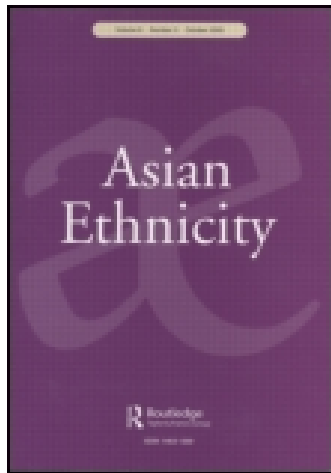


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Asian Ethnicity

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/caet20>

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Published online: 27 May 2010.

To cite this article: Sarah Turner (2003) Setting the Scene Speaking Out: Chinese Indonesians After Suharto, *Asian Ethnicity*, 4:3, 337-352, DOI: [10.1080/1343900032000117187](https://doi.org/10.1080/1343900032000117187)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1343900032000117187>

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Setting the Scene

Speaking Out: Chinese Indonesians After Suharto

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(McGill University, Canada)

This article is an initial analysis of new and re-emerging expressions of identity among ethnic Chinese in Indonesia's contemporary public domain. As long ago as Dutch colonial times in Indonesia, the ethnic Chinese have frequently been the scapegoats for violence, especially during times of political uncertainty and economic hardship. Under President Suharto's rule the identity of the Chinese was politically contested further as Suharto manipulated local understandings of the Chinese in the economic and political spheres. However, since the 1998 riots and the downfall of President Suharto, things have begun to change, and ethnic Chinese are speaking out. Alternative discourses of identity have surfaced through a multitude of different avenues. These have included the actions of a range of political parties, some based on ethnicity, and others more broad-based; non-political organisations including those fighting discrimination and others examining Chinese socio-cultural needs; literature; and the print and television media. It is now, through such means, that new and re-emerging ethnic Chinese identities, some suppressed for more than thirty years, are becoming apparent.

Introduction

It is now over half a decade since the beginning of the 1997 economic crisis in Indonesia, yet the country continues to battle huge economic, social and political uncertainties. In particular, these include an unconfident economy, struggling to recover in the midst of continuing ethnic and sectarian violence in a number of regions, and an unproven political leadership. One thing is certain, however, Indonesia faces challenging times. It is in such a political, economic and social climate that the Chinese in Indonesia are debating their future.

Throughout the rule of President Suharto's government, labelled the New Order, the identities of the Chinese in Indonesia, comprising approximately 3 per cent (around six million) of a total population of about 231,000,000, were politically contested as Suharto manipulated local understandings of the role of the Chinese in the economic and political domains.¹ As such, the Chinese were collectively portrayed as controlling a significant amount of the country's wealth (up to 70 per cent of economic activity), while at the same

1 V. Goldner, 'Chinese-Indonesians Continue to Suffer from Discrimination', *The Jakarta Post* (19 January 2002); I. Wibowo, 'Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Indonesian Chinese after the Fall of Soeharto', *SOJOURN: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2001), pp. 125–40; Z. Hakim, 'Political will Needed to Eliminate Racial Discrimination', *The Jakarta Post* (3 February 2003).

time they were used as scapegoats when required by the government.² Parallel to these events, the government effectively erased the diverse cultural identities of the Chinese, placing priority instead on the assimilation of such cultural groups within a common Indonesian identity.

In late 1997, rioting began to occur in a number of locations throughout Indonesia, partly as the result of the extreme poverty that the economic crisis had bestowed on many of the nation's people. Tensions in the country were fuelled by continued resentment of the government and of the perceived wealth of the Chinese population. These tensions climaxed in May 1998 in Jakarta when the City's ethnic Chinese district was devastated, leaving many Chinese residents faced with the destruction of their homes and businesses. These troubles were exacerbated by the violent rapes of a number of Chinese women and murders of members of the Chinese community.³ For many Chinese, the riots marked a turning point in considering who they are and who they want to be in a post-Suharto Indonesia. At the same time, with the dismantling of New Order state structures and ideologies after Suharto resigned in May 1998, public recognition of alternative discourses of identity became possible. A significant part of this renegotiation of the self in Indonesia has been the public re-emergence of the Chinese consciousness, hitherto suppressed for more than thirty years.

This collection, entitled *Speaking out: Chinese Indonesians after Suharto*, addresses the important subject matter of Chinese ethnicity and identity in post-Suharto Indonesia.⁴ With contributions from nine scholars—some with prominent international reputations, others newer to the academic scene—the papers address the impacts of the profound social and political changes on the ways Chinese in Indonesia identify themselves, and how these changing identities are being expressed in the public domain through groups in civil society, literary and cultural activities, the media, and political institutions and activities.

The use of the word 'identity' is imprecise in much social science writing. On the one hand, the notion can be used to relate to ideas such as uniqueness and individuality, based on a person's conscious self-typification, and lead to the concept of 'self-identity'. On the other, it can refer to qualities of sameness, so that people can associate themselves, or indeed be associated by others, with a certain group on the basis of particular features. These features include 'evaluative or emotional characteristics from which the individual derives self-esteem, or a sense of knowing or belonging. These features are highly variable in intensity and salience, as are any associated normative expectations which may furnish individuals with guides to their social behaviour'.⁵ As such, what is being investigated throughout this special issue are the ways in which ethnic Chinese in Indonesia are socially constructing, (re)negotiating, and maintaining their identities on the basis of their own

2 I. Wibowo 'Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Indonesian Chinese after the Fall of Soeharto'.

3 J. Siegel, 'Early Thoughts on the Violence of May 13 and 14, 1998 in Jakarta', *Indonesia*, vol. 66 (October 1998), pp. 76–100.

4 For the purpose of this article, I adopt the definition of ethnicity provided by Daniel Hiebert. D. Hiebert, 'Ethnicity', in R. Johnston, D. Gregory and D. Smith (eds), *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1994), pp. 172–4. Hiebert (p. 172) writes that ethnicity is 'a way in which individuals define their personal identity and a type of social stratification that emerges when people form groups based on their real or common origins'. He goes on to argue that 'ethnic group formation always entails both exclusionary and inclusionary behaviour' (ibid.) because members of such groups see themselves as sharing certain cultures, histories and ideologies which mark them as different from others. See also F. Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Little, Brown, Boston, 1969).

5 B. Byron, 'Identity', in A. Barnard and J. Spencer (eds), *Encyclopaedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (Routledge, London, 2001), p. 292. See also T.R. Bringa 'Nationality Categories, National Identification and Identity Formation in "Multinational" Bosnia', *Anthropology of East Europe Review*, vol. 11, nos. 1–2 (Autumn 1993), pp. 80–9; L. Ma and C. Cartier (eds), *The Chinese Diaspora. Space, Place, Mobility and Identity* (Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, 2003).

experiences and insights, as well as in relation to members of neighbouring groups, through a range of activities.

