

# From protest to power: Co-optation, patronage, and the institutional transformation of 1998 reform activists in post-reform Indonesia

Fatturrahman<sup>1</sup>, Yahdi Qolbi<sup>2\*</sup>, Alberto N Patty<sup>3</sup>, and Mujiburrahman<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Mulawarman, Samarinda, Indonesia, email: rfattur5@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>Universitas Mulawarman, Samarinda, Indonesia, email: yahdiqolbi@fisip.unmul.ac.id

<sup>3</sup>Universitas Mulawarman, Samarinda, Indonesia, email: albertonovianopatty@fisip.unmul.ac.id

<sup>4</sup>Universitas Mulawarman, Samarinda, Indonesia, email: mujiburrahman@fisip.unmul.ac.id

\*Corresponding author

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## ABSTRACT

*This study examines changes in the political behavior of former 1998 activists in post-Reform Indonesia, particularly their integration into formal power structures during 2014–2024. While previous studies have emphasized structural and institutional dimensions, limited attention has been given to the interaction between political opportunities and activists' motives. This research analyzes the forms of political affiliation adopted by former activists, the factors driving behavioral change, and the implications for democracy. Using a qualitative case study approach, the study analyzes secondary data from 47 online media articles published between 2019 and 2024. Data were collected through documentation and analyzed through coding, categorization, and interpretation. The analysis integrates theories of political behavior, patronage, and co-optation. The findings reveal three patterns. First, former activists increasingly entered formal political institutions through executive positions, political party networks, and appointments as commissioners of state-owned enterprises, indicating the institutionalization of activism. Second, changes in political behavior were driven by political incentives, patronage networks, economic access, and regulatory pressures that constrained extra-parliamentary activism. Third, this integration produced ambivalent consequences for democracy by expanding political representation while weakening the critical capacity of civil society. The study argues that activism in post-authoritarian contexts results from the interaction of actor rationality, institutional pressures, and political opportunity structures. The findings underscore the importance of strengthening political accountability and safeguarding civil society independence.*

### Keywords:

*activist 1998; political co-optation; patronage; political behavior*

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## INTRODUCTION

Changes in the political behavior of post-reform activism in Indonesia are shaped not only by psychological factors, but also by political, economic, and institutional transformations following the collapse of the New Order regime. The democratic transition after 1998 expanded political participation and access to state institutions, while also restructuring the relationship between the state and civil society (Aspinall, 2020; Boudreau, 1999; Setiawan & Tomsa, 2023).

One major phenomenon in the post-reform era is the involvement of former activists in legislative and executive institutions (Haryanto et al., 2023; Mietzner, 2013). This shift reflects a transformation from extra-parliamentary activism toward institutional activism. However, Indonesia's democratic trajectory has also been marked by declining civil liberties, weakening institutional independence, and the persistence of patronage politics (Laebens & Lührmann, 2021; Mudhoffir, 2023). As a result, activists' integration into state institutions cannot be viewed solely as democratic consolidation, but also as part of broader power dynamics that may reshape activist orientations and behavior.

Previous studies on post-reform activist transformation generally fall into three approaches. First, the institutional approach examines activists' involvement in state institutions as a strategy to influence policy and advance reform agendas (Haryanto et al., 2023; Mietzner, 2013). Second, the critical civil society approach highlights the weakening of activist movements through compromise and accommodation with power (Choir, 2022; Mudhoffir, 2023). Third, the historical approach focuses on student and ideology-based movements during the 1998 Reformasi period (Feillard, 2004; Madrid, 2019). Although these studies provide important insights, they remain largely focused on structural dimensions and pay limited attention to activists' subjective motives and individual rationality in shaping political behavior.

This study addresses that gap by analyzing how political opportunity structures interact with activists' subjective interests in influencing changes in political behavior among former 1998 activists. Specifically, this study asks three questions. First, what forms do activists' political affiliations with power networks take? Second, what factors influence the moderation of activists' political behavior? Third, implications accompany these behavioral changes for democracy in Indonesia?

This research employs three main theoretical perspectives. First, political behavior theory explains political action as a result of rational calculation and efforts to maximize interests (Jasko, 2023; Marcus et al., 2000). Second, patronage theory explains how political power is maintained through clientelistic networks and resource distribution (Aspinall, 2013; Hutchcroft, 2014). Third, co-optation theory explains how regimes incorporate opposition actors into state structures to reduce resistance and maintain political stability (Levitsky & Way, 2002; Selznick, 1966). These perspectives help explain how activists negotiate between idealism, political opportunities, and pragmatic interests.

