono’s innocence. *Koran Tempo* links the Bank Century scandal to intra-elite rivalry between Boediono and Sri Mulyani on the one hand and the group around Jusuf Kalla on the other. *Koran Tempo* projects the Democratic Party and Yudhoyono as having something to hide by emphasizing their efforts to hamper an investigation into the Bank Century case. *Koran Tempo* calls upon the president to take responsibility for the bailout and to defend his aides whose ouster has become the aim of the parliamentary inquiry. *Koran Tempo* does

not fault the government's bailout policy and those deemed most responsible for it but is critical of Bank Indonesia's chaotic oversight of Bank Century. Consequently, *Koran Tempo* condemns the DPR's decision to fault the bailout.

Editorial analysis

In contrast to *Kompas* which headed its first editorial on the issue 'Bank Century Scandal',⁴¹¹ *Koran Tempo* (1 September 2009) is calling it "the controversy of the injection of Rp 6.7 trillion by the LPS to that bank [Bank Century]."⁴¹² *Koran Tempo* emphasises that the controversy around Bank Century cannot be separated from an intra-elite conflict, namely "the sharp rivalry between the group of Jusuf Kalla and the Boediono camp, including Sri Mulyani"⁴¹³ and also wonders why the DPR is putting the issue in the spotlight only after the bailout money had been transferred. Overall, *Koran Tempo* avoids recriminations and urges patience until the BKP's audit result is available. By stating that the "Rp 6.7 trillion money came from funds collected through LPS from banks, and not from the state budget"⁴¹⁴ *Koran Tempo* shares the government's assertion regarding the bailout money.⁴¹⁵

As evident in the following excerpts, *Koran Tempo* clearly supports the government's assertion that Bank Century posed a systemic threat to the banking

⁴¹¹ 'Skandal Bank Century' (*Kompas*, 29 August 2009).

⁴¹² "kontroversi pemberian suntikan dana Rp 6,7 triliun oleh Lembaga Penjamin Simpanan kepada bank itu" (*Koran Tempo*, 1 September 2009).

⁴¹³ "persaingan sengit kelompok Jusuf Kalla dan kubu Boediono, termasuk di dalamnya Menteri Keuangan Sri Mulyani" (*Koran Tempo*, 1 September 2009).

⁴¹⁴ "uang Rp 6,7 triliun itu berasal dari dana yang dikumpulkan LPS dari kalangan perbankan, dan bukan dari anggaran negara" (*Koran Tempo*, 1 September 2009).

⁴¹⁵ Whereas *Kompas* and *Media Indonesia* wrote two editorials following the scandal's initial disclosure, *Koran Tempo* only picks up the Bank Century case again in mid-October 2009.

sector, making it eligible for Rp 6.7 trillion from the Deposit Insurance Corporation (LPS).

Former Bank Indonesia Governor Boediono (now vice-president), Finance Minister Sri Mulyani, and a series of other officials explained at great length the reason for the rescue. However, most members of the committee do not believe or do not agree that a failed Century Bank would have had a systemic impact if not rescued.⁴¹⁶

Members of the inquiry committee may just say pertinently that the systemic effects would not have emerged if the bank had not been saved. But this argument is very weak and contrary to the opinion of the banking community who experienced the events themselves.⁴¹⁷

Koran Tempo nevertheless supports the DPR's call to conduct an investigative audit of Bank Century to resolve the obscurities surrounding its bailout. This support is based on the assumption that its result will disprove any alleged wrongdoing or shortcomings on behalf of the government in the Bank Century controversy (11 November 2009) as well as uncover allegations of conspiracy related to it (15 November 2009). However, once the audit was published and those hopes were not fulfilled, *Koran Tempo* (26 November 2009) identifies the BPK's findings as "still hollow here and there"⁴¹⁸ and supports the establishment of a parliamentary inquiry for the following reasons:

⁴¹⁶ "Mantan Gubernur Bank Indonesia Boediono (kini wakil presiden), Menteri Keuangan Sri Mulyani, dan sederet pejabat lain berupaya sekuat tenaga menjelaskan alasan penyelamatan itu. Tapi umumnya anggota Panitia tetap tidak percaya atau tidak setuju bahwa Bank Century yang gagal akan berdampak sistemik jika tidak diselamatkan" (*Koran Tempo*, 19 January 2010).

⁴¹⁷ "Anggota Panitia Angket boleh saja *ngotot* menyatakan bahwa dampak sistemik tidak akan muncul andaikata bank ini tak diselamatkan. Tapi argumen ini amat lemah dan bertentangan dengan pendapat kalangan perbankan yang mengalami sendiri kejadian itu" (*Koran Tempo*, 27 February 2010).

⁴¹⁸ "masih bolong di sana-sini" (*Koran Tempo*, 26 November 2009).

The public needs to be provided with information that is as clear as possible on whether or not there was a shady deal behind the rescue of Bank Century, which cost Rp 6.7 trillion. That is why it is important that the House of Representatives investigate this case through an inquiry. A parliamentary inquiry committee can uncover and verify the findings of the BPK. The government and the Central Bank also have a good opportunity to lay out all their arguments. Moreover, both are of the view that there are a number of fatal mistakes underlying the BPK's audit results . . . Only with the serious investigation into the case, either by an inquiry or by law enforcement agencies, can government credibility be restored.⁴¹⁹

Thus *Koran Tempo* sees an inquiry into Bank Century first and foremost as a means for the government and Bank Indonesia to outline their position which contrasts with the BPK's findings, and to reassert the government's credibility.

Koran Tempo becomes suspicious of the committee's motives following its calls to suspend Sri Mulyani and Boediono during the parliamentary investigation. *Koran Tempo's* critique of the committee's work and the behaviour of its members sharpened in the course of time.⁴²⁰ Editorial headings like 'Slapstick Century inquiry'⁴²¹ (15 January 2010) and 'Lousy Century inquiry'⁴²² (27 February 2010) exemplify *Koran Tempo's* attitude towards committee.

⁴¹⁹ "Publik perlu mendapat informasi sejernih mungkin soal ada-tidaknya patgulipat di balik penyelamatan Century, yang menelan dana Rp 6,7 triliun. Inilah pentingnya Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat mengusut kasus ini lewat angket. Panitia angket DPR bisa mengungkap dan memverifikasi berbagai temuan BPK. Pemerintah dan bank sentral pun punya kesempatan bagus untuk membeberkan semua argumennya. Apalagi keduanya menilai ada sejumlah kekeliruan fatal yang mendasari hasil audit BPK . . . Hanya dengan proses pengusutan yang serius terhadap kasus ini, baik oleh panitia angket maupun institusi penegak hukum, kredibilitas pemerintah bisa dipulihkan" (*Koran Tempo*, 26 November 2009).

⁴²⁰ See, for example, *Koran Tempo*, 15 January 2010; *Koran Tempo*, 28 January 2010; *Koran Tempo*, 1 February 2010; *Koran Tempo*, 27 February 2010.

⁴²¹ 'Dagelan Angket Century' (*Koran Tempo*, 15 January 2010).

⁴²² 'Amburadulnya Angket Century' (*Koran Tempo*, 27 February 2010).

Koran Tempo (19 December 2009) describes the committee's call for Sri Mulyani's and Boediono's resignations as "strange"⁴²³ and "truly odd",⁴²⁴ and asks "whether the DPR's politicians are really serious about investigating the Century case, or simply creating a political sensation?"⁴²⁵ *Koran Tempo* emphasises that there was no legal basis for such a call and that it is irrelevant since "[i]t cannot be stated yet whether Boediono and Sri Mulyani actually collided with the law, let alone engaged in a criminal act in the Century case."⁴²⁶

Koran Tempo (11 December 2009) interprets demands that Sri Mulyani and Boediono resign temporarily as a political manoeuvre that indicates the Bank Century case is being manipulated in a struggle over the positions of the finance minister and the vice-president. In this context, *Koran Tempo* (11 December 2009) urges Yudhoyono to not let "ministers or parties supporting the government utilize the issue to target crucial posts in the cabinet, and even the post of the vice-president"⁴²⁷ and to focus not only on denying allegations that his family or the Democratic Party had been beneficiaries of the bailout money but also to stand up for Sri Mulyani and Boediono:

Although both [Sri Mulyani and Boediono] were praised internationally for saving Indonesia from the storm of crisis and for bolstering the performance of the SBY administration they seem left to fight alone. Hopefully this does not

⁴²³ "aneh".

⁴²⁴ "sungguh ganjil".

⁴²⁵ "apakah politikus DPR benar-benar serius mengusut kasus Century atau sekadar membuat sensasi politik?" (*Koran Tempo*, 19 December 2009).

⁴²⁶ "Boediono dan Sri Mulyani belum bisa dikatakan benar-benar menabrak undang-undang, apalagi terlibat dalam tindak pidana kasus Century" (*Koran Tempo*, 19 December 2009).

⁴²⁷ "para menteri atau partai pendukung pemerintah memanfaatkan isu ini untuk mengincar pos penting di kabinet, bahkan jabatan wakil presiden" (*Koran Tempo*, 11 December 2009).

become a signal that paralyses the technocrats and lets the politician to emerge victorious in the cabinet.⁴²⁸

This excerpt exemplifies *Koran Tempo's* support for both bureaucrats and technocrats in government. Consequently, *Koran Tempo* (1 March 2010) neither faults the government's bailout policy nor those deemed most responsible for its execution. Instead it criticises Bank Indonesia's ineffectiveness in overseeing Bank Century and raises suspicions as to whether this indicates negligence or whether Bank Indonesia had intentionally turned a blind eye to the malpractices of Bank Century's owners and management.

Koran Tempo views the Democratic Party and Yudhoyono as having something to hide by emphasizing their efforts to hamper an investigation. For example, through an editorial (19 November 2009) critical of the attempts of DPR speaker Marzuki Alie to hinder legislators to propose a motion to inquire Bank Century:

Marzuki's attitude may reflect his dismay as the representative of the Democratic Party, the party supporting President Yudhoyono. They seem worried that the inquiry will affect the image of the SBY government. However, it would be more elegant if Marzuki would fight the submission for an inquiry through the jockeying between factions in parliament rather than by blocking it administratively.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁸ "Meski keduanya [Sri Mulyani and Boediono] dipuji dunia internasional karena berhasil menyelamatkan Indonesia dari badai krisis dan telah lama menopang kinerja pemerintah SBY, mereka terkesan dibiarkan bertarung sendirian. Mudah-mudahan ini tak menjadi sinyal lumpuhnya kaum teknokrat dan berjayanya kaum politikus di kabinet" (*Koran Tempo*, 11 December 2009).

⁴²⁹ "Sikap Marzuki mungkin refleksi kegundahannya sebagai wakil dari Partai Demokrat, partai pendukung Presiden Yudhoyono. Mereka agaknya khawatir angket itu akan mempengaruhi citra pemerintah SBY. Namun, akan lebih elegan jika Marzuki melawan pengajuan angket lewat pertarungan fraksi di DPR, dan bukannya dengan menghambatnya secara administratif" (*Koran Tempo*, 19 November 2009).

Koran Tempo (9 December 2009) also criticized Yudhoyono's statement that the mass demonstrations scheduled for the International Anti-Corruption Day on 9 December 2009 were politically charged and therefore could lead to unrest, as scare tactics that only aim to dissuade the population from participating in the demonstrations which were to demand a thorough investigation of the Bank Century case. In short, *Koran Tempo* interprets Yudhoyono's statement as an effort to silence public demands to investigate the Bank Century case thoroughly.