Such activities include those that have been allowed to re-emerge within the country, such as cultural festivals, celebrations and entertainment, as well as new activities such as the emergence of innovative social movements, and literary activities. From all of these have developed new understandings of what it means to be Chinese Indonesian. The very nature and manifestations of these (re)emerging Chinese Indonesian identities need investigation.⁶ Therefore, we aim to fill a gap in the literature with recent research undertaken by authors from Indonesia, Australia, Canada, the US and the UK, in the fields of anthropology, architecture, human geography, literature studies, media studies and political studies.

This article, then, sets the scene for the collection. It begins with a brief overview of the history of the Chinese in Indonesia, stressing events during President Suharto's reign which led especially, it is suggested by Dananjaya, to the ethnic Chinese suffering from 'autohypnotised amnesia, a mental condition in which people deliberately eliminate their self-identities'.⁷ I then go on to examine the incidents that occurred during the economic and political crisis in the late 1990s that had direct bearing on the Chinese in Indonesia, before examining a range of reactions to these incidents. Wibowo and Tan argue, for example, that Chinese adopted very different strategies with which to resist discrimination by the *pribumi*,⁸ namely, 'exit', 'voice' and 'loyalty' (explored more by Purdey in this issue).⁹ In the process, many ethnic Chinese fundamentally redefined their role and place in Indonesian society.¹⁰ However, Wibowo and Tan contend that such changes in identity have been largely lost in academic and media discourses, as a result of the overwhelming focus upon the 'exit' strategy by a proportion of the Chinese population in the face of ethnic tensions.¹¹ Therefore, the aim of this article, and indeed this entire issue of *Asian Ethnicity* is to focus upon these 'lost' strategies, and to foreground the many different methods enacted by this minority population to deal with past and ongoing discrimination, in the years following the riots of May 1998.

6 There are palpable concerns regarding terminology in any discussion of 'the Chinese' in Indonesia. In this special issue a number of contributors have used the term 'ethnic Chinese' or 'Chinese Indonesians' to define those Chinese residing in Indonesia (or who have resided in Indonesia and still associate themselves with that country in some manner)—regardless of whether they are Indonesian citizens or not, and regardless of whether they have mixed blood or not—who identify themselves, or are identified by others in society as being Chinese. J. Mackie and C. A. Coppel, 'A Preliminary Survey', in J. Mackie (ed.), *The Chinese in Indonesia* (The University Press of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1976), pp. 1–18. This also follows the suggestion of Mitchell, that 'any group that identifies itself as sharing a common heritage and belonging together and distinct from other groups can be considered ethnic'. K. Mitchell, 'Networks of Ethnicity' in E. Sheppard and T. Barnes (eds), *A Companion to Economic Geography* (Blackwell, Oxford, 2003), pp. 392–407. At the same time, we stress our awareness of the heterogeneity of the Chinese in Indonesia, a key factor highlighted in a number of the following papers.

7 J. Dananjaya, University of Indonesia Professor of Anthropology, cited in R. Widiadana, 'Chinese Puppets Perform Once More', *The Jakarta Post* (5 February 2000).

8 *Pribumi* literally means 'sons of the soil' or 'of native stock and not of immigrant blood' and relates to indigenous Indonesians regardless of their specific regional culture within the country. J. Echols and H. Shadily, *Kamus Indonesia Inggris: An Indonesian-English Dictionary* (Penerbit Pt Gramedia, Jakarta, 1992), p. 436.

9 E.K.B. Tan, 'From Sojourners to Citizens: Managing the ethnic Chinese minority in Indonesia and Malaysia', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 24, no. 6 (2001), pp. 949–78; I. Wibowo, 'Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Indonesian Chinese after the fall of Soeharto'.

10 D. Djalal, 'Race Relations: Pride and Prejudice', *Far Eastern Economic Review* (8 February 2001).

11 E.K.B. Tan, 'From Sojourners to Citizens: Managing the ethnic Chinese minority in Indonesia and Malaysia'; I. Wibowo, 'Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Indonesian Chinese after the Fall of Soeharto'.

A History of Ethnic Divisions

It is impossible to overstate the sensitivity of the ethnic issue in Indonesia. While the New Order has managed ethnic relations rather well, deep-seated *pribumi* reservations—and in some quarters hostility—persist over the extent of non-*pribumi* wealth and commercial dominance.¹²

Although it must be stressed that the Chinese in Indonesia are culturally heterogeneous and do not form a cohesive group, many *pribumi* see them as such and view them as outsiders because of their ‘common’ geographical roots outside Indonesia and their lack of claim to Indonesian ancestral origins.¹³ This factor, in addition to a collective wealth that far exceeds their numbers, has made them prime targets for ‘expressions of and measures for Indonesian economic nationalism’.¹⁴ The Chinese, therefore, have a long and troubled history in Indonesia and, dating back to Dutch colonial times (1596–1942), have frequently been the scapegoats for violence.

The Chinese first arrived in Indonesia in the seventeenth century, settling in the Dutch-founded city of Batavia (now Jakarta) in order to take advantage of the many economic prospects available.¹⁵ Under Dutch rule, the Chinese established many trade monopolies and came to control most of the banking sector, setting themselves apart from the *pribumi* majority, a position backed by the anti-integrationist policies of the Dutch, discussed by Giblin (this issue).¹⁶ Indeed as argued by Suryadinata, ‘the Dutch made no attempt to integrate the Chinese into indigenous society; on the contrary ... the colonizers introduced a divide-and-rule policy towards the population’.¹⁷ As a consequence, the Javanese aristocracy in particular became ‘deeply hostile’ towards the Chinese.¹⁸ This hostility was exacerbated as many wealthy Chinese sought protection from the Dutch or formed self-defence groups, in turn reinforcing growing notions that the Chinese were opposed to an increasingly popular nationalist movement.¹⁹ It should not be forgotten, therefore, that resentment in Indonesia towards the Chinese as an ethnic group dates back to early colonial times, and was strengthened throughout the Dutch period.²⁰

The first Chinese migrants to Indonesia primarily came from four ethnic groups, predominantly from the two provinces of Fujian and Guangdong in southeast China.²¹ The Hokkien were the first to settle in Indonesia. As proficient traders, Hokkien entrepreneurs dominated the local economies of Eastern Indonesia, Central and East Java, and the west coast of Sumatra. The Teochiu concentrated along Sumatra’s east coast, the Riau islands and Kalimantan. Their members initially specialised in agriculture but, in time, progressed into commercial areas where the Hokkien were not represented. The third group, the Hakka, originated from agriculturally unproductive mountainous areas in Guangdong, and as such, its members’ migration has been described as being from necessity.²² They established themselves on the outer islands of Indonesia, such as Kalimantan, and exploited the vast natural mineral resources in those areas. Hakka individuals continue to dominate many

12 H. Hill, *The Indonesian Economy Since 1966: Southeast Asia's Emerging Giant* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996), p. 106.

13 H. Hill, *Indonesia's Industrial Transformation* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1997).

14 L. Suryadinata, *Interpreting Indonesian Politics* (Times Academic Press, Singapore, 1998), p. 3.

15 N. Tarling, *Southeast Asia: A modern history* (Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001).

16 A. Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia in the 1990s* (Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, Australia, 1994).