In this study, political behavior refers to strategic actions taken in response to political incentives, while activism refers to collective efforts to promote social and political change through institutional or non-institutional channels. Political pragmatism is understood as prioritizing practical and political interests over ideological consistency. Meanwhile, democratic decline is examined through empirical indicators such as restrictions on civil liberties, weakening political competition, and declining institutional accountability.

Empirically, post-reform Indonesia shows a pattern in which some former activists have become integrated into political and bureaucratic elites through networks of patronage and political affiliation. This phenomenon raises important questions regarding how such affiliations emerge, what drives changes in political orientation, and how these transformations affect democratic dynamics. Therefore, this article contributes to the study

of post-reform activism by combining structural explanations with the subjective motives and rationality of political actors in understanding the transformation of activism in contemporary Indonesia.

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to analyze changes in the political behavior of 1998 activists in post-reform Indonesia, particularly regarding their political affiliations within the 2014–2024 administrations. A qualitative approach was chosen because this study seeks to understand the meanings, motives, and socio-political processes underlying behavioral transformation, while the case study design enables an in-depth exploration of activists' involvement within state power structures.

The study uses secondary data derived from online media reports discussing the political affiliations of 1998 activists. Data were collected through documentation techniques using systematic searches on Google with Boolean-based keywords such as “1998 Activists” AND “power affiliations.” From this process, 47 relevant articles published between 2019 and 2024 were selected. The units of analysis include media outlets such as Tempo.co, Tirto.id, BBC Indonesia, VOA Indonesia, Kompas.id, CNN Indonesia, Detik.com, AntaraNews, and several other online platforms. The selection of these sources was based on considerations of editorial diversity, national coverage, and relevance to the research topic. Articles were included only if they explicitly discussed the positions, affiliations, or political involvement of former 1998 activists within government institutions.

Data analysis employed interpretive qualitative analysis through three stages. First, open coding was conducted to identify recurring themes, such as forms of political affiliation, motives, and factors driving behavioral change. Second, axial coding was used to group these themes into broader analytical categories, including patronage, co-optation, and political pragmatism. Third, interpretation was conducted by connecting the empirical findings with the theoretical frameworks of political behavior, patronage, and state co-optation in order to produce contextual explanations. The analysis process was iterative, meaning that data were repeatedly reviewed and refined to ensure consistency and analytical depth.

To strengthen validity, this study applied source triangulation by comparing information across media outlets and identifying recurring narrative patterns. Researcher reflexivity was also employed to minimize interpretive bias and ensure that conclusions remained grounded in empirical evidence. Nevertheless, this study recognizes several limitations, particularly the potential influence of media framing, editorial bias, and uneven representation of political actors within online news coverage.

The use of media reports as primary data is considered appropriate because media not only document political events but also construct public narratives surrounding political phenomena. Therefore, analyzing media coverage enables this study to examine the political affiliations of 1998 activists not only as empirical developments, but also as part of broader discursive and political dynamics in post-reform Indonesia.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Political Affiliations of 1998 Activists in the Circle of Power

Research findings indicate that following the reform era, particularly during the 2014–2024 period, there has been a significant shift in the patterns of engagement among 1998 activists, moving from the extra-parliamentary sphere toward formal state power structures. Based on an analysis of 47 online media articles, it was identified that a number of activists who were previously involved in the opposition movement now hold strategic positions in the government, either as deputy ministers or commissioners of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs).