Whereas *Koran Tempo* clearly supports Boediono and Sri Mulyani and is convinced by their innocence, its stance towards Yudhoyono is more critical. For example, *Koran Tempo* does not regard Yudhoyono's denial of the rumours that his Democratic Party had benefited from the Bank Century bailout money as sufficient and calls upon the president to take action. Namely, the paper wants the president to encourage the PPATK to disclose its data on the flow of the bailout funds for Bank Century in order to extinguish those suspicions (26 December 2009) and to "uncover allegations of power abuse and conspiracy in the rescue of Bank Century"⁴³⁰ (9 December 2009).

Koran Tempo repeatedly urges Yudhoyono to take action to solve the Bank Century case. Those calls are often in relation to attempts to defend Sri Mulyani and Boediono.⁴³¹ In mid-January 2010 *Koran Tempo* (19 January 2010) becomes more explicit by demanding through its editorial headlined 'The President should not be silent'⁴³²:

⁴³⁰ "mengungkap dugaan adanya penyalahgunaan wewenang dan kongkalikong penyelamatan Bank Century" (*Koran Tempo*, 9 December 2009).

⁴³¹ For example, as previously discussed in the context of the calls for their suspension.

⁴³² 'Presiden jangan diam' (*Koran Tempo*, 19 January 2010).

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono should not just be a spectator when the Bank Century case is dismantled by the inquiry committee . . . The president must state publicly that he indeed had knowledge about the policy and agreed at that time . . . President Yudhoyono's reticence gives the impression that he did not know anything or did not approve the policy . . . It is also difficult to consider that the president did not agree with the policy because he actually picked Sri Mulyani again for the position of Minister of Finance for the next term. Even Boediono was then asked by Yudhoyono to remain with him as vice-president.⁴³³

This clearly shows that *Koran Tempo* is convinced that Yudhoyono knew about the bailout and supported it. Interestingly, as the following excerpt shows, *Koran Tempo* (19 January 2010) not only demands that Yudhoyono state this publicly in order to defend Sri Mulyani and Boediono but also that he explain the rescue policy in order to address the rumours surrounding it, by arguing

from the very beginning the investigation of the Century case is based on the suspicion that this policy benefited the party or the people supportive of Yudhoyono. That is why it is important that the president takes responsibility and does not allow the examination of the Century case to run unfairly. Whether requested by the inquiry committee or not, he needs to explain the Bank Century rescue policy. If not, it is Boediono and Sri Mulyani, who become easy targets, even victims. It has certainly hurt the public sense of justice. Because, so far there is no evidence that they gained any benefit from the policy.⁴³⁴

⁴³³ "Presiden Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono tidak semestinya hanya menjadi penonton ketika kasus Bank Century dibongkar oleh Panitia Angket . . . Presiden mesti menyatakan secara terbuka bahwa kebijakan itu memang sepengetahuan dirinya dan saat itu ia menyetujuinya . . . Sikap diam Presiden Yudhoyono memberi kesan seolah-olah ia tak tahu-menahu atau tidak menyetujui kebijakan itu . . . Sulit pula menganggap Presiden tidak setuju terhadap kebijakan itu karena ia justru mengangkat Sri Mulyani lagi menjadi Menteri Keuangan untuk periode berikutnya. Bahkan Boediono kemudian diminta oleh Yudhoyono untuk mendampingi sebagai wakil presiden" (*Koran Tempo*, 19 January 2010).

⁴³⁴ "sejak semula penyelidikan kasus Century didasarkan pada kecurigaan bahwa kebijakan ini menguntungkan partai atau orang-orang yang mendukung Yudhoyono. Itulah pentingnya Presiden

In late January 2010 *Koran Tempo* (30 January 2010) emphasises again that Yudhoyono should have stepped in earlier:

If the president had taken responsibility for the rescue of Bank Century, perhaps the issue would not be so widespread. He should have given an assurance that the decision was taken to save the economy, so that was beyond doubt. The president should not allow his aides to be attacked by the DPR.⁴³⁵

This shows that *Koran Tempo* blames Yudhoyono for the prolongation of the Bank Century case and for making Sri Mulyani and Boediono targets of the inquiry.

Koran Tempo (27 February 2010) is frustrated by the committee's conclusion and sees it first and foremost as the basis to initiate the ousting of Sri Mulyani and Boediono.

It is not that the DPR should not be allowed to stage an inquiry . . . The problem is that Senayan's politicians from the outset, were less accurate in assessing the Century issue. Some of them were more motivated by political desires to oust Vice-President Boediono and Finance Minister Sri Mulyani.⁴³⁶

Following the DPR's decision to fault the rescue of Bank Century, *Koran Tempo* (4 March 2010) raises concerns that this decision "has serious consequences, which

mengambil alih tanggung jawab dan tidak membiarkan pemeriksaan kasus Century berjalan secara tidak fair. Diminta atau tidak oleh Panitia Angket, ia perlu menjelaskan seputar kebijakan penyelamatan Century. Jika tidak, Boediono dan Sri Mulyani yang menjadi sasaran empuk, bahkan korban. Ini tentu melukai rasa keadilan masyarakat. Soalnya, sejauh ini tak ada bukti bahwa mereka mendapatkan keuntungan apa pun dari kebijakan itu" (*Koran Tempo*, 19 January 2010).

⁴³⁵ "Seandainya Presiden mengambil tanggung jawab atas penyelamatan Bank Century, barangkali persoalan tak semakin luas. Semestinya diyakini bahwa keputusan itu diambil demi menyelamatkan ekonomi, sehingga tak perlu ada keraguan mengambil alih. Presiden tak patut membiarkan para pembantunya menjadi bulan-bulanan serangan anggota Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat" (*Koran Tempo*, 30 January 2010).

⁴³⁶ "DPR bukannya tidak boleh menggelar angket . . . Masalahnya, para politikus Senayan sejak awal kurang cermat menakar persoalan Century. Sebagian dari mereka lebih terdorong oleh nafsu politik untuk melengserkan Wakil Presiden Boediono dan Menteri Keuangan Sri Mulyani" (*Koran Tempo*, 27 February 2010).

open the possibility of Vice-President Boediono being impeached⁴³⁷ and warns that this could endanger the country's political stability and democracy (4 March 2010). *Koran Tempo's* (5 March 2010) support for the government becomes evident in the next editorial, which demands from the president "There must be concrete steps to ensure that this government will survive until 2014".⁴³⁸ More specifically, the paper urges the president either to repair the current coalition or, if that is not possible, to form a new coalition that guarantees a stable government.

If the president wants to maintain the existing coalition, he must verify the commitment of the parties, especially Golkar, PKS and PPP . . . If restoring the coalition is difficult, there is no need to strive too desperately. There is nothing wrong if the president builds a new coalition if this will ensure a healthier democracy as well as a more stable government.⁴³⁹

5.4 *Tempo*: Pro-bailout, pro-Boediono and pro-Sri Mulyani

Overview of *Tempo's* position

The following editorial analysis will show that the editorial position of *Tempo* was pro-bailout. Consequently, *Tempo* defends Sri Mulyani and Boediono who are regarded as those primarily responsible for the bailout decision. *Tempo* links the Bank Century scandal to the feud between Sri Mulyani and Aburizal Bakrie, and

⁴³⁷"memiliki konsekuensi serius, yakni membuka kemungkinan Wakil Presiden Boediono dimakzulkan"(Koran Tempo, 5 March 2010).

⁴³⁸ "Harus ada langkah konkret untuk memastikan bahwa pemerintah ini bertahan hingga 2014" (Koran Tempo, 5 March 2010).

⁴³⁹ "Jika Presiden ingin mempertahankan koalisi yang ada, ia harus memastikan lagi komitmen partai-partai, terutama Golkar, PKS, dan PPP . . . Bila koalisi memang sulit diperbaiki, tak perlu pula matimatian dipertahankan. Tidak ada salahnya Presiden membangun koalisi baru jika memang akan menjamin demokrasi yang lebih sehat sekaligus pemerintah yang lebih stabil" (Koran Tempo, 5 March 2010).

implies that Bakrie will use his position as Golkar chairman to oust Sri Mulyani over the Bank Century scandal. *Tempo* strongly criticizes Yudhoyono's handling of the Bank Century scandal. The magazine is particularly critical of the president's emphasis on political bargaining and his efforts to secure his position instead of standing behind his two aides and taking the responsibility for the bailout. For *Tempo*, it was not the bailout policy that was wrong but rather that Bank Indonesia failed to oversee Bank Century. Consequently, *Tempo* criticises the DPR's decision to fault the Bank Century bailout and points out that Bank Indonesia's failure in overseeing Bank Century could have been prevented if the DPR had fulfilled its oversight function of Bank Indonesia. In so doing, *Tempo* puts the blame on the DPR.

Editorial analysis

Tempo's first editorial following the disclosure of the Bank Century scandal reveals its pro-bailout stance. *Tempo* justifies the bailout by, among other things, arguing that the bank's closure would have been more costly than its rescue; that the bank's owner and its directors have already been arrested for alleged fraud; that the economic situation at the time of the bailout decision resembled the situation of the Asian financial crisis in 1997/98; and that, since the bailout, Bank Century has already managed to make a profit. *Tempo* also does not mention that the bailout costs increased to Rp 6.7 trillion. Instead, it only contrasts the amount of Rp 6.4 trillion that should have been paid out by the LPS in the event of the Bank Century's closure with the much lesser estimated amount of Rp 632 billion for the rescue. *Tempo* supports the BPK audit in order to bring transparency to the Bank Century

case. However, *Tempo* particularly hopes that the audit will show that bailing out Bank Century was the right decision and that there was no embezzlement involved.

The people need to be convinced that the rescue of Bank Century can be justified. The audit that will be conducted by the Supreme Audit Agency may be one way of creating that transparency.⁴⁴⁰

The audit investigation currently underway by the Supreme Audit Agency is important to ensure that there are no irregularities behind the massive flow of funds.⁴⁴¹

Tempo supported the establishment of a parliamentary inquiry from the very beginning (16 November 2009, 1 December 2009) and strongly criticised the Democratic Party's attempts to hamper its establishment. This is clearly expressed in the editorial's headline 'The right of inquiry should not be suppressed'⁴⁴² (16 November 2009). *Tempo* supports the establishment of a parliamentary inquiry in order to clarify the policy of the bailout fund, to trace the flow of the bailout funds and to shed light on Bank Indonesia's "special treatment"⁴⁴³ of Bank Century.

However, following the public disclosure of the feud between Sri Mulyani and Bakrie, the election of a Golkar legislator as committee chairman and calls for Sri Mulyani and Boediono to step down temporarily, *Tempo* takes the position that Golkar chairman Bakrie is using the committee to oust Sri Mulyani. This becomes evident in *Tempo's* editorial (20 December 2009) following the exposure of the long-

⁴⁴⁰ "Rakyat perlu diyakinkan bahwa penyelamatan Century bisa dipertanggungjawabkan. Audit yang akan dilakukan oleh Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan barangkali merupakan salah satu cara menciptakan keterbukaan itu" (*Tempo*, 13 September 2009).