17 L. Suryadinata, ‘Chinese Politics in Post-Suharto's Indonesia’, *Asian Survey*, vol. 41, no. 3 (2001), pp. 502–24 (quote p. 503).

18 A. Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia in the 1990s*, p. 103.

19 Nationalist sentiment rose rapidly during the early part of the twentieth century as a result of growing anti-Dutch sentiment. The nationalist movement's leader, Soekarno, led the country to independence following the Japanese defeat in 1945.

20 A. Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia in the 1990s*.

21 Mackie and Coppel ‘A Preliminary Survey’.

22 D. Hill, ‘The Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia’, unpublished Master's dissertation, University of Hull, England, 1998.

aspects of economic society in these regions today. The Cantonese were the other significant group to settle in Indonesia. Although smaller in number than the Hokkien and Hakka, the majority of Cantonese were wealthier and, being skilful in mechanics and industry, launched themselves as artisans and machine workers throughout the archipelago.²³

During the Japanese occupation, from 1942 to 1945, Chinese political organisations in Indonesia were banned.²⁴ Then, during President Soekarno's administration (1945–65), the debate regarding assimilation, including an abandonment of Chinese customs and cultural traits, versus integration, involving 'political loyalty and identification with Indonesia but not an immediate abandonment of group identity', escalated.²⁵ Individuals advocating integration were, however, increasingly marked as Communists, while others advancing the cause of assimilation were building on nationalist sentiments, prominent in the newly independent Indonesia. Soekarno perpetuated the prejudices being voiced against the Chinese, banning their trade in rural areas.²⁶

The establishment of President Suharto's New Order regime in 1966 and its consolidation of power fundamentally altered the relationship between the Chinese and the *pribumi*.²⁷ During the widespread massacres that followed a failed coup in September 1965, which Suharto claimed China had helped to provoke, many Chinese in Indonesia were accused of being Communist sympathisers and, according to some estimates, at least 500,000 people, a great number of whom were Chinese, were killed in the 1966 anti-Communist purge.²⁸ Subsequently, Suharto's government decided to adopt policies to curb anti-Chinese sentiment so that social stability and economic growth would be restored (or, as has also been argued, to adopt policies to reduce China's influence and reprimand local Chinese communities).²⁹ During the latter half of 1966—while many Chinese were still being accused of being Communist sympathisers—a systematic campaign of discrimination against them by the *pribumi* and the state was advanced, with assimilation being strongly supported.³⁰ The policies varied between regions, as regional officials and military leaders designed a number of their own regulations. Nevertheless, they served collectively as a precedent for a nationwide series of assimilation policies in the late 1960s and 1970s that discriminated against Chinese in various ways.

Such discriminatory tactics included banning Chinese script—in the process removing dozens of Chinese language newspapers—prohibiting Chinese cultural expression, and the eventual closing of Chinese language schools and education facilities,³¹ including a '10 per cent limit on university places for Chinese students imposed for courses in medicine, engineering, law and science'.³² Furthermore, ethnic Chinese were strongly encouraged to change their names to become more 'Indonesian-sounding'.³³ In addition,

23 A. Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia in the 1990s*.

24 L. Suryadinata, 'Chinese Politics in Post-Suharto's Indonesia'.

25 J. Mackie and C. Coppel 'A Preliminary Survey', p. 12.

26 See L. Suryadinata, *Pribumi, Indonesians, the Chinese Minority and China* (Heinemann, Singapore, 1978), pp. 129–38, for more specific details of Soekarno's policies towards the Chinese, including the 'Benteng System' and the 'Assaat Movement'.

27 A. Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia in the 1990s*.

28 D. Djalal, 'Race Relations: Pride and Prejudice'; N. Tarling, *Southeast Asia. A Modern History*.

29 M. Cohen, 'Cultural Revival—Raising the Lantern', *Far Eastern Economic Review* (2 October 2000).

30 Ibid. See also L. Suryadinata, 'Chinese Politics in Post-Suharto's Indonesia'.

31 A. Heryanto, 'Ethnic Identities and Erasure: Chinese Indonesians in public culture', in J. Kahn (ed.), *Southeast Asian Identities: Culture and the politics of representation in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1998), pp. 95–114; Mackie, J. 'Tackling "the Chinese Problem"', in G. Forrester (ed.), *Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Renewal or Chaos. Indonesia Assessment 1998* (KITLV Press, Leiden, 1999), pp. 105–27.

32 D. Djalal, 'Race Relations: Pride and Prejudice', online version.

33 *Associated Press*, 'After Years of Discrimination, Indonesia's Chinese Hopeful' (28 August 2001).

Chinese Chambers of Commerce were banned, and ‘identity cards that all Indonesians must carry contained a code that enabled the holder to be identified as either Chinese or not’.³⁴ Such actions serve to remind us that recent ethnic tensions, highly visible since the late 1990s, are clearly historically rooted, and that they nearly always take on a ‘*pribumi* versus ethnic Chinese’ angle, as opposed to a particular cultural group within Indonesia versus the Chinese.

Socio-economic Divisions

It must be acknowledged, however, that not only are Chinese individuals very different from one another in terms of their origins and degree of assimilation into mainstream Indonesian society, they also vary tremendously by socio-economic class.³⁵ Indeed, as Paris maintains ‘despite having being favoured by the Dutch, the vast majority of the seven million descendants of these Chinese transplants ... are not wealthy’.³⁶ Dananjaya further adds, ‘thousands of residents living on the outskirts of Jakarta like Tangerang, west of Jakarta, Sawangan to the south of Jakarta and Cilincing in North Jakarta are of Chinese origin and live in poverty’.³⁷ The diversity within the ethnic Chinese population has even led some commentators to suggest that discussing the ‘Chinese’ as a single entity does not have significant usefulness.³⁸ Yet analyses of media discourse show that class distinctions among ethnic Chinese are often ignored, except for the mention of a few extremely wealthy tycoons. This failure to recognise ethnic Chinese class dynamics is not, however, simply associated with the media. When *pribumi* anti-Chinese sentiment reaches boiling point in the country, few distinctions are made in terms of targets between Chinese of different class. As Williams argues, ‘the problem with the Chinese debate is that the wealthy conglomerate owners are very few and are least likely to face the mobs’.³⁹

How did these few wealthy Chinese conglomerate owners emerge? The growth of a large private sector in Indonesia has been a recent phenomenon.⁴⁰ The associated rise of private capital is important, firstly, because of how rapidly it increased since the reduction in the state’s role following oil revenue declines in 1983 and, secondly, because of the overwhelming dominance of Chinese-controlled conglomerates in the private sector. Certain ethnic Chinese and selected *pribumi*—who enjoyed close or family ties to former President Suharto—thus obtained considerably more access to wealth than the majority of Indonesia’s population.