**Table 1.** Political affiliations of activists

| Actors                | Organ Activist     | Position/Job Title                                                                                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mugiyanto Sipin       | SMID               | Deputy Minister of Human Rights                                                                       |
| Nezar Patria          | SMID               | Deputy Minister of Communication and Digital Affairs                                                  |
| Andi Arief            | SMID               | PLN Commissioner                                                                                      |
| Agus Jabo Priyono     | PRD                | Deputy Minister of Social Affairs                                                                     |
| Faisol Riza           | PRD                | Deputy Minister of Industry                                                                           |
| Budiman Sudjatmiko    | PRD                | Head of the Agency for the Acceleration of Poverty Eradication                                        |
| Mustar Bonaventura    | Pena 98            | Commissioner of PT Dahana (Persero)                                                                   |
| Fendy Eventius Mugni  | Pena 98            | Commissioner of PT Mandiri Tunas Finance                                                              |
| M. Budiman Napitupulu | Pena 98            | Commissioner of PT Yodya Karya (Persero)                                                              |
| Katno Rizki           | Pena 98            | Commissioner of PT Industri Kapal Indonesia (Persero)                                                 |
| Yervis M. Pakan       | Pena 98            | Commissioner of PT Barata Indonesia (Persero)                                                         |
| Ranto Roy Simanjuntak | Pena 98            | Commissioner of PT Perikanan Nusantara (Persero)                                                      |
| Sarbini               | FKSMJ              | Commissioner of PT HK Infrastruktur [subsidiary of PT Utama Karya (Persero)]                          |
| Rama Pratama          | Senat Mahasiswa UI | Commissioner of PT Telkom Satelit Indonesia [subsidiary of PT Telekomunikasi Indonesia (Persero) Tbk] |
| Fahri Hamzah          | KAMMI              | Deputy Minister of Housing and Settlements                                                            |

Source: Compiled by researchers, 2025

The data in Table 1 show that figures such as Mugiyanto Sipin and Nezar Patria (SMID), as well as Agus Jabo Priyono and Budiman Sudjatmiko (PRD), hold executive positions in the government, while the majority of activists affiliated with Pena 98 are concentrated in board member positions at state-owned enterprises. This data was obtained through media documentation using strict selection criteria, thereby representing a consistent pattern rather than merely a compilation of sporadic cases.

From these findings, three main patterns of political affiliation emerge. First, the integration of activists into executive positions indicates a pathway toward the institutionalization of activism, where movement actors transform into part of the state structure. Second, the dominance of appointments to SOE commissioner positions suggests the existence of a position-distribution mechanism based on political networks, rather than purely technocratic meritocracy. Third, there is a tendency toward differentiation in affiliation pathways, where activists with backgrounds in ideological organizations such as SMID and PRD are more likely to enter political positions, while networks like Pena 98 are more concentrated in semi-political positions within the state corporate sector.

Analytically, this pattern can be explained through a combination of patronage and co-optation theories. Within the patronage framework (Aspinall, 2013), the strategic positions obtained by activists reflect the distribution of political resources by the ruling elite to actors of strategic value, whether through historical legitimacy as “reform actors” or the social networks they possess. This relationship is clientelistic in nature, wherein the state (patron) provides access to positions and resources, while activists (clients) offer political and symbolic support. Meanwhile, from the perspective of co-optation (Levitsky & Way, 2002; Selznick, 1966), the entry of activists into the power structure can be understood as a systemic strategy to dampen the potential for opposition by integrating critical actors into formal institutions.

The mechanism of change in activists’ political behavior in this context does not occur instantly, but rather through a gradual process. First, there is a phase of structural adaptation, in which activists respond to the opening of post-reform political opportunities by considering institutional channels as a new arena for struggle. Second, the phase of political affiliation, marked by involvement in political parties or closeness to the power elite as a prerequisite for obtaining positions. Third, the phase of internalizing the logic of power, where the orientation of action begins to shift from mass mobilization toward policy and resource management. In this stage, political rationality (Jasko, 2023; Marcus et al., 2000), plays a crucial role, as actors adjust their strategies to maximize political gains within the existing structure.

The implications of this process for democracy cannot be simplistically framed as a normative “setback,” but must be assessed through empirical indicators. Research findings suggest that activists’ political affiliations contribute to two ambivalent trends. On one hand, the integration of activists into the state has the potential to strengthen representation and bring reform agendas into public policy. However, on the other hand, the dominance of patronage and co-optation patterns has the potential to weaken the independence of actors and reduce the critical capacity of civil society. This is reflected in the tendency of activists who have become part of the establishment to engage less frequently in open criticism of state policies, as well as an increasing attachment to institutional interests and political networks.

Furthermore, the link between data and theory also reveals a clear cause-and-effect relationship. The appointment of activists to board positions in state-owned enterprises, for example, not only reflects recognition of their political experience but can also be interpreted as a form of resource redistribution within a broader patronage network (Menozzi et al., 2012). Meanwhile, activists involvement in executive positions demonstrates how co-optation operates at the policy level, where actors previously outside the system now participate in the production of policies that are often compromising (Koo, 2021). Thus, changes in activists’ political behavior are not merely individual matters but the result of interactions between political opportunity structures, material incentives, and power strategies.