⁴⁴¹ "Audit investigasi yang sedang dirancang Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan penting sekali untuk memastikan tak ada penyimpangan di balik grojogan dana besar itu" (*Tempo*, 20 September 2009).

⁴⁴² 'Hak angkat diredam jangan' (*Tempo*, 16 November 2009).

⁴⁴³ "perlakukan khusus" (*Tempo*, 16 November 2009).

standing feud between Mulyani and Bakrie in the context of the Bank Century scandal. *Tempo* sees the Bank Century case as part of the protracted conflict between Sri Mulyani and Bakrie that had erupted during Yudhoyono's first term, when both held ministerial posts and disagreed on issues involving the Bakrie group. Consequently, *Tempo* (20 December 2009) interprets Bakrie's announcement to support the suspension of all officials linked to the Bank Century case during the committee's working period, while simultaneously supporting the Yudhoyono-Boediono government, as evidence that Bakrie is only targeting Sri Mulyani.

In arguing that the "committee should also not become the political tool of whomever"⁴⁴⁴ *Tempo* expresses its concern that the inquiry will lose its objectivity and could be dragged into the dispute between Sri Mulyani and Bakrie.⁴⁴⁵ These concerns over the inquiry's objective are profoundly expressed in an editorial headline that questions 'An inquiry on Bank Century or Sri Mulyani?'⁴⁴⁶ (20 December 2009) and declares "The inquiry must focus on investigating Century's bailout policy and the flow of funds. Search for truth, not for ousting state officials."⁴⁴⁷

Tempo also criticises other aspects of the committee. For example, the magazine argues that the parliamentarians are impolite, unethical, and interrogate

⁴⁴⁴ "Panitia hendaknya juga tidak menjadi alat politik siapa pun" (*Tempo*, 27 December 2009).

⁴⁴⁵ *Tempo* also raises the possibility that – despite the fact that Golkar has joined the pro-government coalition with three of its party members currently holding ministerial post – Bakrie in his position as Golkar chairman could take a stance opposing the government. In this editorial *Tempo* also points out Yudhoyono's dilemma in the conflict between Sri Mulyani and Aburizal, criticising Yudhoyono for not having resolved the conflict already during its first administration and siding with one of them; *Tempo* pictures Sri Mulyani in a positive way and Bakrie in a negative.

⁴⁴⁶ 'Angket Century atau Sri Mulyani?' (*Tempo*, 27 December 2009).

⁴⁴⁷ "Panitia Angket harus berfokus menelisik beleid penyelamatan dan aliran dana Century. Cari kebenaran, bukan mendongkel petinggi negeri" (*Tempo*, 27 December 2009).

rather than question the witnesses (24 January 2010, 9 February 2010). It says the sessions resemble a reality show (9 February 2010). It is critical of the committee's decision to not invite the president to testify (7 February 2010a) and of the inquiry's lack of focus (21 February 2010a). Nonetheless, *Tempo's* main concern is that Boediono and Sri Mulyani will be made scapegoats:

Oddly enough, even the majority of the members of the Special Committee have not deemed it necessary to invite the president to come to Senayan. This means, the real target is not the president. After the chairman of the Golkar Party – one of whose members became leader of the Special Committee – said Vice-President Boediono does not need to be impeached, we know that the target is Finance Minister Sri Mulyani.⁴⁴⁸

Instead of seriously dissecting the alleged misappropriation of funds, the Special Committee more often performs political stunts and tries to find a scapegoat for the Century scandal. Vice-President Boediono and Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati are the two government officials who are most widely accused of wrongdoing by the Special Committee – even though evidence or proof of wrongdoing by those two officials has not been substantiated by convincing data and arguments.⁴⁴⁹

Tempo is critical of the Yudhoyono's and the Democratic Party's lobbying efforts towards its defecting coalition parties. For example, *Tempo* (21 February 2010c) describes the Democratic Party's suggestion of a cabinet reshuffle to

⁴⁴⁸ "Anehnya, justru mayoritas anggota Panitia Khusus belum memandang perlu mengundang Presiden datang ke Senayan. Artinya, sasaran sesungguhnya bukanlah Presiden. Setelah Ketua Umum Partai Golkar – yang anggotanya menjadi pimpinan Panitia Khusus-mengatakan Wakil Presiden Boediono tidak perlu dimakzulkan, kita tahu sasaran tembak adalah Menteri Keuangan Sri Mulyani" (*Tempo*, 7 February 2010a).

⁴⁴⁹ "Bukannya serius membongkar dugaan penyelewengan dana, Pansus terlihat semakin sering melakukan akrobat politik dan mencoba mencari kambing hitam dari skandal Century. Wakil Presiden Boediono dan Menteri Keuangan Sri Mulyani Indrawati merupakan dua pejabat yang paling banyak dituduh bersalah oleh Pansus – meskipun pembuktian kesalahan dua pejabat ini belum disokong data dan argument yang menyakinkan" (*Tempo*, 21February 2010a).

encourage the coalition parties to join its stance as an “empty threat”⁴⁵⁰ and a “[c]hildish political move”⁴⁵¹ that ultimately only benefits the coalition parties in increasing their bargaining power. In late February 2010, shortly before the committee’s final report, *Tempo* (28 February 2010) also implies that the recently disclosed scandals involving legislators attacking the government’s decision to bailout Bank Century are a political manoeuvre by the Palace and pro-government parties to facilitate “under-the-table compromises”⁴⁵² and emphasises

[a]ll cases uncovered by these political disputes should be resolved through legal channels. Whatever recommendations will be issued by the Bank Century Special Committee, for example, law enforcement agencies must resolve the alleged tax evasion by the Bakrie group . . . Admittedly, politics cannot be separated from bargaining and granting concessions. Yet it cannot be justified if the various cases that have appeared recently only turned out to be the weapon of those in power seeking to win the battle and maintain the coalition. Perpetuating a coalition by covering up cases, especially those already in the public domain, would be an unforgiveable political mistake.⁴⁵³

Here, *Tempo*’s main concern is that the alleged tax evasion by Bakrie’s company will only be used as a bargaining tool to persuade the Golkar to take the government’s stance on the bailout in the committee’s final report, instead of resulting in a proper

⁴⁵⁰ “gertak sambal” (*Tempo*, 21 February 2010c).

⁴⁵¹ “Langkah politik kekanak-kanakan” (*Tempo*, 21 February 2010c).

⁴⁵² “kompromi di bawah meja” (*Tempo*, 22 February 2010).

⁴⁵³ “Semua kasus yang terbongkar dari pertikaian politik ini semestinya dituntaskan lewat jalur hukum. Apa pun rekomendasi yang akan dikeluarkan oleh Panitia Khusus Angket Kasus Bank Century, misalnya, penegak hukum harus menyelesaikan kasus dugaan penggelapan pajak oleh kelompok usaha Bakrie . . . Politik memang tak bisa lepas dari tawar-menawar dan pemberian konsesi. Namun tak bisa dibenarkan bila aneka kasus yang sekarang muncul ternyata hanya menjadi senjata penguasa untuk memenangi pertarungan dan menjaga koalisi. Melanggengkan koalisi dengan cara menutupi berbagai kasus, apalagi yang sudah terbuka di depan publik, merupakan kesalahan politik yang tak termaafkan” (*Tempo*, 22 February 2010).

investigation and resolution of the tax evasion allegations by law enforcement agencies.

In this context *Tempo* (28 February 2010) elaborates on the change of relationship from friend to foe between Yudhoyono and Bakrie over the Bank Century case. Having received support from the Palace in his election as Golkar chairman in October 2009, the relationship between Yudhoyono and Bakrie turned sour during the course of the parliamentary investigation into the Bank Century case when Golkar opposed Bank Century's rescue. The Palace countered Golkar's opposition by disclosing information on the alleged tax fraud by Bakrie-owned companies, and Yudhoyono himself publicly ordered that measures be taken against tax evaders. Thus, *Tempo* relates the Bank Century scandal and the question of whether Golkar will leave the coalition to a personal conflict between Yudhoyono and Bakrie. This is particularly important since *Tempo* also points out Yudhoyono's role in the conflict between Sri Mulyani and Bakrie. *Tempo* magazine is critical of the fact that, during his first term – when the conflict erupted between his two ministers – Yudhoyono allowed the friction to continue by neither siding with Bakrie or Sri Mulyani. The following quote points to Yudhoyono's indecisiveness and clearly shows whom *Tempo* (20 December 2009) favours:

We know that Bakrie is a party leader who has extensive political influence. He is also a tycoon with extraordinary financial capability. Meanwhile Sri Mulyani is a minister with a good reputation and internationally well-regarded.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵⁴ "Kita tahu, Aburizal Bakrie tokoh partai yang memiliki pengaruh politik luas. Ia juga konglomerat dengan kemampuan finansial luar biasa. Sementara Sri Mulyani adalah menteri dengan reputasi bagus dan diperhitungkan dunia internasional" (*Tempo*, 20 December 2009).

Tempo criticises Yudhoyono's handling of the Bank Century case. *Tempo* argues that Yudhoyono could have prevented the Bank Century case from becoming protracted and his aides from being attacked by the DPR through taking swift action from the outset. More precisely, the case would have been resolved rapidly if Yudhoyono had taken responsibility for the rescue of Bank Century, had testified before the Bank Century parliamentary committee (although not invited), confirmed that the decision was taken to save the economy, publicly stated that he approved the bailout policy and that he shared his aide's argumentation (25 January 2010, 7 February 2010a, 3 March 2010). *Tempo* (7 February 2010a) implicitly demands the president take full responsibility for the bailout decision in order to prevent Sri Mulyani and Boediono from becoming political scapegoats instead of seeking to keep himself in power.

However, it is only in early March 2010, shortly before the DPR's vote on the committee's report, that *Tempo* becomes more specific and directly addresses the president instead of only highlighting what he should have done. Based on the argument that, in the presidential system, the ministers merely assist the president in carrying out executive policies, *Tempo* (7 March 2010a) demands that the president take responsibility for the decision to rescue Bank Century.

Tempo (7 March 2010a) further emphasizes that Yudhoyono should affirm the bailout decision instead of securing his power through political bargaining. Thus, *Tempo* clearly shows that it wants Sri Mulyani and Boediono to keep their positions and that it would condemn Yudhoyono's decision should he do otherwise.