The New Order government ideology sought the development of conglomerates to

34 M. Backman, ‘Blame Indonesia’s Chinese?’, *Far Eastern Economic Review* (5 March 1998). See also L. Suryadinata, *Pribumi, Indonesians, the Chinese Minority and China*.

35 A division can also be made between the locally born, Indonesian speaking, *peranakan* Chinese, and *totok* Chinese who are comparatively recent, foreign-born migrants. For more on this division, see F. Aguilar, ‘Citizenship, Inheritance, and the Indigenizing of “Orang Chinese” in Indonesia’, *Positions*, vol. 9, no. 3 (2001), pp. 501–33; A. Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia in the 1990s*; L. Suryadinata, *Interpreting Indonesian Politics* (Times Academic Press, Singapore 1998); and L. Suryadinata, ‘Chinese Politics in Post-Suharto’s Indonesia’.

36 J. Paris, ‘How Indonesia’s Chinese Can Survive: Minority Rules’, *The New Republic*, vol. 219, no. 2 (1998), p. 20.

37 J. Dananjaya, University of Indonesia Professor of Anthropology, cited in R. Widiadana, ‘Chinese Puppets Perform Once More’.

38 J. Rigg, *Southeast Asia, The Human Landscape of Modernization and Development* (Routledge, London, 1997).

39 L. Williams, ‘The Chinese Scapegoats of Indonesia’, *The Age*, online text: <http://www.theage.co.au/daily/980124/news/news18.html>. (1998), p. 20.

40 See R. Robison, *The Rise of Capital* (Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1986); R. Robison, ‘The Middle-class and the Bourgeoisie in Indonesia’, in R. Robison and D. Goodman (eds), *The New Rich in Asia: Mobile phones, McDonalds and middle-class revolution* (Routledge, London, 1996), pp. 78–101; and H. Hill, *Indonesia’s Industrial Transformation*.

manage the economy.⁴¹ Of the top 25 conglomerates in 1994, *pribumi* interests headed only four. Ethnic Chinese businesspeople dominated the rest and, in the process, had amassed considerable fortunes.⁴² Many of these large conglomerates emerged in the 1960s and 1970s and developed through close relations with President Suharto, other political elites, and the powerful armed forces (ABRI, *Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*, until 1999, now TNI, *Tentara Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*), utilising a system of complex patronage. Throughout the 1980s, the conglomerates diversified production into a range of manufacturing and agricultural businesses, thus forming extensive networks throughout both Indonesia and the Southeast Asian region. As such, it has been argued that the conglomerate managers' skills lay in

being able to identify commercial opportunities, to understand the Indonesian bureaucracy and system of patronage, and to be able to marshal packages of finance, management, and technical inputs. Their role in, and access to, regional ethnic Chinese and business networks has obviously facilitated their growth.⁴³

Largely as a result of the economic crisis that became apparent to most Indonesians in early January 1998, resentment of ethnic Chinese dominance of the economy, through such means as these conglomerates, once again surfaced violently. The long- and short-term economic and political causes of the economic crisis will not be outlined here, given the excellent coverage provided by Evans (1999), H. Hill (1999), and Radelet (1999), among others.⁴⁴ Instead, I turn to outline the incidents that occurred during the crisis that had a direct impact upon ethnic Chinese.

The 1998 Riots

One of the most tragic features of the crisis was, and still is, the impact on many individuals who had a limited understanding of why the prices of rice, cooking oil and other necessities were rising at over 20 per cent a month during early 1998.⁴⁵ Price rises, combined with massive food shortages and huge job losses, caused many people to become frustrated. The result was numerous riots that occurred throughout the first half of 1998. Resentment towards the government, augmented by severe poverty and anti-Chinese sentiment proved to be both a volatile mix and a powerful motivation for ethnically targeted violence. As Tan argues, the violence of 1998 was a microcosm of the wider *pribumi* mistrust and frustration, for 'ethnic riots are symptomatic of the failure of incomplete ethnic domination, especially in the economic and cultural realms'.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, the *Jakarta Post's* coverage of the riots between February and May 1998⁴⁷

41 H. Hill, *The Indonesian Economy Since 1966: Southeast Asia's Emerging Giant*.

42 Consider the substantial wealth of a few Chinese individuals such as Eka Tjipta Wijaya, Liem Sioe Liong and Mochtar Riady, who have built economic empires through personal contacts with important politicians and bureaucrats. See also H. Hill, *Indonesia's Industrial Transformation*; and L. Suryadinata, *Prominent Indonesian Chinese: Biographical Sketches* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1995).

43 H. Hill, *The Indonesian Economy Since 1966: Southeast Asia's emerging giant*, p. 110.

44 K. Evans, 'Economic Update', in G. Forrester (ed.), *Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Renewal or Chaos. Indonesia Assessment 1998* (KITLV Press, Leiden, 1999), pp. 105–27; H. Hill, 'The Indonesian Economy: The strange and sudden death of a tiger', in G. Forrester and R. May (eds), *The Fall Of Suharto* (Select Books, Singapore, 1999), pp. 93–103; and S. Radelet, *Indonesia: Long Road to Recovery* (Harvard Institute for International Development, Harvard, 1999).

45 K. Evans, 'Economic Update'.

46 E.K.B. Tan, 'From Sojourners to Citizens: Managing the Ethnic Chinese Minority in Indonesia and Malaysia', p. 949.

47 On the media's coverage of these riots see S. Turner, and R. Seymour 'Ethnic Chinese and the Indonesian Crisis', in *Nations under Siege: Globalisation and Nationalism in Asia*, R. Starrs (ed.), (Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2002), pp. 169–94.

illustrated two critical aspects pertaining to the nature of the riots. First, specific anti-Chinese riots occurred predominantly in February and May. This raises questions about whether the anti-Chinese riots were in fact orchestrated by certain government elements, as discussed shortly. Secondly, there were two types of riots/protests involving two distinctly different groups. Members of the first group, the *massa* (populist lower classes) protested against food prices, and directed their anguish towards the Chinese.⁴⁸ It is widely understood that the government and army tolerated these riots, and that the state used and exploited anti-Chinese feeling to avoid attention being directed towards its own wrongdoings.⁴⁹ In the words of one ethnic Chinese shopkeeper, a victim of the 14 February Lombok riots: 'It is an ethnic thing. The current crisis is the worst since President Suharto came to power but he cannot be blamed, so we, the traditional enemy are made the scapegoat.'⁵⁰ In contrast, the second group of protestors were mostly middle-class students who approached this situation with a significantly different agenda. They were protesting against the government with the aim of removing President Suharto from office, rioting neither to loot nor to rectify their position *per se*, as was the case with many of the *massa*.⁵¹

That the mostly middle-class students were not targeting the Chinese in their demonstrations is an indication of the economic disparities existing in Indonesian society. Economically, the middle classes were not affected as severely by the crisis as were the poorer classes. For the majority of the former, the basic necessities were still affordable and therefore they had no direct motivation or 'need' for anti-Chinese sentiment. In addition, given that the students were campaigning for widespread *reformasi* (reform), they had a clearer understanding of who was really to blame for the crisis, namely the Indonesian government and its corrupt practices. By comparison, however, the protests of the *massa* were often based on class and ethnicity. They were linked to a need to vent anger arising from misunderstandings about the causes of their poverty. In a sense then, these riots were a culmination of suspicion and mistrust by the *pribumi* toward the ethnic Chinese that had been building up over time⁵² and, in turn, were yet another manifestation of the history of discrimination against the ethnic Chinese.