Theoretically, these findings reinforce the argument that the transformation of activism in post-authoritarian states cannot be understood merely as a moral or ideological shift, but as a consequence of the restructuring of the relationship between the state and civil society. The integration of activists into the state power structure indicates that the boundary between the opposition and the state is becoming increasingly fluid, so that activism is no longer entirely outside the state but has become part of the power configuration itself. Practically, this finding indicates the importance of institutional mechanisms capable of maintaining the accountability and independence of actors, so that activists’ involvement in the state is not entirely absorbed into a logic of patronage that could potentially undermine the quality of democracy.

### **The transformation of activist behavior in economic factors**

Research findings indicate that during the post-reform period, particularly between 2014 and 2024, there has been a significant shift in the political engagement of former 1998 activists from extra-parliamentary movements toward formal state institutions. Based on the analysis of 47 online media articles, a number of former activists were identified as occupying strategic positions within the government, either in executive offices or state-owned enterprises (SOEs). This pattern suggests that post-reform activism has increasingly moved from oppositional politics into institutionalized political participation.

The data in Table 1 reveal three important patterns. First, activists from organizations such as SMID and PRD are more likely to occupy executive and policy-oriented positions within the government. Figures such as Mugiyanto Sipin, Nezar Patria, Agus Jabo Priyono, and Budiman Sudjatmiko demonstrate how former movement actors have entered formal political institutions. Second, activists affiliated with Pena 98 are predominantly concentrated in commissioner positions within SOEs, indicating a different pathway of political integration through state-corporate institutions rather than direct policy-making positions. Third, the distribution of positions reflects differentiated networks of political access, where ideological activist organizations tend to connect with formal political institutions, while broader activist networks are more associated with semi-political or corporatist positions.



**Figure 1.** Comparison of job salaries with the cost of living in 2025  
Source: *Compiled by researchers, 2025*

These findings suggest that the transformation of activism in post-reform Indonesia is not random, but follows identifiable patterns of political affiliation and resource distribution. The dominance of appointments to SOE commissioner positions indicates that political access is influenced not only by technocratic competence, but also by political networks and historical legitimacy as former reform actors. In this context, activists' involvement within state institutions represents a broader process of institutionalization, where actors who once operated outside the state gradually become integrated into formal power structures.

From a theoretical perspective, these patterns can be explained through patronage and co-optation frameworks. Patronage theory (Aspinall, 2013) helps explain how political elites distribute strategic positions and resources to actors with symbolic value and political networks. The appointments identified in Table 1 indicate a clientelistic relationship in which the state provides institutional access, while activists contribute political legitimacy and support. At the same time, co-optation theory (Levitsky & Way, 2002; Selznick, 1966) explains how the integration of former opposition actors into state institutions can reduce the potential for external criticism and opposition by incorporating them into the existing political order.

The findings also show that changes in activists' political behavior occur gradually through several interconnected phases. The first phase is structural adaptation, where activists respond to the expansion of political opportunities after reformasi by shifting their struggle into institutional channels. The second phase involves political affiliation through political parties, elite networks, or government connections that provide access to strategic positions. The third phase is the internalization of institutional logic, where activists increasingly orient their actions toward policy negotiation, bureaucratic management, and resource distribution rather than mass mobilization. In this process, political rationality plays an important role, as actors adapt their strategies to maximize political influence and institutional access.

The implications of these transformations for democracy are ambivalent. On the one hand, the integration of former activists into state institutions may strengthen representation and allow reform agendas to influence public policy from within government structures. On the other hand, the dominance of patronage and co-optation mechanisms may weaken activists' independence and reduce the critical capacity of civil society actors. Several findings indicate that activists who have entered state institutions tend to become less involved in open criticism of government policies and more closely tied to institutional and political interests.

The relationship between empirical findings and theoretical frameworks further demonstrates that changes in activists' political behavior are shaped by interactions between political opportunity structures, material incentives, and state power strategies. The concentration of activists in SOE commissioner positions reflects not only recognition of

political experience, but also the redistribution of resources within patronage networks. Similarly, activists occupying executive positions illustrate how co-optation operates at the policy level by integrating former opposition actors into state governance structures. Therefore, the transformation of activism in post-reform Indonesia should not be understood solely as an ideological shift, but as part of a broader restructuring of relations between the state and civil society in a democratic context.