The president's affirmation is important to underline that his aide's decision to rescue the failed bank was correct to prevent systemic impact and that he was well aware of that. The political arena is not free of various short-term interests. Certainly, there are political forces that are considering toppling the president over the Century case. However, if, for the sake of maintaining his presidential powers, innocent aides have to be sacrificed – through a cabinet reshuffle or a trade-off or an exchange of any kind – it should be appreciated that the “undermining” by political opponents will not stop there. The next target will surely be the seat that is occupied by the president himself. Therefore, the president must publicly state that the doors for bargaining are closed. If Yudhoyono asserts that he will not remove Boediono and Sri Mulyani, this will inevitably undermine attempts by some of the members of the Special Committee who seemed more intent on bringing down those two people than seeking the truth.⁴⁵⁵

Tempo attributes the responsibility in the Bank Century scandal to institutions and not to individual actors such as Boediono or Sri Mulyani. This is evident in its focus on Bank Indonesia's shortcomings and how *Tempo* (7 March 2010a) depicts Sri Mulyani and Boediono, namely by stating “so far no criminal violation – such as receiving illegal funds or enriching themselves or others through rescuing Bank Century – been proven against the aides.”⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁵ “Penegasan Presiden ini penting untuk menggarisbawahi bahwa kebijakan menyelamatkan bank gagal berdampak sistemik oleh pembantunya itu sudah benar dan atas sepengetahuannya. Ranah politik memang tidak steril dari pelbagai kepentingan jangka pendek. Pasti ada kekuatan politik yang sedang berpikir untuk menjatuhkan Presiden dalam kasus Century ini. Tapi, bila demi kekuasaan Presiden harus mengorbankan pembantunya yang tak bersalah-melalui reshuffle kabinet atau barter atau pertukaran bentuk apa pun-perlu disadari bahwa “rongrongan” lawan politik itu tak akan berhenti sampai di situ. Target berikutnya pastilah kursi yang sedang diduduki Presiden sendiri. Karena itu, Presiden harus secara terbuka menyatakan tutup pintu untuk tawar-menawar ini. Bila Yudhoyono menegaskan tak akan mencopot Boediono dan Sri Mulyani, posisi itu niscaya akan merontokkan upaya sebagian anggota Panitia Khusus yang terkesan ngebet menjatuhkan dua orang itu ketimbang mencari kebenaran” (*Tempo*, 7 March 2010a).

⁴⁵⁶ “sejauh ini tak ada pelanggaran pidana-misalnya menerima aliran dana haram atau memperkaya diri atau orang lain lewat penyelamatan Century-ditemukan atas para pembantunya” (*Tempo*, 7 March 2010a).

Already in early December 2009, following the BPK audit's conclusion that Bank Indonesia should have already shut down Bank Century in 2005, a year after its establishment when it experienced an acute liquidity crisis, *Tempo* (30 November 2009) calls upon the committee to shed light on Bank Indonesia's "special treatment"⁴⁵⁷ of Bank Century and focus on the shortcomings of Bank Indonesia's oversight function. Later, following the committee's finding that Bank Indonesia had been ineffective in overseeing Bank Century, *Tempo* (7 March 2010b) questions whether this indicates negligence or whether Bank Indonesia had intentionally turned a blind eye to the malpractices of Bank Century's owners and management. For *Tempo*, it was not the bailout policy that was wrong but rather Bank Indonesia's failure to oversee Bank Century. For *Tempo*, it was the failure of Bank Indonesia's oversight that allowed Bank Century to degenerate into such a mess. *Tempo* then hits back at the DPR by pointing out that Bank Indonesia's failure in overseeing Bank Century could have been prevented if the DPR had fulfilled its oversight function of Bank Indonesia.

Law No. 23/1999 on Bank Indonesia, which was amended by Act No. 3/2004, defines Bank Indonesia as an independent institution that reports its work to the DPR. In addition to annual and quarterly reports, the DPR may ask for clarification at any time if it finds anything suspicious. The failure of the Central Bank's oversight in turn, must be sent back to the DPR's oversight function of the monetary system management institutions – as mandated by law. Considering that the Bank Century case was not without warning, it needs to be asked to what extent the DPR carried out its oversight function before elevating "Centurygate" to the stage of national politics.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁷ "perlakuan khusus" (*Tempo*, 6 December 2009).

⁴⁵⁸ "Undang-undang No. 23/1999 tentang Bank Indonesia, yang diubah dengan Undang-Undang No. 3/2004, menentukan Bank Indonesia sebagai lembaga independen yang melaporkan kerjanya kepada Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat. Selain laporan tahunan dan triwulanan, Dewan bisa meminta penjelasan

Ultimately, *Tempo* (14 March 2010b) criticises the DPR's decision to fault the decision to rescue Bank Century:

Admittedly, there is something wrong in the haphazard way in which the bank was managed. But putting the blame on the rescue policy mistakes amid the threat of a crisis is unfair. Especially now, since it is evident that the economic crisis could be circumvented.⁴⁵⁹

5.5 Explaining *Koran Tempo's* and *Tempo's* coverage

Due to the fact that *Tempo* magazine is a weekly, and *Koran Tempo* a daily, there are differences in coverage. However, *Tempo* and *Koran Tempo* share the same newsroom, exchange information and staff, and conduct joint weekly editorial meetings for both publications. Their content is intertwined. For example, some editorials⁴⁶⁰ on the Bank Century scandal have been published in both publications and in 2001 *Tempo's* chief editor, Bambang Harymurti, also became chief editor of the newly established *Koran Tempo*. During the Bank Century scandal, different people held those positions. Namely, Bambang Harymurti was chief editor of *Koran*

sewaktu-waktu jika menemukan hal mencurigakan. Kegagalan pengawasan oleh bank sentral, pada gilirannya, harus dipulangkan kepada fungsi pengawasan Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat terhadap lembaga pengelola sistem moneter itu – seperti amanat undang-undang. Mengingat kasus Bank Century bukan kasus mendadak sontak, patut dipertanyakan sejauh mana Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat melaksanakan fungsi pengawasannya, sebelum mengangkat “Centurygate” ke panggung politik nasional (*Tempo*, 14 March 2010b).

⁴⁵⁹ “Harus diakui, ada sesuatu yang salah dalam perjalanan bank yang dikelola dengan cara serampangan ini. Tapi membebankan kesalahan terhadap kebijakan penyelamatan di tengah ancaman krisis merupakan tindakan tidak adil. Apalagi kini terbukti bahwa krisis ekonomi bisa dielakkan” (14 March 2010).

⁴⁶⁰ These are: Nonaktifkan Susno Duadji (*Koran Tempo*, 11 October 2009; *Tempo*, 5 October 2009); Musim Mengurus Nama Baik (*Koran Tempo*, 7 December 2009; *Tempo*, 13 December 2009b); Seratus Hari Tak Bergigi (*Koran Tempo*, 30 January 2010; *Tempo*, 31 January 2010); Sang Kerbau Masuk Istana (*Koran Tempo*, 8 February 2010; *Tempo*, 8 February 2010); Skandal Century: Alpa atau Sengaja (*Koran Tempo*, 1 March 2010; *Tempo*, 7 March 2010)

Tempo while Toriq Hadad was chief editor of *Tempo*. Before becoming chief editor of *Tempo* in 2006, Toriq Hadad was chief editor of *Koran Tempo* for one year. Furthermore, Toriq Hadad and Bambang Harymurti also hold positions in the Tempo Media Group's (PT.Tempo Inti Media Tbk) board of directors, as director and president director respectively (Tempo Media Group n.d.). Interestingly, both disagreed on Bank Century.

In order to explain *Tempo's* stance in the bailout this section also elaborates on the role of Goenawan Mohammad, who although inactive in *Tempo* magazine's daily operations at the time of the Bank Century scandal nevertheless had, as will be shown, a significant personal influence over *Tempo* and the Tempo Media Group. The following paragraphs aim to explain *Koran Tempo's* and *Tempo's* pro-bailout and pro-Sri Mulyani coverage.

Individual factors

Two of the Tempo Media Group's most influential and well-known staffers or associates supported the bailout. Namely, Bambang Harymurti, corporate chief editor of *Koran Tempo* and chief director of the Tempo Media Group, and *Tempo* co-founder Goenawan Mohamed. In its 13 September 2009 edition *Tempo* magazine published a column with the title 'Century: Allah forgive me or Thank God?'⁴⁶¹ written by Bambang Harymurti. Since published as a column, the article mirrored Bambang Harymurti's personal opinion and not *Tempo's*. The whole article supports the bailout. This is most evident in the statement that no public funds were used for the bailout and in the article's closing sentence:

⁴⁶¹ Bambang Harymurti. 2009. "Century: Astagfirullah atau Alhamdulillah?" *Tempo*, 13 September.

That's why, after observing the Bank Century case, I concluded that we do not need to beg for forgiveness, but say Thank God instead.⁴⁶²

Bambang Harymurti's article was heavily criticised by journalists and media observers.⁴⁶³ However, Bambang Harymurti's opinion does not reflect the stance of all *Tempo* magazine personnel in the Bank Century case (Laksono, 16 January 2010). An article⁴⁶⁴ written by Toriq Hadad, chief editor of *Tempo*, on his Facebook account around the same point in time showed that *Tempo's* staff had a range of different opinions regarding the bailout.⁴⁶⁵

That Bambang Harymurti and Toriq Hadad had different opinions of the Bank Century case was well known among *Tempo's* staff.⁴⁶⁶ Yet Toriq Hadad's opinion was not published in the magazine. This is particularly interesting since a pro-bailout article by *Koran Tempo's* executive editor Metta Dharmasaputra's was published in *Koran Tempo's* opinion section (Dharmasaputra, 9 September 2009). *Koran Tempo* staffer, Grace Gandhi, felt Toriq Hadad's article was not published in *Tempo* because it was Toriq Hadad's personal view and did not mirror *Tempo's* position as an institution, which shared the government's assertion that Bank Century had to be rescued.⁴⁶⁷ There were indeed heated discussions among the

⁴⁶² "Itu sebabnya, setelah mencermati kasus Bank Century, saya berkesimpulan kita tak perlu beristigfar, tapi malah mengucapkan: alhamdulillah" (Harymurti, 13 September 2009).

⁴⁶³ Interview with Metta Dharmasaputra, journalist, *Koran Tempo*, Jakarta, 7 June 2009; Interview with Grace Gandhi, journalist, *Koran Tempo*, Jakarta, 4 May 2010; Piliang, 13 September 2009; Laksono, 16 January 2010; Gunawan, 12 September 2009.

⁴⁶⁴ Siapa senang Century diselamatkan?

⁴⁶⁵ The article, 'Siapa Senang Century Diselamatkan' originally posted on Toriq Hadad's Facebook account (http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=129675303373&id=1346466814&ref=nf) has been re-posted by Sulistiono Kertawanca on the Yahoo group page of Asosiasi Konsultan Hukum Indonesia on 6 September 2009 (Kertawanca 2009).

⁴⁶⁶ Interview with Grace Gandhi, journalist, *Koran Tempo*, Jakarta, 4 May 2010.

⁴⁶⁷ Conversation with Grace Gandhi via Facebook, 22 November 2011.

magazine's and newspaper's editorial staff on the standpoint of the Tempo Media Group in the Bank Century case. However, once the decision was made that the Tempo Media Group supports the bailout, both publications had to follow.

Goenawan Mohamed was not active in *Tempo's* daily operations at the time of the Bank Century scandal; however, he holds shares, writes a column called 'A Note from the Sideline'⁴⁶⁸ in the magazine, is chief commissioner of the Tempo Media Group⁴⁶⁹ and as *Tempo* co-founder has a strong residual influence over the magazine.⁴⁷⁰

Goenawan Mohamed also defended the bailout and Sri Mulyani, albeit not directly through *Tempo*. Indeed, Goenawan Mohamed has a close relationship with Boediono and Sri Mulyani. For example, he was a strong supporter of Boediono's vice-presidential campaign (Kompas.com, 15 May 2009). In May 2009, shortly after Yudhoyono named Boediono as his vice-presidential running mate, Goenawan Mohammed used his column 'Sidelines' in *Tempo* to praise Boediono and to support his candidature (Mohamad, 18 May 2010). His support for Sri Mulyani was most obvious in the speech 'Try to split up with Sri Mulyani'⁴⁷¹, given at Sri Mulyani's farewell ceremony on 19 May 2010 at the Financial Club, Graha Niaga, Jakarta.⁴⁷²

⁴⁶⁸ 'catatan pinggir'

⁴⁶⁹ Tempo Media Group.n.d. Tentang Kami. Dewan Komisaris

⁴⁷⁰ Indeed, as pointed out by Liddle (1996: 161) the history of *Tempo* cannot be separated from Goenawan Mohamed and his name, "ideas, and activities are well known through to the newspaper and magazine reading public, in Jakarta and throughout the country".