The Jakarta Riots, May 1998: A Turning Point in Pribumi-Chinese Relations

During 13–14 May 1998, over 1,000 people were killed, and at least 168 Chinese women were raped. The Chinese district of Jakarta was destroyed, with 4,083 Chinese shops and properties, and 40 shopping centres looted and burnt.⁵³ In May of 1998, the 'Coordinating Minister for Finance and Economy Ginanjar Kartasasmita ... put the damage in Jakarta at Rp. 2.5 trillion (about US\$250 million at prevailing rates)'.⁵⁴ Furthermore, these riots sparked further economic and political turmoil, while exposing deep divisions within the government and armed forces.⁵⁵ As the true impacts of the riots became clear, growing international media and political awareness focused attention not only upon the atrocities

48 J. Siegel, 'Early Thoughts on the Violence of May 13 and 14, 1998 in Jakarta'.

49 S. Wanandi, 'The Post-Soeharto Business Environment', in G. Forrester (ed.), *Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Renewal or Chaos. Indonesia Assessment 1998* (KITLV Press, Leiden, 1999), pp. 128–34.

50 Cited in J. Aglionby, 'Indonesian Riots Spread and Worsen', *Guardian* (16 February 1998).

51 J. Siegel, 'Early Thoughts on the Violence of May 13 and 14, 1998 in Jakarta'.

52 I. Wibowo, 'Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Indonesian Chinese after the Fall of Soeharto'.

53 Ibid. See also Geocities website, 'Atrocities in Indonesia', online text: <http://www.geocities.com>.

54 van Klinken, 'The May Riots', *Inside Indonesia* (29 May 1998), p. 1.

55 Ibid.

that had befallen Jakarta, but also significantly, upon the Suharto Government's failure to curb the violence.⁵⁶

The Jakarta riots of 13–14 May were predominantly anti-Chinese in tone, thereby they did not incorporate feelings of anti-government sentiment to the same extent as other rioting during that year. Some commentators argue that this was because there was an active anti-Chinese campaign being supported by factions of the military.⁵⁷ The military was starkly divided into two factions, namely the Prabowo and Wiranto camps, led by two army generals.⁵⁸ One explanation is that in an attempt to undermine the power of General Wiranto, troops loyal to General Prabowo possibly helped direct the *massa* towards anti-Chinese rioting.⁵⁹ Prior to this, and following a public backlash against Chinese businesspeople orchestrated by Suharto, Prabowo had raised anti-Chinese sentiment among Muslim groups sympathetic to his cause. One such group, the *Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam* (Indonesian Committee for the Solidarity of the Muslim World) had actively distributed books that denounced the unhealthy dominance of the Chinese in business.⁶⁰

Furthermore, this was occurring at a time when the ethnic Chinese were constantly being accused by the government of non-nationalist behaviour by keeping much-needed capital overseas. Indeed, the prominent Indonesian economist Sumitro Djojohadikusumo warned against an 'unholy alliance of crony capitalists' involving 'groups of people who do not feel rooted in Indonesian soil'.⁶¹

Individual ethnic Chinese were immediately affected in different ways by the riots. Clearly, the emotional toll on those families and people who suffered from rape and murder is incomprehensible to outsiders. Excerpts from statements by Chinese Indonesians (both directly and indirectly affected) give us only some idea of the trauma experienced:

I was scared to death and couldn't drive the car because in front the *massa* blocked it with wood and metal ... Feeling really afraid I then got out and asked them for mercy ... while I was still conscious, several big men pulled me by the legs and one after the other they raped me ... I still have lots ahead of me. As a girl of twenty-six I still have lots of chances to find a better life. But not in this land where I was born.⁶²

Where will I go? Singapore? What will I do there? It is so expensive. My savings will run out in six months. I will stay, but I am scared.⁶³

The big people can come back and pick up their pieces. We are small; we have to start all over again.⁶⁴

56 J. Solomon, 'Indonesia Woos Ethnic Chinese for Investment', *The Asian Wall Street Journal* (5 November 1999); L. Suryadinata, 'Chinese Politics in Post-Suharto's Indonesia'.

57 See, for example, L. Suryadinata, 'Chinese Politics in Post-Suharto's Indonesia'; S. Wanandi, 'The Post-Soeharto Business Environment'.

58 M. Mietzner, 'From Soeharto to Habibie: The Indonesian armed forces and political Islam during the transition', in G. Forrester (ed.), *Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Renewal or Chaos. Indonesia Assessment 1998* (KITLV Press, Leiden 1999), pp. 65–102.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

61 Economist Intelligence Unit 1998, cited in D. Hill, 'The Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia: Construction of an Ethnic Identity?', p. 6.

62 Rape victim, quoted in J. Siegel, 'Early Thoughts on the Violence of May 13 and 14, 1998 in Jakarta', p. 98.

63 Young Indonesian Chinese stock-broker, quoted in S. Trapathi, and B. Dolven 'Shattered Confidence: Ethnic Chinese hold the key to economic revival', *Far Eastern Economic Review* (28 May 1998), p. 20.

64 Chinese tailor, *ibid.*

Chinese Reactions to the 1998 Riots

Despite the previous resentment and discrimination towards the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia during the Dutch, Japanese, Soekarno and New Order periods, many commentators see May 1998 as a crucial point in their history. Initial responses to the political and economic crisis were dynamic, varying greatly among different sectors of the ethnic Chinese community. An analysis of the considerable variation of responses turns our attention, once again, to the fact that ethnic Chinese are not an homogeneous group in Indonesia.

Contrary to popular media reports, not all Chinese capital and individuals fled Indonesia after the initial economic crisis and the riots in May 1998. However, for those who could afford to, it was an obvious first choice. As Mackie points out ‘many of the more wealthy ones among an estimated total of six to eight million ethnic Chinese would doubtless jump at any opportunity to leave if they could be sure of finding a safe haven elsewhere’.⁶⁵ Such responses by wealthier ethnic Chinese were those focused upon initially by media and academic discourses, and were popularised as ‘the response’ of the ethnic Chinese to the crisis. In some ways, this interpretation is understandable given the widely held assumptions within Indonesia regarding the ethnic Chinese.

Other responses have been less well documented and hence are the focus of this special issue, as they are an indication, and a product, of the changing identities of ethnic Chinese, as well as the adjusting relations with the *pribumi* population. These responses, along with the more immediate ones of capital flight and migration, are introduced next.