### Regulations that Suppress Activism

Research findings indicate that changes in the political behavior of former 1998 activists were influenced not only by political and economic opportunities, but also by regulatory dynamics that shaped the boundaries of civil society participation in post-reform Indonesia. Based on the analysis of 47 online media articles, several regulations were consistently associated with increasing state control over freedom of expression, public mobilization, and civil society organizations. These findings suggest that changes in activist behavior occurred within a broader political environment characterized by tighter legal and institutional regulation.

**Table 2.** List of restrictive regulations

| Category                                          | Regulation/Laws                                                           | Impact on Activism                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Restrictions on Freedom of Expression             | ITE Law (Articles 27, 28); New Criminal Code (Articles 218, 219, 240)     | Criminalizing criticism of the government, activists, and journalists; threatening freedom of expression, especially regarding insults against the government. |
| Restrictions on Community Organizations           | Government Regulation in place of Law No. 2 of 2017 on Mass Organizations | Criminalizing criticism of the government, activists, and journalists; threatening freedom of expression, especially regarding insults against the government. |
| Criminalization of Demonstrations & Public Action | New Criminal Code (Article 256)                                           | Regulating demonstration permits with criminal penalties for unauthorized actions.                                                                             |
| Digital Surveillance and Censorship               | ITE Law and Revision of Broadcasting Law (Draft)                          | The potential for media and internet censorship to restrict criticism.                                                                                         |

Source: Compiled by researchers, 2025

The data in Table 3 demonstrate three important patterns. First, there is an increasing use of legal instruments to regulate freedom of expression, particularly through provisions related to defamation, insults against government institutions, and online speech. Second, the state has expanded its authority over civil society organizations through administrative and legal mechanisms, including the ability to restrict or dissolve organizations considered contrary to state interests. Third, regulations concerning demonstrations and digital spaces indicate the expansion of state control over both physical and online arenas of political participation. Together, these patterns show that regulation functions not only as a governance mechanism, but also as an instrument shaping the relationship between the state and civil society.

These findings can be analyzed through the framework of democratic backsliding and competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky & Way, 2002), where democratic institutions formally remain in place but experience substantive limitations in practice. In this context, restrictions on activism increasingly operate through legal and institutional mechanisms rather than direct coercion. This pattern is also consistent with co-optation theory (Selznick, 1966), which explains how political systems encourage critical actors to adapt to institutional channels rather than maintain confrontational opposition outside the system.

The findings further indicate that regulatory pressures contribute to gradual changes in activists' political behavior. The increasing legal and political risks associated with demonstrations, public criticism, and extra-parliamentary activism create disincentives for confrontational political action. As a result, some activists adopt more moderate strategies by shifting their activities toward institutional participation, policy advocacy, or political

affiliation with actors in power. In the long term, this adaptation may transform the orientation of activism from oppositional mobilization toward institutional negotiation and accommodation. From the perspective of political behavior theory, this shift can be understood as a rational response to changing political opportunities and risks.

The relationship between empirical findings and theoretical explanations also reveals a broader structural dynamic. Regulations that increase the political costs of non-institutional activism indirectly strengthen incentives for activists to enter formal political institutions. In this context, integration into state institutions is driven not only by access to power and resources, but also by the narrowing of political alternatives outside the system. This helps explain why some former activists choose compromise and institutional participation as strategies for political survival within an increasingly regulated democratic environment.

The implications for democracy are ambivalent. On the one hand, increasing regulation contributes to the narrowing of civic space, reflected in reduced public mobilization, greater caution in political expression, and declining oppositional activism. On the other hand, the adaptation of activists to institutional channels may also encourage more policy-oriented forms of political engagement. Therefore, regulation simultaneously limits the space for criticism while also accelerating the institutionalization of activism in post-reform Indonesia.

Theoretically, these findings reinforce the argument that in post-authoritarian contexts, state control over civil society often operates through institutionalized legal mechanisms rather than overt repression. This indicates that the boundary between democratic governance and authoritarian practices becomes increasingly blurred when restrictions on civil liberties are implemented through formally legitimate regulations. By combining perspectives on democratic backsliding and co-optation, this study demonstrates how regulatory mechanisms play an important role in reshaping the political behavior of activist actors in contemporary Indonesia.