⁴⁷¹ "Mencoba Berpisah dari Sri Mulyani."

⁴⁷² Sri Mulyani's farewell ceremony on 19 May 2010 at the Financial Club, Graha Niaga, Jakarta. Many high profile people attended the event. For example, Mari Elka Pangestu (Minister of Trade), Mar'ie Muhammad (former finance minister and popularly known as 'Mr. Clean' because of his struggle against corruption), Erry Riyana Harjapamekas (KPK chairman vice-chairman 2003-2007, holder of the 'Bung Hatta Anti Corruption Award' in 2003), Marsilam Simanjunak, Todung Mulya Lubis (lawyer and legal experts, Goenawan Muhammad, Jakob Oetama (CEO Kompas Gramedia), Anis Baswedan, Jusuf Wanandi, Wimar Witoelar, Arifin Panigoro, Franz Magnis-Suseno, Yopie

Stating that “[t]hrough well-controlled media, the campaign against Sri Mulyani (and Boediono) intensified”⁴⁷³ Goenawan Mohamad partly blames the media for Sri Mulyani’s resignation. The speech, that was subsequently published in *Tempo* (30 May 2009) as a column also clearly shows Goenawan Mohamad’s dislike for Aburizal Bakrie. By using the term ‘political thuggery’⁴⁷⁴ in the context of the Bank Century scandal – and more specifically by seeing Sri Mulyani as the target of political thuggery – Goenawan Mohamad indirectly labels Golkar and Aburizal Bakrie ‘thugs’. As is evident in this column, Goenawan Mohamad depicts Sri Mulyani’s resignation and the establishment of the Joint Secretariat (Setgab) headed by Aburizal Bakrie as the price Yudhoyono had to pay in order to regain political stability (Mohamad, 24 May 2009).

Furthermore, in June 2010 Goenawan Mohamad returned his 2004 Bakrie Award, along with the Rp 100 million prize money plus interest, to the Freedom Institute (Detiknews, 22 June 2010). The awards are sponsored and prizes for each recipient are sponsored by the Bakrie family. As stated by Goenawan Mohamad during a press conference the reason he returned the award was because of Bakrie's role in the Bank Century scandal investigation:

Hidayat (Spokesperson of Vice-President Boediono), some senior *Tempo* journalists, a number of public figures, scholars, professors, activists, and of course Sri Mulyani’s fellow colleagues, and the facebookers who established and are joined through ‘Kami Percaya Integritas - Sri Mulyani Indarwati (KPI-SMI)’ (Finacial Club, Graha Niaga, Jakarta 19 May 2010 (I attended as an eye witness); See also Hapsoro, 20 May 2010.

⁴⁷³ “Melalui media yang dikuasai dengan baik, kampanye anti Sri Mulyani (dan Boediono) digencarkan”.

⁴⁷⁴ premanisme politik.

To me, the peak was during the issue with Sri Mulyani and Boediono, when they were attacked and manipulated. It's not about their positions but because I know they're innocent. They were punished and sacrificed and I know Bakrie was behind all of that.⁴⁷⁵

Goenawan Mohamad's move to return the award sparked the media's interest. A press conference conducted at Utan Kayu, East Jakarta, provided the platform for Goenawan Mohamad to accuse Bakrie of manufacturing a 'political drama' with the Bank Century case and being responsible for Sri Mulyani's resignation.

The cases of Bambang Harymurti and Goenawan Mohamed highlight the difficulty in analysing media motivation. On the hand, they are private individuals with personal point of views, but, on the other, they are very influential in the Tempo Media Group which makes it unlikely that Tempo Media Group publications will take a diametrically opposed position to them.

Values and ideologies

The pro-bailout stance of the Tempo Media Group (i.e. *Tempo* and *Koran Tempo*) and its support for Sri Mulyani was not only rooted in personal preferences and convictions. It extends to a value system and affinity towards technocracy within *Tempo*. Sri Mulyani and Boediono are both technocrats without a political base. In post-Suharto Indonesia their names are associated with rational economic planning, bureaucratic reform, and liberal economic policy. As argued by McCargo (1999) "Early Tempo was broadly aligned with the technocratic policies of the original

⁴⁷⁵ "Bagi saya memuncaknya itu waktu persoalan Sri Mulyani dan Boediono. Di mana mereka diserang dan dimanipulasi sedemikian rupa. Bukan masalah jabatan mereka tapi karena saya tahu mereka tidak bersalah, mereka dihukum dan dikorbankan dan saya tahu Bakrie ada di belakang itu semua" (Detiknews, 22 June 2010).

New Order and its 'Berkeley mafia'⁴⁷⁶ which emphasized the rational management of economic issues." More specifically, Fikri Jufri and Goenawan Mohamad, *Tempo's* co-founders and former editors, were part of a group that supported economic liberalism through de-regulation since the 1980s (Mallarangeng 2000: 136, 140). Although having "some reservations about the capitalist system in general" (Mallarangeng 2000: 151) Goenawan Mohamad saw deregulation and expansion of the market as a means to overcome the incompetent and corrupt state bureaucracy (Mallarangeng 2000: 151-54). As *Kompas* did, *Tempo* also conducted a regular discussion with key economists.⁴⁷⁷ The issues discussed were not directly reported in *Tempo*, but aimed to provide its reporters and editors with background and in-depth information (Mallarangeng 2000: 144-6).

Since the industrialisation and deregulation of the press in the mid-1980s *Tempo* had a sophisticated in-house training and career planning system, and, as emphasised by Steele (2005: 200), "Alongside the more professional model of journalism also came a more rational system of management". Thus, the Tempo Media Group supported Sri Mulyani and Boediono because they articulated the broad values of the technocrats, so their support was not for the individual bureaucrats but for the value system.

For the Tempo Media Group the Bank Century scandal was a conflict between two opposing forces. On the one hand were Sri Mulyani and Boediono – known for their corruption eradication efforts and incorruptibility –, and those who

⁴⁷⁶ 'Berkeley mafia' is a term often used for a group of key economic ministers from the early period of the New Order. Many held doctorates from the University of California, Berkeley.

⁴⁷⁷ In 1988 *Tempo* formalized its regular discussion group of economists through the establishment of 'Tempo's Economic Forum' (Forum Ekonomi Tempo).

supported them. The other forces, in particular those who wanted Sri Mulyani out, “include political parties in the opposition, as well as parties in the ruling coalition trying to increase their bargaining power, businesspeople whose interests are threatened by Mulyani's position at the Finance Ministry, and even crooked bureaucrats and public officials close to crooked businesspeople who are uncomfortable with Mulyani” (The Jakarta Post, 7 December 2009). For the Tempo Media Group, this was first and foremost Aburizal Bakrie who, in his position as Golkar chairman, used the Bank Century scandal and the parliamentary inquiry to oust Sri Mulyani. The Tempo Media Group, particularly through *Koran Tempo*, also utilized the alleged Bakrie-group tax evasion to discredit Bakrie.⁴⁷⁸ The Tempo Media Group's aversion towards Aburizal Bakrie is well known and dates back to the Lapindo mudflow disaster in 2006. At that time Bakrie complained over a series of articles published in *Tempo's* 17 November 2008 edition that carried an image of Bakrie constructed of numbers on its cover, including the figures 666 (regarded as symbolising the devil), superimposed on his temple. In its report *Tempo* identifies

⁴⁷⁸ Following the tax office's disclosure that it was investigating three Bakrie owned coal mining companies – PT Kaltim Prima Coal (KPC), PT Arutmin Indonesia and parent company PT Bumi Resources – for possible tax evasion totalling around Rp 2,1 trillion *Koran Tempo* (12 December 2009) run a cover story with on the issue. Neither *Media Indonesia* nor *Kompas* covered that issue on that day. Metta Dharmasaputra (interview, journalist, *Koran Tempo*, Jakarta, 7 June 2010), editor of *Koran Tempo's* business section, admits that *Tempo* was the only media organisation that had information on the Bakrie tax case and thus was able to run it with a front page headline. Metta Dharmasaputra's knowledge of the Bakrie tax issue dated back to 2007, but respecting the sources' request and taking into account the lack of political support behind Sri Mulyani, *Koran Tempo* decided not to publish its information at that time. By December 2009 the situation had changed and Sri Mulyani's interview in the *Wall Street Journal* in which she talked openly about her troubled relationship with Bakrie provided the trigger to publish a cover story on accusations that Bakrie companies had committed tax fraud (Metta Dharmasaputra, interview, journalist, *Koran Tempo*, Jakarta, 7 June 2010). Thus, *Koran Tempo's* disclosure of the Bakrie tax evasion scandal clearly aimed to discredit Aburizal Bakrie and to point out that he himself has blotted his copybook. Indeed, the money Bakrie allegedly owes the state in taxes exceeds the cost of the Bank Century bailout. Adding royalty debts and fines for tax evasion, the amount Bakrie owes the state may well exceed Rp 10 trillion.

Bakrie as one of the biggest sponsors of Yudhoyono's 2004 presidential campaign and suggested that this financial support earned him the position of Coordinating Minister for Economy in Yudhoyono's first cabinet. *Tempo* also alleges that Bakrie's position influenced the government's decision to rescue the Bakrie group owned PT Bumi Resources.⁴⁷⁹

Following the preceding discussion of the various factors that have influenced the Tempo Media Group's position in the Bank Century scandal, the next section draws together the various arguments outlined in this chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter has explained the contrasting positions of particular news publications in the Bank Century scandal by examining editorial commentary. It establishes that the positions of *Kompas*, *Media Indonesia*, *Koran Tempo* and *Tempo* in the Bank Century scandal can be best explained through the politico-economic interests and ideological affiliations of their respective owner or prominent editors.

The analysis has shown that *Media Indonesia's* faulting of the bailout and its opposition towards the government was determined by its owner's political interests and personal relations to some of the decisive actors in the Bank Century scandal and its investigation. *Media Indonesia's* anti-bailout and anti-government

⁴⁷⁹ Bakrie accused *Tempo* of damaging his reputation by publishing an investigative report on the plight of the Bakrie Group's plummeting shares, the allegations that he had earned his cabinet post through huge contribution to the Yudhoyono-Kalla presidential campaign and depicting the figures "666" – regarded as the demon's number – on his temple (Wicaksono, 2 December 2008). Bakrie, who had initially threatened to sue the magazine for libel, finally filed a complaint to the press council (The Jakarta Post, 29 November 2008).

stance can be explained through Surya Paloh's longstanding friendship and support of fellow Golkar politician Jusuf Kalla, who faulted the bailout from the very beginning. Equally important might have been his disrupted personal relationship with President Yudhoyono. This also explains why *Media Indonesia* was aiming at the President and not solely on Sri Mulyani and Boediono. *Media Indonesia's* criticism, however, goes beyond the government. In the way *Media Indonesia* depicts the parliament, political parties, the government, and the political process it gives the overall impression that the whole system is rotten. Furthermore, by aiming at the president, and by encouraging and welcoming coalition disunity, *Media Indonesia* aims to create political instability. In so doing, *Media Indonesia* lays the ground for Surya Paloh's political ambitions, which was subsequently manifested in the establishment of his political party – National Democrats (Nasional Demokrat, Nasdem) – that aims to 'restore' Indonesia.