Immediate Reactions: Capital Flight and Migration

In anticipation of the 1998 riots, or as a result of them, many wealthy ethnic Chinese fled the country. Their capital, consisting of a considerable proportion of the nation’s private sector economy, went with them. While the condition of the Indonesian economy currently indicates that much is yet to return, as early as 1999 it was being suggested that it was the ethnic Chinese who held the key to an economic recovery in Indonesia.⁶⁶ As succinctly argued in *Business Week*, ‘the trouble is, there is still no will to fill the hole left in Indonesia’s economy by the Chinese’.⁶⁷

With increasing globalisation in the financial sector, the ability to move large amounts of capital across the globe rapidly clearly had a role to play in the responses of wealthier Chinese to the crisis. The total capital flight during the initial crisis period was estimated to be US\$80 billion, equivalent to two years’ worth of imports for Indonesia or enough revenue to cover the country’s foreign debt.⁶⁸ Also, from the beginning of the economic crisis in 1997 until mid-1999, estimates of Chinese emigration from Indonesia ranged from 30,000–40,000 people⁶⁹ to 100,000–125,000 people.⁷⁰ However the latter estimate is probably exaggerated, as Wibowo argues that, while many ethnic Chinese left Jakarta during the riots, many did not in fact leave Indonesia.⁷¹ Rather, a number migrated to areas such as Bali, West Kalimantan and North Sulawesi, thus keeping at least a proportion of their capital in the country.

65 J. Mackie, ‘Tackling “the Chinese Problem”’, p. 189.

66 *Wall Street Journal*, ‘Indonesia Woos Ethnic Chinese for Investment’ (5 November 1999); *Reuters*, ‘Analysis—Indonesian-Chinese Wary Despite New Government’ (8 November 1999).

67 *Business Week*, ‘Wages of Hatred: Indonesia’s hostility to a minority costs the country dearly’ (9 October 2000), p. 2.

68 *Reuters*, ‘Analysis—Indonesian-Chinese Wary Despite New Government’.

69 J. Mackie, ‘Tackling “the Chinese Problem”’.

70 K. Chew, ‘When Will Ethnic-Chinese Money Flow Back to Indonesia?’, *Straits Times* (18 April 1999).

71 Wibowo, I. ‘Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Indonesian Chinese after the Fall of Soeharto’.

Whatever the specific number of Chinese emigrating, it is agreed upon by both social commentators and economists that, in order for the Indonesian economy to recover, these people *and* their wealth have to return.⁷² Not only will this directly help the recovery of Indonesia's ailing economy, it will also encourage other much needed and valuable foreign capital to flow into the country.⁷³ Equally important was the fact that many wealthy ethnic Chinese are extremely skilled and well educated. Indeed, the Indonesian economy will take far longer to recover to the prosperous levels of growth that it saw for the majority of the Suharto regime without the help of Chinese capital and experience.⁷⁴

Nevertheless, Indonesia may not receive this help from members of the ethnic Chinese minority unless steps continue to be taken to reduce discrimination. In the words of one Chinese: 'Now many Chinese are saying look at the mess, we'll step back and let the Indonesians fix it ... they know Indonesia needs them ... they need to reflect on what the Chinese have done for the country'.⁷⁵

After the election of President Abdurrahman Wahid (President from October 1999 until July 2001), it was still being argued that 'Indonesia's new-found hopes of political stability will not alone be enough to tempt wealthy Indonesian-Chinese to bring back billions of dollars sent abroad during the country's turmoil'.⁷⁶ Despite Wahid's meetings with business executives in Singapore in November 1999, designed to woo ethnic Chinese to return to Indonesia, and signs that some funds were being returned to the country, it has been suggested that significant amounts will not return until there is greater certainty regarding the country's judicial and banking systems.⁷⁷ In addition, more recent attempts by Megawati Soekarnoputri, since her swearing in as President in 2001, to encourage Chinese investment and capital have been greeted with scepticism within Indonesia itself. Langit states that 'anti-Chinese sentiment continues to run high as Indonesia struggles to dig itself out of the multi-dimensional crisis'.⁷⁸ The slow progress in real reforms at the time of writing this article, and the continuing political and economic uncertainties are also unlikely to encourage further inward flows of capital.

Longer-term Reactions

More encouragingly, since 1998 there has been an increased official and general acknowledgement within Indonesia that the ethnic Chinese community received gross injustices during the period of the riots. In January 2000, following a long history of good relations between Wahid and ethnic Chinese, his government agreed to the celebration of the Chinese New Year on the streets of Indonesia for the first time since the late 1960s.⁷⁹ As President, Wahid also sanctioned the publication of Chinese newspapers through the repealing of laws that had banned the local publication of Chinese characters in Indonesia since 1965.⁸⁰

72 *Reuters* 'Analysis—Indonesian-Chinese Wary Despite New Government'; *Wall Street Journal* 'Indonesia Woos Ethnic Chinese for Investment'.

73 Djiwandono, S. 'The Rupiah—One Year After its Float', in G. Forrester (ed.), *Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Renewal or Chaos. Indonesia Assessment 1998* (KITLV Press, Leiden, 1999), pp. 145–53; Suryahadi, A. 'The Economic Crisis: Effects and Policy Framework for its Solution', in G. Forrester (ed.), *Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Renewal or Chaos. Indonesia Assessment 1998* (KITLV Press, Leiden, 1999), pp. 154–60.

74 J. Mackie, 'Tackling "the Chinese Problem" '.

75 Confidential personal communication (23 August 1999).

76 *Reuters*, 'Analysis—Indonesian-Chinese Wary Despite New Government'.

77 *Ibid.*

78 R. Langit, 'Indonesia Stirs Ethnic Chinese Pot', *Online Asia Times* (20 February 2002), p. 2.

79 S. Akmar, 'Point Blank: Indon Chinese shed their skin on lunar year', *Straits Times* (8 January 2002), p. 1; see also *South China Morning Post*, 'Wahid Our Good Friend, Say Chinese' (12 February 2000).

80 After the 1965 coup, all Chinese language newspapers were banned, with the exception of one which was Government controlled. See L. Suryadinata, *Pribumi, Indonesians, the Chinese Minority and China*.

Moreover, many schools were openly allowed to teach Mandarin to their pupils after being banned from doing so by regulations several decades earlier.

In addition, Wahid moved to reassure ethnic Chinese that they could openly practice their culture and religious beliefs without fear of reprisal by the state, declaring:

I would like to renew the Government's commitment to stay out of religious issues. Let every religious believer take care of their own beliefs. As we have all learned, any government intervention would only create negative consequences.⁸¹

More recently, President Megawati Soekarnoputri moved to encourage new trade agreements with China and agreed to allow the Chinese New Year to be a state holiday from 2003, partially in an attempt to appease Chinese concerns relating to the treatment of its ethnic population residing in Indonesia.⁸² Nevertheless, approximately fifty of Indonesia's laws and ordinances continue to discriminate against ethnic and religious minorities.⁸³

Changing Chinese Identities

Prior to Suharto's fall from power in May 1998, complex political strategies worked towards the effective erasure of Chinese identities in the public sphere. Yet at the same time identities were not erased to the point where Chinese could assimilate into the majority population and become 'Indonesian'.⁸⁴ Careful political checks and balances were put in place by the government to ensure that the ethnic Chinese, and perhaps more importantly the *pribumi*, would always remember that the Chinese were *orang Cina*, a derogatory term for Chinese.⁸⁵

While during the New Order this process was largely masked by the rapidly growing economy, the economic crisis and the 1998 riots resulted in the ethnic Chinese again being labelled the 'other'. They could no longer identify themselves as Indonesians (in a *pribumi* sense), despite many speaking only *bahasa Indonesia* (the official Indonesian language), and having been born in Indonesia.