### Implications of Changes in the Political Behavior of Activists in 1998 after the Reform

Research findings indicate that changes in the political behavior of former 1998 activists did not occur randomly, but followed identifiable patterns of motivation shaped by political opportunities, institutional access, and network relations. Based on the analysis of 47 online media articles, several recurring motives were identified, including political volunteering, reconciliation through government positions, involvement in formal political processes, and adaptation to institutional power structures. These findings demonstrate that the transformation of activism in post-reform Indonesia is closely connected to both subjective rationality and broader political dynamics.

**Table 3.** Motives for political behavior change among activists in 1998

| Actors             | Motive                                        | Main Issues                                                                                                                                                                | Sources                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Budiman Sudjatmiko | Political Volunteers                          | Expressing his political stance, he gave his support to Prabowo Subianto, stating that he is not a criminal and has become a part of the democratic process.               | <a href="https://www.kompas.tv/nasional/468290/budiman-sudjatmiko-tidak-ada-bukti-hukum-prabowo-subianto-kriminal-ham-dia-bagian-dari-demokrasi">https://www.kompas.tv/nasional/468290/budiman-sudjatmiko-tidak-ada-bukti-hukum-prabowo-subianto-kriminal-ham-dia-bagian-dari-demokrasi</a> |
| Nezar Patria       | Rejecting Freedom of the Press                | Reporting on the podcast content <i>Bocor Alus Politik (Tempo)</i> entitled " <i>Erick Thohir's Maneuvers Through PSSI and State-Owned Enterprises Disliked by PDIP</i> ". | <a href="https://kumparan.com/kumparannews/profil-nezar-patria-staf-khusus-erick-thohir-yang-jadi-wamenkominfo-20oD2XRBXgs/full">https://kumparan.com/kumparannews/profil-nezar-patria-staf-khusus-erick-thohir-yang-jadi-wamenkominfo-20oD2XRBXgs/full</a>                                 |
| Mugiyanto Sipin    | Reconciliation of Government Agency Positions | Stating that Prabowo was not fit to be president during the 2014 presidential election. Mugi was then appointed Deputy Minister of Human Rights in Prabowo's cabinet.      | <a href="https://www.tempo.co/arsip/profil-mugiyanto-pernah-bilang-prabowo-tak-pantas-maju-presiden-kini-jadi-wamen-ham-1144180">https://www.tempo.co/arsip/profil-mugiyanto-pernah-bilang-prabowo-tak-pantas-maju-presiden-kini-jadi-wamen-ham-1144180</a>                                 |