Kompas, despite its support for liberal economic policy, did not back individuals but implicitly supported the Yudhoyono-Boediono government for the sake of political and economic stability. This can be explained by *Kompas's* economic interests as well on its long-standing cautiously neutral editorial policy, and its principle of not engaging in personal conflicts, as in the case of Sri Mulyani and Bakrie.

The analysis of *Koran Tempo's* and *Tempo's* editorial content has demonstrated that both publications, while showing differences in detail, did promote a pro-bailout, pro-Sri Mulyani and pro-Boediono stance. The Tempo Media Group publications did not support Sri Mulyani and Boediono as individuals but because of the broad values they embodied as technocrats, namely bureaucratic

reform and corruption eradication. By appointing Sri Mulyani as finance minister and Boediono as vice-president, Yudhoyono had shown his commitment to this value system. Consequently, these Tempo Media Group publications supported the Yudhoyono government, while being critical of the president's actions and behaviour during the inquiry. Since *Tempo* and *Koran Tempo* are not owned by a single individual (unlike *Media Indonesia* and *Kompas*) their stance had to be negotiated among its decisive actors. Here, as the discussion has shown, the personal views of *Koran Tempo's* corporate chief editor, Bambang Harymurti, and *Tempo* co-founder Goenawan Mohamad played a role. Another factor that played a role was *Tempo's*, particularly Goenawan Mohamad's, animosity towards Aburizal Bakrie, that resulted in the Tempo Media Group exploiting Bakrie's alleged tax evasion and framing Centurygate as a conflict between those promoting reform and those hindering it.

In sum, this chapter has reinforced the argument that the contrasting positions of particular media organisations in a scandal are contingent upon the extent to which the interests of their respective owners or prominent editors coincide with the interests of particular elite factions embroiled in, or seeking to benefit from, the scandal. Those coinciding interests, as shown in this chapter and in chapter three, lead to the formation of temporary mutually beneficial collations between individual media and individual members of the elite during a scandal.

Conclusion

In order to shed light on how, why, and for whose benefit media freedoms are compromised this dissertation has focused on the significance of press freedom for elite politics by investigating media-elite interactions in post-authoritarian Indonesia. Challenging the liberal notion that the media reinforces democratic structures and values through its scrutiny of political and economic actors, this dissertation has argued that the Indonesian commercial mainstream news media is deeply embedded in power struggles between competing elites. Indeed, instead of fighting against the media the politico-business elite has, to differing degrees, harnessed the concept of press freedom by incorporating the media (as an arena and weapon) into its power struggles over key positions in political institutions and political resources.

As argued in the first chapter, the preponderance of private media ownership in the hands of the politico-business elite along with a high level of conglomeration has led to interdependency between the media and the elite. This is due to the structural and personal linkages between the Indonesian mainstream media and the politico-business elite, and their shared location within capitalist markets. However, since neither the media nor the elite are a monolithic entity, the media play a crucial role on issues that concern the distribution of power among the political elite. Indeed, the empirical part of this study has shown that the free media have become an integral part of intra-elite power struggles and that scandal has become a weapon of choice in the elite's competition over key positions in political institutions and access to political resources beyond election times.

The prominence of mediated allegations of misconduct, often related to corruption and directly aimed at specific political leaders, demonstrates that the elite is revealing information on others' wrongdoing out of self-interest, or in other words, employs scandal in order to gain political advantage. This was clearly evident in Bulog- and Centurygate where those political parties that had limited access to government resources following the 1999 and 2009 post-election political bargaining processes respectively exploited scandal to boost their power. A decisive factor in both scandals' political impact was the media's and the parliament's shared motivation to investigate and publicize alleged misconduct by the president and his administration, combined with strong incentives for multiple parties to escalate the allegations as opportunities for "doing politics by other means". Revealing others' wrongdoings was also employed by those government actors under scrutiny in Bulog- and Centurygate respectively as a means of counter attack. Corruption allegations against Golkar and its individual members by Wahid's electoral vehicle PKB, allegations of misconduct against those legislators critical of the Bank Century bailout, as well as allegations of tax evasion against Aburizal Bakrie, all variously aimed to discredit and question the motives of those legislators eager to accuse the government of misconduct.

By dominating the political agenda Bulog- and Centurygate each escalated into a political crisis that threatened the legitimacy and stability of the government. Ultimately Bulog- and Centurygate served "as an extraordinary, nonstatutory catalyst for irregular political change" (Yanai 1990: 185).⁴⁸⁰ Indeed, Buloggate was the prelude to establish impeachment proceedings against President Wahid.

⁴⁸⁰ Yanai (1990: 185) calls political scandals that generate political crises "political affairs."

Centurygate resulted in Sri Mulyani's resignation as Finance Minister and the restructuring of the cabinet to Golkar's advantage.

It is a paradox, though, that those branded in the scandal as most responsible for the alleged misconduct – namely President Wahid and Finance Minister Sri Mulyani – were widely known as opponents to corruption and promoters of reform. By contrast, those pushing for their removal, particularly Golkar and its politicians, were demonstrably linked to the New Order regime's KKN-culture and commonly known to be resisting political and economic reforms.

As this thesis has also shown, this paradox can be explained by the fact that those who exploited Bulog- and Centurygate were more successful in employing the media to their advantage than those who had to defend themselves. By establishing a parliamentary inquiry, opposed legislators were not only successful in providing a continuous news supply on the scandal, but were also able to promote their interests under the guise of exercising their duty to oversee the government. As shown in chapter three, Wahid's ability to engage the media positively during Buloggate was thwarted by the parliament's and the media's ability to disguise their multiple interests behind the veneer of exercising their commonly perceived watchdog-function towards the government. This enabled Wahid's opponents to use the jargon of press freedom and democracy successfully against Wahid. At the time of Buloggate, democratisation had only just begun and the public discourse was strongly driven by the need for good governance and democratic reform. The newly liberated media was a key arena of this discourse, making it easy indeed for political elites to exploit this context for their interests. In contrast, arguments and actions made by Wahid and his supporters – like questioning the legality and the

authority of the parliamentary inquiry into Buloggate, NU-Banser's occupation of the *Jawa Pos* office, and Wahid's repeated criticism of the media combined with allegations that there was a conspiracy to oust him – were interpreted by his opponents as signs that Wahid was slipping towards authoritarianism and attempting to restrict press freedom. This had the effect of aligning the media, consciously or otherwise, more closely with Wahid's opponents. In the context of Centurygate, the government's opportunities were equally limited. For example, the media interpreted President Yudhoyono's publicly voiced statements to take tougher measures against tax evaders, the Democratic Party's suggestion of a cabinet reshuffle, and corruption allegations against individual legislators critical of the bailout, as threats to force the parliament to come to a conclusion in their inquiry that favoured the government.

Given the involvement of government actors and the suspiciously secretive nature of the financial transactions, the media had to report on President Wahid's alleged involvement in the embezzlement of Rp 35 billion from Bulog and the alleged misuse of public funds amounting to Rp 6.7 trillion in the Bank Century bailout. Nevertheless, in order to fulfil their professional obligations, some media were also critical of those exploiting the scandal. As the editorial analysis in chapters three and five has shown, the media were well aware of the vested interests behind the Bulog- and Centurygate inquiry and were willing to point them out and voice criticism.

Thus, as this thesis has shown, the media did not become a mere pawn in the hands of contesting members of the elite. Rather, the diverse and privately owned media had their own interests in the scandal and withstood external interference

that did not coincide with their own interests. Finance Minister Sri Mulyani and presidential spokesperson Yopie Hidayat, for example, were not successful in applying their power resources – in the case of the former, allegedly her knowledge of the Kompas Gramedia Group's tax payments and, in the case of the latter, his personal and professional relationship with Jakob Oetama due to his former position as chief editor of *Kontan* (a business newspaper belonging to the Kompas Gramedia Group) – to influence *Kompas'* coverage in their favour. Also the threat of physical force against the media, as shown in Buloggate, did not hamper media scrutiny.

As shown in chapters three and five the media had multiple interests in Aryanti-, Bulog- and Bruneigate. The fact that the media – albeit intertwined with the elite – do have their own vested interests in those intra-elite power struggles that develop into scandal results in the dissemination of different viewpoints through the media and thus shows the media's heterogeneity.

Editorial analysis has shown that, for example, while not taking sides with either of the conflicting parties during Bulog- and Centurygate, *Kompas* implicitly supported the government in order to maintain economic and political stability. This can be partly explained by the Kompas Gramedia Group's various business interests and *Kompas'* non-confrontational style of journalism, under the influence of Jakob Oetama.

In contrast to *Kompas*, *Media Indonesia* took different stances in Bulog- and Centurygate. Whereas in Buloggate *Media Indonesia* sought to maintain an aura of neutrality while simultaneously criticising President Wahid, it opposed the bailout, the government and President Yudhoyono during Centurygate. This can be

explained through the shifting interests of its owner, politico-businessman Surya Paloh, in the outcome of the respective scandals and his various political ambitions at that time. As the analysis in chapter three has shown, Surya Paloh did not hold an executive position in Golkar nor did he have political ambitions during Buloggate. During Centurygate, as discussed in detail in section 5.1, Surya Paloh was politically active in Golkar and advanced his political ambitions with the establishment of a political movement that aimed to 'restore' Indonesia. Additionally, Surya Paloh had close relations with Jusuf Kalla who strongly condemned the Bank Century bailout. His relationship with Yudhoyono however, whom he had assisted during the 2004 elections by mobilising the support of his media empire, had deteriorated for multiple reasons, and thus resulted in Paloh transferring his media empire's support to Jusuf Kalla's presidential candidature during the 2009 elections.

The examples of *Republika* and *Tempo* show that personal relationships and ideological congruency, or opposition, also play a decisive role in a newspaper's editorial stance. As discussed in chapter three *Republika's* ideological affiliation with ICMI as well as its association with Habibie and the *poros tengah*, made it a part of the group opposed to President Wahid. Thus it is understandable that *Republika's* stance advanced the opinion of *poros tengah* leader and PAN chairman Amien Rais who had turned his back on Wahid to become one of the president's staunchest critics. Rais even declared publicly his regret at having supported Wahid's presidential election. Another factor that might explain *Republika's* stance is the troubled personal relationship between its ex-chief editor Parni Hadi and Wahid. In sum, *Republika's* negative stance towards President Wahid can be explained through

personal and ideological reasons. Ideological reasons are also most likely to explain *Panji Masyarakat's* coverage of Aryantigate.