Looking back at the severity of the riots and short-term reasons for them, it becomes clear how the political 'othering' of the Chinese both in the past and in the immediate lead-up to the riots resulted in the devastation of the Chinese Indonesian community, especially in Jakarta, in May 1998. While the Chinese population may have tried to forget at least part of the extent of their 'alienness', *pribumi* were constantly reminded of this through the manipulation of anti-Chinese sentiment by nationalist political discourse, a point discussed further by Giblin (this issue). The fact that *pribumi* 'knew' the Chinese were foreign, and that they were not good 'nationalist' Indonesians, made it all the more inconceivable that the Chinese could appear effectively to control so much of the economy. Therefore, a purely economic injustice, formed in part through corrupt political processes, became a racial issue because of the grossly generalised attachment of 'Chineseness' to that wealth. Underlying this was the negative symbolism related to 'Chineseness' largely created by the state. Thus, instead of a relatively simple issue of corruption and inequity between the 'haves' and the 'have nots', the question became a complex issue whereby all Chinese

81 Cited in V. England, 'Confucianism in Favour with Tolerant Wahid', *South China Morning Post* (9 January 2002), p. 1.

82 J. Ruwitch, 'Indonesia President Arrives in China to Push Trade', *Reuters*, online text: <http://ca.news.yahoo.com/020324/5/177y.html>. (24 March 2002).

83 V. Goldner, 'Chinese-Indonesians continue to suffer from discrimination'. See also A. Freedman this issue.

84 J. Paris, 'How Indonesia's Chinese Can Survive: Minority Rules'; E.K.B. Tan, 'From Sojourners to Citizens: Managing the ethnic Chinese minority in Indonesia and Malaysia'.

85 F. Aguilar, 'Citizenship, Inheritance, and the Indigenizing of "Orang Chinese" in Indonesia'; J. Echols, and H. Shadily, *Kamus Indonesia Inggris: An Indonesian-English Dictionary*.

automatically became the (illegitimate) 'haves', while all *pribumi* were automatically (and incorrectly) the 'have nots'.

Nevertheless, now, as a result of the recent riots, combined with changes in the political sphere, it is argued that there has emerged a rapid re-identification among many ethnic Chinese, a process that is still in motion. This identity change is interwoven with a push for greater representation among many ethnic Chinese within civil society. As such, the assimilation versus integration debate for Chinese in Indonesia is now being reopened, albeit tentatively, as explored in the articles by Purdey and Fuyuan (this issue). Many Chinese who had begun to attempt to merge into the broader Indonesian community, especially during the pre-1998 times of economic prosperity, are now revising this move. Yet, they are not claiming to be solely 'Chinese'. New identities are developing, whereby instead of attempting to assimilate into the *pribumi* population (as they clearly have not been able to), many are adopting a new tactic of 'ethnic promotion' via political representation, through literary and media endeavours, and via the work of non-political organisations.

Political Representation

Since Suharto effectively barred ethnic Chinese from the political spectrum, direct political representation of the Chinese during the Suharto regime was non-existent.⁸⁶ However, the elite or *cukong* (boss) Chinese enjoyed considerable covert political and economic influence through cronyism practices with the political elite of the Indonesian government. Kristof speaks of the resentment many Indonesians felt towards this small minority of Chinese businesspeople before the May 1998 riots, as 'it is true that some prominent Chinese businesspeople are close to Mr. Suharto and were given monopolies that helped them prosper'.⁸⁷

Relative political freedom since the fall of Suharto in 1998, however, has led to an upsurge in the number of ethnic Chinese now seeking an active role in Indonesian politics. At the same time, and not surprisingly, divisions exist within the Chinese community as to what kind of representation they wish to seek and, indeed, how they might obtain it, as analysed in the papers by Freedman, Giblin and Purdey (this issue). Some Chinese have formed their own political parties, such as the *Partai Reformasi Tionghoa Indonesia* (Chinese Indonesian Reform Party), although this party did not contest the June 1999 general elections.⁸⁸ Dr Thee Kian Wie, a well-known economist and ethnic Chinese, believes these trends towards political representation are positive, but argues that Chinese should not 'form purely Chinese parties,' adding, 'we become sectarian when we fight only for a particular race. I'm against parties based on ethnicity'.⁸⁹ Ethnic Chinese should instead seek representation through more popular parties, he suggests, which is exactly what others have done, joining parties such as the National Mandate Party (PAN), *Nahdatul Ulama* (NU) and *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia* (Indonesian Democratic Party, PDI-P).⁹⁰ These political parties have, in effect, moved to embrace religious and ethnic differences that exist within their ranks, trying in particular to win the confidence of Christians and ethnic Chinese voters and members.

86 It can also be argued that the majority of Indonesians did not gain political representation during this period and that the problem was not limited to the Chinese. However, no government representatives were Chinese, whereas certain other ethnic groups did have some representation.

87 N.D. Kristof, 'The Fall of Suharto: Voices', *The New York Times* (25 May 1998), p. 8; *Straits Times* 'Jakarta to Review Laws on Ethnic Chinese' (6 January 2000).

88 K. Chew, 'Indonesia's Chinese Try to Break Political Shackles', *Straits Times* (18 April 1999).

89 Cited in K. Chew, *ibid.*

90 J. Mackie, 'Tackling "the Chinese Problem"': L. Suryadinata, 'Chinese Politics in Post-Suharto's Indonesia'.

It is evident that even *within* the Chinese community there is widespread disenchantment with previous processes that allowed, among other things, a small group of Chinese elite to dominate a large portion of the economy. The turn towards political representation for some Chinese is part of a wider drive among the poorer and middle-class ethnic Chinese to detach their identities from the rich elite of their ethnic group and the crony politics of the Suharto regime. Chew suggests that these attempts to gain political representation are part of a 'fundamental change in mood for the Chinese after the May riots'.⁹¹ Is it likely, then, that the elite Chinese will follow this new drive of Chinese political representation? Most likely not, states Talcott, who suggests that, instead, they would probably like to retain their power behind the scenes more, there being little point in them turning to politics as this would only cause public anger and possibly undermine the political power they already covertly enjoy.⁹² Certainly the high profile case of Bob Hasan, perhaps the most infamous of Suharto's ethnic Chinese cronies, receiving a six-year imprisonment in early 2001 after being found guilty of 'misusing' \$US243 million in state reforestation funds, tends to support this argument.⁹³