|                       |                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Andi Arief            | Political Volunteers                          | In the 2024 election, he will support Prabowo-Gibran through the Democratic Party.                                                                                                                                                                                  | <a href="https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20231023105416-617-1014720/andi-arief-soal-pilihan-cawapres-prabowo-demokrat-akan-bersama">https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20231023105416-617-1014720/andi-arief-soal-pilihan-cawapres-prabowo-demokrat-akan-bersama</a>                                                                               |
| Agus Jabo Priyono     | Efforts to Postpone the 2024 Elections        | The decision by the General Elections Commission (KPU) to postpone the 2024 elections is unconstitutional, based on Agus Jabo's previous lawsuit at the Jakarta District Court, filed through the Prima Party.                                                      | <a href="https://www.tempo.co/politik/profil-ketum-partai-prima-agus-jabo-yang-gugatannya-dikabulkan-pn-jakpus-lewat-putusan-penundaan-pemilu-213169">https://www.tempo.co/politik/profil-ketum-partai-prima-agus-jabo-yang-gugatannya-dikabulkan-pn-jakpus-lewat-putusan-penundaan-pemilu-213169</a>                                                       |
| Faisol Riza           | Reconciliation of Government Agency Positions | Joined the government through a representative/recommendation from the ruling coalition party from 2008 to the present.                                                                                                                                             | <a href="https://www.antaranews.com/berita/4412221/faisol-riza-sosok-yang-dampingi-agus-gumiwang-menjaga-iklim-industri">https://www.antaranews.com/berita/4412221/faisol-riza-sosok-yang-dampingi-agus-gumiwang-menjaga-iklim-industri</a>                                                                                                                 |
| Mustar Bonaventura    | Political Volunteers                          | Actively volunteered for the 2014, 2019, and 2024 presidential elections through the PDIP Party's wing organization (Pospera).                                                                                                                                      | <a href="https://www.tribunnews.com/mata-lokal-memilih/2023/10/25/profil-mustar-bona-ventura-eks-relawan-jokowi-yang-kini-jadi-wakil-ketua-tpn-ganjar-mahfud">https://www.tribunnews.com/mata-lokal-memilih/2023/10/25/profil-mustar-bona-ventura-eks-relawan-jokowi-yang-kini-jadi-wakil-ketua-tpn-ganjar-mahfud</a>                                       |
| Fendy Eventius Mugni  | Political Volunteers                          | OJK approved his appointment as commissioner of PT Mandiri after he was active in the PDIP Party's wing organization (Pospera).                                                                                                                                     | <a href="https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/market/20231214162847-17-497483/ojk-setujui-fendy-eventius-jadi-komisaris-independen-mtf">https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/market/20231214162847-17-497483/ojk-setujui-fendy-eventius-jadi-komisaris-independen-mtf</a>                                                                                                 |
| M. Budiman Napitupulu | Political Volunteers                          | Joined the ranks of State-Owned Enterprise Commissioners during Jokowi's era in 2020 while actively participating in the PDIP Party's wing organization (Pospera).                                                                                                  | <a href="https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/market/20201117164459-17-202507/ada-lagi-times-jokowi-jadi-komisaris-bumn-dari-pdip-nih">https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/market/20201117164459-17-202507/ada-lagi-times-jokowi-jadi-komisaris-bumn-dari-pdip-nih</a>                                                                                                   |
| Katno Rizki           | Political Volunteers                          | Appointed to the board of commissioners of state-owned enterprises in 2020 after joining the PDIP Party's wing organization (Pospera).                                                                                                                              | <a href="https://www.cnnindonesia.com/ekonomi/20201117131249-92-570776/daftar-komisaris-bumn-dari-pospera">https://www.cnnindonesia.com/ekonomi/20201117131249-92-570776/daftar-komisaris-bumn-dari-pospera</a>                                                                                                                                             |
| Yervis M. Pakan       | Political Volunteers                          | Through the PDIP Party's wing organization (Pospera), filling the ranks of state-owned enterprise commissioners Barata Indonesia.                                                                                                                                   | <a href="https://www.suarasurabaya.net/ekonomibisnis/2020/dorong-kemajuan-industri-manufaktur-dalam-negeri-kementerian-bumn-rombak-jajaran-pt-barata-indonesia/#google_vignette">https://www.suarasurabaya.net/ekonomibisnis/2020/dorong-kemajuan-industri-manufaktur-dalam-negeri-kementerian-bumn-rombak-jajaran-pt-barata-indonesia/#google_vignette</a> |
| Ranto Roy Simanjuntak | Political Volunteers                          | Appointed as Commissioner of a State-Owned Enterprise after being active in the PDIP Party's wing organization (Pospera).                                                                                                                                           | <a href="https://www.satukanindonesia.com/melihat-kinerja-bumn-yang-buat-staf-erick-thohir-dipolisikan/">https://www.satukanindonesia.com/melihat-kinerja-bumn-yang-buat-staf-erick-thohir-dipolisikan/</a>                                                                                                                                                 |
| Sarbini               | Reconciliation of Government Agency Positions | From being a legislative candidate in 2008 for the Democratic Party to becoming a commissioner of a state-owned enterprise.                                                                                                                                         | <a href="https://www.tempo.co/arsip/aktivis-98-komisaris-bumn-824337">https://www.tempo.co/arsip/aktivis-98-komisaris-bumn-824337</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Rama Pratama          | Reconciliation of Government Agency Positions | He began his political career as a member of the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) and served as a member of the Indonesian House of Representatives from 2004 to 2009. Then, in 2021, he became a commissioner of a state-owned enterprise.                           | <a href="https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/market/20210715183622-17-261281/eks-kader-pks-rama-pratama-ditunjuk-jadi-komisaris-telkomsat">https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/market/20210715183622-17-261281/eks-kader-pks-rama-pratama-ditunjuk-jadi-komisaris-telkomsat</a>                                                                                         |
| Fahri Hamzah          | Reconciliation of Government Agency Positions | From 1999 to 2002, he served as an expert staff member of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR). From 2004 to 2019, he was a member of the House of Representatives (DPR) from the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). In 2024, he was appointed as Deputy Minister. | <a href="https://www.detik.com/bali/berita/d-7603988/profil-dan-karier-politik-fahri-hamzah-wakil-menteri-dari-sumbawa">https://www.detik.com/bali/berita/d-7603988/profil-dan-karier-politik-fahri-hamzah-wakil-menteri-dari-sumbawa</a>                                                                                                                   |