In contrast to all the other publications under scrutiny, *Tempo* is regarded as having the most independent ownership (Saptono 2009: 37). This is generally attributed to the fact that *Tempo* is not owned by a single owner, unlike *Kompas* and *Media Indonesia*, but by multiple shareholders. However, as evident in the Bank Century case, there are personal relationships and ideological similarities between prominent *Tempo* staff and the scandal's main protagonists Sri Mulyani and Boediono. This encouraged *Tempo* to support those protagonists. Besides their shared values and convictions, another reason the *Tempo* Group publications supported them was that the editors involved felt it was necessary to provide a countervailing source of information, to balance the opinion which dominated TV coverage, particularly by the two news channels *MetroTV* and *TVOne*, which was highly critical of Sri Mulyani. Additionally, *Tempo's* animosity towards Bakrie was a decisive factor. Ultimately, the case of *Koran Tempo* and *Tempo* also exemplifies that a publication that is not owned by a single owner, but by a diverse group of shareholders, can take sides. Indeed, it seems that both publications, albeit *Tempo* to a lesser extent than *Koran Tempo*, reflected the support that several of the *Tempo* Group's prominent personnel had for Sri Mulyani and Boediono. Yet the *Tempo* Group's position in the Bank Century scandal cannot be explained solely by personal relations among those actors and their shared animosity towards the denouncers. It extends to *Tempo's* history of support for the kind of technocratic solutions to economic problems that Sri Mulyani and Boediono represent. Thus, *Tempo's* position in the Bank Century scandal was principled, and based on values

that the magazine has endorsed since its founding. To a lesser extent the same might be said of *Kompas*, which has always endorsed both liberal economic policies and political stability. However, as the previous editorial analysis has shown, none of the publications under scrutiny sacrificed their watchdog role. Rather, they had vested interests which were embedded in this watchdog role.

In summary, this thesis has shown that press freedom has enabled the elite in Indonesia to incorporate the media into their power struggles over key positions in political institutions and the control and allocation of political and other resources, and in so doing to utilize scandal as an opportunity to do “politics by other means”.

It established that, in their role as actors, the owners or editors of the media have their own vested interests that go beyond the media’s democratic functions assigned to it according to the liberal view. Indeed, during Bulog- and Centurygate, the owners and practitioners of particular media organisations, either consciously or otherwise, did form temporary mutually beneficial coalitions with particular elite factions based on shared interests defined by structural conditions and personal interrelations. This is due to the fact that neither the elite nor the media constitute a monolithic entity, and as such can – depending on the issue at stake – reinforce or contradict each other’s interests during times of intra-elite power struggles. Importantly, this thesis has shown that despite being dominated by elite interests, the media nevertheless provide a variety of viewpoints during times of intra-elite contestations, and that the elite, in turn, has successfully applied the media as an actor and a weapon within times of intra-elite contestation. The evidence has clearly demonstrated that the media did play a watchdog role by exposing and reporting

on political and economic misconduct but its motivations to do so were – given the media’s structural and personal relation with the elite – not the public interest, even though they used this rhetoric. This resonates with Herman and Chomsky’s (1988: xii) argument that the media are not unified on all issues and that elite disagreements (which do not question the system’s overall existence) are reflected in media content.

Unlike existing literature on media and democratisation (Blankson and Murphy 2007; Guerrero and Márquez-Ramírez 2014; Gunther and Mughan 2000; Hallin and Mancini 2012; McCargo 2003; McConnell and Becker 2002; Norris 2010; Pasek 2006; Romano and Bromley 2005; Sen and Hill 2011; Sen and Lee 2008; Voltmer 2006, 2013), this thesis has placed its analytical focus explicitly on the interaction between the commercial mainstream news media and the politico-business elite in intra-elite power struggles fought out in the public sphere. Building on aspects of C. Wright Mills’ elite theory and Herman and Chomsky’s propaganda model this thesis has conceptualised the (Indonesian commercial mainstream news) media and the politico-business elite as being intertwined through structural and personal relations that ensure the *status quo* of the existing power structure and the prevalence of elite interests. Crucially, the Indonesian politico-business elite is not a cohesive group but similar to Mills’ power elite divided by a diversity of interests that leads to periodic struggles among this elite. This notion of a heterogeneous elite, as well as Mills’ argument that the elite can move between institutions or simultaneously occupy key positions in various institutions, illustrates that Indonesia’s politico-business elite and the people who run the country’s commercial mainstream media are neither natural enemies nor inevitably aligned. Indeed, in

their role as actors the owners or practitioners of these mostly private owned media conglomerates have their own strategic objectives that might reinforce or contradict – depending the context and the issues at stake – the objectives of particular members of the contesting elite. In short, as empirically shown with the focus on media-elite interactions in the context of scandal, elite relationships are contingent, complex and dynamic.

Although this study is limited to an analysis of media-elite interactions in Indonesia it may therefore provide an analytical framework for examining those dynamics in other post-authoritarian regimes where similar factors are at work. Indeed, in contrast to other studies that have applied or suggested models of hybrid media systems (Guerrero 2014; Voltmer 2012) in an attempt to gain insights on the media in so-called ‘third wave democracies,’ the approach taken in this thesis is not constrained by unstated assumptions about ideal typical institutional attributes of the media. Instead it offers an understanding of why the media that are now free from government repression operate in the way they do. This insight is informed by a need to investigate the complex and dynamic interests and coalitions of elites.

Appendix

Appendix A

Circulation⁴⁸¹

	Kompas	Koran Tempo	Media Indonesia	Republika
2000	507,000	-	170,000	160,000
2001	507,000	-	190,000	165,000
2002	509,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
2003	506,000	200,000	284,745	200,000
2004	509,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
2006	509,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
2007	518,000	180,000	352,000	315,000
2008	519,000	-	315,000	180,000
2010	600,000	240,000	250,000	325,000
AVERAGE	520,444	203,000	240,193	216,111

Readership⁴⁸²

	Kompas	Koran Tempo	Media Indonesia	Republika
2000	1,598 000	-	396,000	335,000
2005	1,692,000	282,000	463,000	-
2006	1,646,000	166,000	341,000	-
2007	1,611,000	199,000	396,000	-
2008	1,420,000	233,000	262,000	193,000
2009	1,611,000	275,000	193,000	-
2010	1,090,000	187,000	211,000	-
AVERAGE	1,524,000	223,667	323,143	264,000

⁴⁸¹ From various sources: 2000 (WAN 2001: 120 quoted from Press Reference Indonesia); 2001 – 2004 (WAN 2002 – 2005 quoted from Keller 2009: 43); 2006 (WAN 2007: 381); 2007 (WAN 2008: 450); 2008 (WAN 2009: 500); 2010 (quoted from Lim 2012: 6).

⁴⁸² From various sources: 2000: Kompas, Media Indonesia, Republika (Media Index AC Nielsen 1990-2000, quoted from Nainggolan 2003: 102, 215, 267); 2008 Republika (WAN 2009: 500); 2005-2010: Kompas, Koran Tempo, Media Indonesia (Asril and Hudrasyah 2013: 891).

Appendix C

Listing of all the editorials included in the analysis. Includes all editorials that mention the Bulog Yanatera scandal.

Kompas

26 May 2000	Skandal Bulog Bisa Jadi Batu Sandungan Pemerintahan Abdurrahman
27 May 2000	Mari Kita Simak lagi, Apa Saja yang Beruntun Terjadi Pekan Ini
29 May 2000	Ada-ada Saja Persoalan yang Menerpa Pemerintah Gus Dur-Megawati
31 May 2000	Sanggupkah Kita Menanggung Krisis Kedua? Rasanya akan Kelewat Berat!
5 June 2000	Dana dan Kepercayaan IMF akan Kita Mubazirkan atau Kita Manfaatkan!
8 June 2000	Memang Seru Persoalan Presiden, Jaksa Agung, dan Gubernur BI, tetapi Akibatnya?
9 June 2000	Maling Ayam yang Mengembalikan Barang Curiannya Tetap Diproses Hukum
12 June 2000	Bagaimana Duduk Perkara Konflik Elite Politik, Presiden dan Lain-lain?
14 June 2000	Kita Harus Peduli terhadap Maraknya Massa Main Hakim Sendiri!
16 June 2000	Keamanan, Hukum dan Politiklah yang Membuat Ekonomi Terpuruk
29 June 2000	Momentum Pemulihan Ekonomi Itu Jangan Dilewatkan Lagi
1 September 2000	Kabinet yang Langsung Bekerja, Seharusnya Indikasi yang Baik
16 November 2000	Sampai Kapan Energi dan Perhatian Kita Disandera oleh Kasus Tommy
29 November 2000	Lewat Bencana, Langit Memberikan Pesan dan Isyarat secara Dramatis
2 December 2000	Pelanggaran UU atau Lebih Cara Presiden Memahami dan Menyikapi Persoalan!
5 December 2000	Pansus DPR Ternyata Bersisi Dua, Sisi Hukum dan Sisi Substansi

8 December 2000	Bertugas Kembalinya Syahril Sabirin Jangan Membuat Ekonomi Semakin Terpuruk
22 December 2000	Betapa Pentingnya Kita Segera Memiliki Sistem Perbankan yang Sehat
12 January 2001	Aneh! Kenapa 15 Januari Ditanggapi Seperti Dunia Akan Kiamat?
19 January 2001	Ketika Kita Melanggar Komitmen Anti-KKN, Kita Mengingkari Reformasi
22 January 2001	Betapapun Penting, Kini Ada Prioritas Lain Lebih Mendesak dari Perubahan UUD
24 January 2001	Satu Nol untuk Abdurrahman Wahid, tetapi Selanjutnya Bagaimana?
26 January 2001	Mengapa Politik Polarisasi yang Melibatkan Massa Bangkit Lagi
27 January 2001	Pers Dinilai Parsial, tetapi Pemerintah Pun Bersudut Pandang Parsial
29 January 2001	Belum Lenyap Dag-dig-dug 15 Januari, Kini Dihadang 29 Januari
30 January 2001	Konflik Di Atas dan Di Bawah Jangan Sampai Mengucurkan Darah
31 January 2001	Benarkah Kita Berada dalam Keadaan Semakin Tidak Pasti?
1 February 2001	Pencairan Pinjaman IMF Bukanlah Sesuatu yang Gratisan
2 February 2001a	Kita Berharap Agar Pertentangan Ini Tidak Berkepanjangan
2 February 2001b	Menjelang dan Pada Pleno DPR Terjadi Perkembangan Politik Besar
3 February 2001	Kita Ciptakam Iklim untuk Dipilihnya Langkah-langkah Bijak

Media Indonesia

25 May 2000	Menanti Teladan Keluarga Presiden
28 May 2000	Wabah Paradoks
31 May 2000	Kita Mengidap Kleptomania?
3 June 2000	Bodoh-bodoh Pintar
9 June 2000	Ritual Suwondo

11 June 2000	Kuruwetan Baru Tuan Presiden
12 June 2000	Impor Kemauan
28 June 2000	Sebuah Ritus Bernama Korupsi
3 July 2000	Kejarlah Daku, Kau Kutangkap
7 August 2000	Meresensi Presiden, bukan Menjatuhkan
23 August 2000	Pengadilan yang Menggelikan
13 September 2000	Sandiwara Keberanian
19 October 2000	Misteri Soewondo
1 December 2000	Rapat Tertutup Kehilangan Relevansi
13 December 2000	Rimba Kebohongan
27 January 2001	Ketakutan Terjadwal
28 January 2001	Negeri tanpa Komandan
3 February 2001	Maaf dan Janji

Republika

15 May 2000	Langkah Politik, bukan Hukum
25 May 2000	Mengingatkan, bukan Menjatuhkan
31 May 2000	Bondan dan Buloggate
02 June 2000	Jangan 'Jual' Aceh
05 June 2000	Hak Interpelasi Wakil Rakyat
07 June 2000	Kisah Seorang Syahril
26 June 2000	Abdurrahman Wahid sudah diperiksa
30 August 2000	Hak Angket, Sejarah Politik Penting
16 October 2000	Suwondo Tertangkap
22 November 2000	Bukti Keterlibatan Presiden
30 November 2000	Menunggu Arah Buloggate
13 January 2001	Presiden dan Wapres soal Calon Ketua MA
29 January 2001	Hari-hari Menentukan
30 January 2001	Reformasi Kembali Digaungkan
02 February 2001	Serahkan pada Mekanisme Demokrasi

Appendix D

Listing of all the magazine articles analysed in the Aryantigate case study.