Emerging Non-political Organisations

As well as political parties' playing an important part in the emergence of new role models, ambitions and dynamics among the Chinese, new civil rights and non-political organisations have emerged, playing equally important functions. For some ethnic Chinese, this has been considered a more appropriate avenue through which to channel their energy and passions, rather than the political realm. Indeed, as argued by Suryadinata

despite such movements into the political arena, many ethnic Chinese still suffered from political phobia. They felt that party politics was dangerous and an ethnic party would not be effective. They preferred to work with associations and pressure groups to fight discrimination. They wanted to establish NGOs that would promote ethnic Chinese interests.⁹⁴

Giblin (this issue) suggests that these newly emerging non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should be subdivided as, while some are campaigning on anti-discrimination matters, others are concentrating on social and cultural issues. Two increasingly well-known socio-cultural NGOs which have emerged are *Paguyuban Sosial Marga Tionghoa Indonesia* (PSMTI; Indonesian Chinese Social Clan Association) and *Perhimpunan Indonesia Keturunan Tionghoa* (INTI; Associations of Indonesians of Chinese Descent). Their albeit brief histories reflect the diversity of feelings within the Chinese community as to how such organisations should operate to promote ethnic Chinese interests.

Anti-discrimination groups—often with some degree of political leaning as well—have tended to be established by younger members of the Indonesian Chinese community. Such organisations have also been divided regarding how best to voice their concerns, whether this should be within the Chinese Indonesian community alone, or whether the establishment of non-ethnic-based organisations is more appropriate. Yet such youth have generally felt frustrated by the slowness of change in Indonesia regarding discrimination against the Chinese Indonesians and are pushing for more rapid and significant reforms.⁹⁵ Such groups, among others discussed by Giblin (this issue) include

91 K. Chew, 'Indonesia's Chinese Try to Break Political Shackles'.

92 G. Talcott, 'Democratizing Indonesia: Legacies and contingencies', unpublished paper delivered to the Wellington Branch of the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs (9 September 1999).

93 Laksamana.Net, 'Bob Hasan moved to new Prison', online text: http://laksamana.net/vnews.cfm?news_id=744 (2001).

94 L. Suryadinata, 'Chinese Politics in Post-Suharto's Indonesia', p. 512.

95 *Ibid.*

Solidaritas Pemuda Pemudi Tionghoa Untuk Keadilan (SIMPATIK; Chinese Youth Solidarity for Justice) and *Gerakan Perjuangan Anti Diskriminasi* (GANDI; Anti-discrimination Movement).

As discussed by Nagata (this issue), other initiatives working towards the restoration of ethnic harmony via the voluntary sector are also emerging, albeit in unforeseen and unexpected ways. Multi-ethnic and multi-religious organisations are beginning to gain greater acceptance within the broader communities in which they operate. Some are tackling issues of how Indonesian heritage should be negotiated and defined, which can lead, as Nagata explains, to Chinese heritage also being recognised, a significant change from the past in the politics of cultural identity within the country.

New Literary Forms and the Media

New literary expressions by the Chinese in Indonesia are developing rapidly as well. During Suharto's period, Chinese literature within Indonesia was effectively silenced, as explained in Allen's article (this issue). Yet after Suharto's resignation, at least two organisations of Chinese Indonesian writers have been established, 32 years after their predecessors were disbanded, and Chinese Indonesian literature is undergoing something of a renaissance.⁹⁶ Furthermore, a Jakarta publisher is also now trying to save late nineteenth century and early twentieth century Chinese literature from being ignored, by publishing a series of anthologies of the work of Chinese writers in the Malay language.⁹⁷

Stories depicting friendships between Chinese and *pribumi* Indonesians are increasingly appearing in fictional literary works. In addition, television dramas such as *Cinta Terhalang Tembok* (Obstructed Love) and 'Don't Call Me Chinese'—although not supported by all ethnic Chinese due to often assimilationist storylines—have picked up on such themes to highlight the need for greater understanding across ethnic boundaries, 'mirroring a greater willingness to allow the open expression of Chinese culture in the years since the fall of Suharto'.⁹⁸

Similarly, the Chinese media in Indonesia has also undergone a reawakening since the fall of Suharto. As detailed in the article by Pandiangan (this issue), dozens of new newspapers have emerged throughout Indonesia in Chinese and Indonesian languages, in an attempt to meet the growing demands of the ethnic Chinese community. These have provided a space for Chinese to discuss the visions that they have for their future in Indonesia, with many papers stressing the need for acknowledgement of the country's diversity regarding religion and ethnicity, as well as protesting against the discriminatory practices against ethnic Chinese still in place.

Nevertheless, as Suryadinata contemplates, 'whether these publications will be able to survive given their limited readership and limited advertising remains to be seen'.⁹⁹ Indeed, as Pandiangan stresses, what will determine the fate of these new media outlets is not so much the authorities for the time being, but problems concerning inflexible management, funding (especially due to a lack of advertisers) and the capabilities of editorial staff.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ M. Cohen, 'Cultural Revival—Raising the Lantern'.

⁹⁸ M. Cohen, 'Exploring a Painful Past', *Far Eastern Economic Review* (19 September 2002), pp. 62–5.

⁹⁹ L. Suryadinata, 'Chinese Politics in Post-Suharto's Indonesia', p. 522.

¹⁰⁰ See also I. Christianto, 'Chinese publications face rivalry', *The Jakarta Post* (30 April 2000).

Conclusion

Since the 1998 riots and the downfall of Suharto, alternative discourses of identity through the actions of political parties, NGOs, literature and the media have begun to surface, bringing into the open new or re-emerging ideas concerning what it means to be ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. Cultural meanings are being actively negotiated and contested through a range of activities, in turn influencing ethnic Chinese in their personal interpretations of self-identity, as well as being reflections of these.

The history of antagonism towards the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia will not be forgotten, nor should it be, if the mistakes of the past are to be avoided in the future, as passionately argued by Fuyuan (this issue). The disastrous riots and murders that occurred in 1998 after the economic crisis began the year previously, had a direct impact on thousands of Chinese throughout Indonesia. It is clear that this crisis has resulted in a multitude of reactions from the ethnic Chinese. Many of the wealthy elite Chinese fled the country, taking much-needed capital with them. Yet, conversely, other wealthy ethnic Chinese, and many middle and lower class Chinese did not react similarly to these events, and diverse, long-term strategies for such Chinese have emerged, interwoven with new and (re)emerging identity formations. These developments highlight the inability of the Suharto government to assimilate the ethnic Chinese into Indonesian society, while acknowledging that there must be legal, political and ideological changes within the country for the ethnic-based disasters of the 1990s, as well as those of the more distant past, to be avoided in the future. We therefore turn, in the following papers, to explore in more detail a range of these strategies, to examine the more immediate political and ideological changes that are underlying them, and to identify the emerging and re-emerging forms of identity becoming apparent within Chinese communities in Indonesia.