Gatra (28 August 2000)

Nada konspirasi di balik nyanyian Aryanti

Tak perlu diladeni

Honor sebuah pengakuan

Panji Masyarakat (6 September 2000)

Dari foto intim ke gosip politik

Perjalanan kisah kasih Aryanti-Gus Dur

Gus Dur bilang 'nanti kita tobat'

Foto itu perlu diperiksa

Pelajaran dari negeri seberang

Forum Keadilan (10 September 2000)

ARYANTI Sengaja menghina Presiden? (Cover page title)

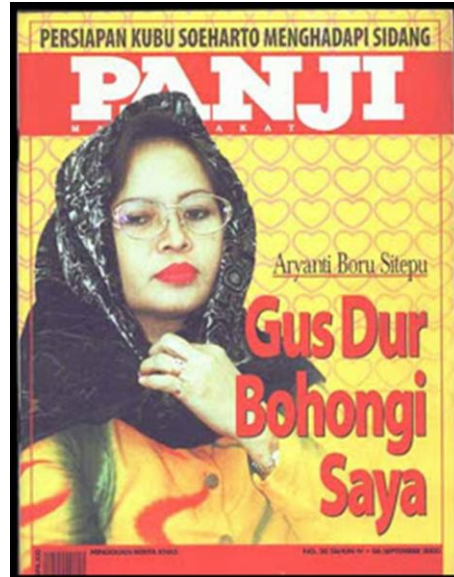
Pasal karet siap menjerat Aryanti (main report)

K. H. Abdullah Faqih: "Kalau sampai ada fotonya, ya bagaimana..."

Aryanti Arsyad Sitepu: "Saya juga mengalami tekananmmental"

Appendix E

Cover pages Aryantigate and Photo of Gus Dur and Aryanti



Appendix F

Scandal disclosure (August 2009) until the first editorial following the DPR's decision (4 March 2010). Kompas (K), Media Indonesia (M), Koran Tempo (KT), Tempo mag (T)

	2009																2010																		
	August				September				October				November				December				January				February				March						
	K	M	KT	T	K	M	KT	T	K	M	KT	T	K	M	KT	T	K	M	KT	T	K	M	KT	T	K	M	KT	T	K	M	KT	T	K	M	KT
1						x	x										x						x		x	x	x			x		x			
2																		x							x					x					
3																	x								x				x	x	x				
4																	x	x				x							x	x	x				
5						x												x				x	x	x		x									
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7					x												x	x	x	x															
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Appendix G

Listing of all the editorials included in the analysis. This list includes all editorials that mention the Bank Century scandal over the period from the end of August 2009 until 4 March 2010 (the editorial following the DPR's vote).

Kompas

29 August 2009	Skandal Bank Century
7 September 2009	Antusiasme dan Kepercayaan
14 September 2009	Substansi atau Ambisi?
19 September 2009	Cinta Tuhan Itu Cinta Sesama
7 November 2009	Program 100 Hari Kabinet
30 November 2009	Ujian Kita Belum Selesai
3 December 2009	Komunikasi Politik
4 December 2009	Anjuran Wapres Boediono
7 December 2009	Adil, tetapi Juga Perlu Bijak
10 December 2009	Antara Antikorupsi dan HAM
14 December 2009	Konsentrasi Sangat Diperlukan
15 December 2009	Kontroversi Sebelum Kerja
21 December 2009	Keputusan Presiden Tegas
23 December 2009	Sistemik atau Tidak Sistemik?
28 December 2009	Kembali ke Proporsi
30 December 2009	Menyikapi Buku MGC
31 December 2009	Sirnanya Peluang Emas
4 January 2010	Kepemimpinan dan Koalisi Diuji
5 January 2010	Banyak Masalah, Sedikit Pilihan
11 January 2010	Terpilihnya Hatta Rajasa
14 January 2010	Soal Kesantunan Politik
16 January 2010	Legalistik dan Kepemimpinan
18 January 2010	Presiden agar Ambil Alih
19 January 2010	Kejahatan di Sekitar Kita
20 January 2010	Perlu Segera Diselesaikan

21 January 2010	Kewajiban Laporan Kekayaan
23 January 2010	Makna Pertemuan Bogor
29 January 2010	Pesan dari Pengunjuk Rasa
30 January 2010	Gaduhnya Negeri Ini
1 February 2010	Wapres Ingatkan Cara Elegan
5 February 2010	Pesan dari Cipanas
6 February 2010	Wacana Kepentingan Publik
8 February 2010	Buruk dan Kurang Buruk
10 February 2010	Kesimpulan Awal Pansus
17 February 2010	Komplikasi Kasus Bank Century
19 February 2010	Penjiplakan dan Plagiat
22 February 2010	Tantangan dan Jawaban
24 February 2010	Hiruk-pikuk Lobi
27 February 2010	Solusi Berdasar Konstitusi
1 March 2010	Tanggung Jawab Kebijakan Century
3 March 2010	Kericuhan Jadi Tontonan
4 March 2010	Jebakan Bank Century

Media Indonesia

1 September 2009	Transparansi dalam Kasus Bank Century
5 September 2009	Independensi BPK di Kasus Century
9 September 2009	Netralitas Polisi
6 October 2009	Agenda Mendesak untuk DPR Baru
29 October 2009	Angket Century Jangan Mati Suri
30 October 2009	Demi Apa Keduanya Ditahan?
24 November 2009	Pidato Antiklimaks
25 November 2009	Memburu Duit Century
26 November 2009	Misteri Century di Saku PPATK
30 November 2009	Awas Tengkulak di Angket Century
1 December 2009	Angket yang Mulus?
2 December 2009	Century Mendekati Jantung Kekuasaan

4 December 2009	Melindungi Kewenangan KPK untuk Menyadap
5 December 2009	Pansus Century yang Merisaukan
7 December 2009	Persoalan Hari ini yang Menentukan
8 December 2009	Angket Century Mencekal JK...?
9 December 2009	Demonstrasi dan SBY
11 December 2009	Tumpuan Harapan Pindah ke KPK
12 December 2009	Ani versus Ical
15 December 2009	Meluruskan Pansus Angket Century
16 December 2009	Skandal Century Luas dan Lama
17 December 2009	Menuntut Keterbukaan Pansus Angket Century
22 December 2009	Berisik soal Nonaktif
23 December 2009	Nikmatnya Keterbukaan
26 December 2009	Si Artis Luna di Dunia Maya
29 December 2009	Kegaduhan Gurita Cikeas
30 December 2009	Koalisi Mulai Goyah
5 January 2010	Kejahatan Perpajakan focus on Bakrie and pajak
9 January 2010	Ruhut Vs Gayus focus on language and behaviour
11 January 2010	Century dan Borok di BI
14 January 2010	Kata Evaluasi di Mata Koalisi
15 January 2010	Keterbukaan JK
20 January 2010	Misteri Rapat 20 November 2008
22 January 2010	Pengawasan BI yang Amatiran
23 January 2010	Cincai dan Pemakzulan
26 January 2010	Pansus Century semakin Kabur
2 February 2010	Kerisauan Wapres
3 February 2010	Menembus Rahasia Bank
8 February 2010	Menuju Negara Seolah-olah
9 February 2010	Angket Century Goyang Koalisi
10 February 2010	Akhir Century
11 February 2010	Pengemplang Pajak
12 February 2010	Follow the Money

16 February 2010	Akrobat Pansus
17 February 2010	Ramai-Ramai Jahar Century
18 February 2010	Bendera Perang Mulai Dikibarkan
23 February 2010	Skandal Anonim
24 February 2010	Pansus Bodong
25 February 2010	Drama Century di Paripurna
2 March 2010	Konsistensi Partai Diuji
3 March 2010	Diktator Palu Marzuki Alie
4 March 2010	Sidang Paripurna DPR yang Ribet

Koran Tempo

1 September 2009	Mengaudit Suntikan Dana Century
17 September 2009	Selamatkan Komisi Antikorupsi
5 October 2009	Nonaktifkan Susno Duadji
8 October 2009	Lolosnya Jenderal Susno
14 October 2009	Kini Giliran Aktivis Antikorupsi
15 October 2009	Anwar dan Kasus Century
6 November 2009	Kerisauan Tim Delapan
9 November 2009	Menanti Tindakan Presiden
19 November 2009	Ketua DPR dan Angket Century
26 November 2009	Bolong Audit Kasus Century
7 December 2009	Musim Mengurus Nama Baik
9 December 2009	Ribut soal Demo 9 Desember
11 December 2009	Ketika Kabinet Mulai Retak
16 December 2009	Jika Boediono Mengkritik Pers
19 December 2009	Seruan Aneh Panitia Angket
29 December 2009	Kontroversi Buku Aditjondro
5 January 2010	KPK Jangan Lamban
15 January 2010	Dagelan Angket Century
19 January 2010	Presiden Jangan Diam
21 January 2010	Gratifikasi buat Anggota DPR

28 January 2010	Jika Politikus Main Todong
30 January 2010	Seratus Hari Tak Bergigi
1 February 2010	Superioritas yang Tiba-tiba Kempis
8 January 2010	Sang Kerbau Masuk Istana
27 January 2010	Amburadulnya Angket Century
1 March 2010	Skandal Century: Alpa atau Sengaja ‘
3 March 2010	Tepercik ke Politikus Sendiri
4 March 2010	Setelah Drama Senayan

Tempo

7 September 2009	Heboh dana talangan Century
14 September 2009	Aksi Susno di Century
21 September 2009	Ricuh Komisi Antikorupsi dan Polisi
28 September 2009	KPK di Ujung Tanduk
5 October 2009	Nonaktifkan Susno Duadji
12 October 2009	Periksa lagi Susno Duadji
9 November 2009	Setelah rekaman Anggoda dibuka
23 November 2009	Hak angket diredam janagn
30 November 2009	Melacak penjarah Century
7 December 2009a	Terang-gelap audit Century
7 December 2009b	Musim mengurus nama baik
14 December 2009	Lakon dua seteru
21 December 2009	Angket Century atau Sri Mulyani?
28 December 2009	Mengungkap juru selamat Century
11 January 2010	Mengapa BI berkali terperosok
18 January 2010	Di mana etika anggota Pansus
25 January 2010	Seratus hari tidak bergigi
1 February 2010a	Siapa jadi korban
1 February 2010b	Superioritas yang tiba-tiba kempis
14 February 2010a	Aliran duit Boedi Sampoerna
14 February 2010b	Sang kerbau masuk istana

14 February 2010c	Gertak sambal reshuffle kabinet
22 February 2010	Sekutu dan seteru dalam konflik Century
1 March 2010a	Sikap Presiden dalam episode akhir Century
1 March 2010b	Skandal Century: Alpa atau Sengaja
8 March 2010a	Pertemuan besar lepas kendali
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