Source: Compiled by researchers, 2025

The data in Table 4 reveal three dominant patterns of behavioral change. First, there is a strong tendency toward partisan activism, where former activists openly align themselves with political elites or electoral coalitions. Cases such as Budiman Sudjatmiko, Andi Arief, and several Pospera figures demonstrate that activists increasingly participate as political volunteers and campaign actors rather than remaining outside formal politics. Second, there is a pattern of political reconciliation through government positions, where actors previously associated with opposition movements later become integrated into executive institutions or state-owned enterprises. The cases of Mugiyanto Sipin, Faisol Riza, and Fahri Hamzah illustrate how former critics of the state eventually entered formal government structures. Third, the findings indicate the importance of organizational and patronage

networks, particularly through party-affiliated organizations such as Pospera, which function as channels for political access and distribution of strategic positions.

Beyond these broader patterns, several cases also demonstrate variations in political motives and strategies. Nezar Patria's involvement in reporting media content reflects the increasing integration of former activists into state-centered information and regulatory practices, while Agus Jabo Priyono's legal challenge regarding the 2024 election demonstrates how activists may utilize institutional and legal mechanisms as part of political contestation. These cases indicate that behavioral transformation is not limited to occupying formal office, but also involves shifts in how activists engage with political authority and institutional power.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings can be explained through the interaction between political behavior theory, patronage, and co-optation. Political behavior theory explains that actors respond rationally to political opportunities, incentives, and institutional access in order to maximize influence and resources. In this context, support for political elites or acceptance of government positions can be interpreted as strategic adaptation within changing political structures. Patronage theory (Aspinall, 2013) further explains how political networks facilitate access to state positions, particularly through clientelistic relationships linking activists with political elites. Meanwhile, co-optation theory (Levitsky & Way, 2002; Selznick, 1966) helps explain how integrating former opposition actors into formal institutions may reduce the potential for external criticism by incorporating them into the political system itself.

The findings also indicate that behavioral change among activists occurs gradually through several stages. Initially, activists establish political proximity with parties, coalitions, or influential actors as a response to emerging political opportunities. This is followed by institutional integration through formal positions within government or SOEs. Over time, activists increasingly adapt to institutional norms, political loyalties, and bureaucratic interests, leading to a shift from oppositional mobilization toward participation within existing power structures. In this process, behavioral transformation reflects not only ideological change, but also adaptation to institutional incentives and political realities.

The implications for democracy are ambivalent. On the one hand, the inclusion of former activists within state institutions may broaden political representation and create opportunities for reform agendas to influence public policy. On the other hand, integration into patronage networks and institutional structures may weaken activists' autonomy and reduce their capacity for criticism toward those in power. This is reflected in the shift from confrontational activism toward more accommodative and institutional forms of political engagement.

Theoretically, these findings reinforce the argument that the transformation of activism in post-authoritarian contexts cannot be understood solely through structural explanations, but must also consider the subjective motives and rational calculations of political actors. By integrating political behavior theory, patronage, and co-optation, this study provides a more comprehensive explanation of how former activists transform from movement actors into participants within formal state power structures in post-reform Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

This study finds that changes in the political behavior of former 1998 activists were shaped by the interaction between political opportunity structures, patronage networks, regulatory pressures, and actors' subjective rationality. The findings demonstrate that the transformation of activism in post-reform Indonesia reflects a shift from extra-parliamentary opposition toward institutional political engagement through government positions, political affiliations, and involvement in state-centered networks. In this context,

activists' integration into formal institutions cannot be understood solely as ideological change or moral deviation, but rather as an adaptive response to changing political incentives and institutional dynamics.

The study also reveals three major patterns. First, former activists increasingly entered executive institutions and state-owned enterprises through political and organizational networks. Second, regulatory developments such as restrictions on freedom of expression and public mobilization contributed to narrowing civic space and encouraged activists to adopt more institutionalized forms of political participation. Third, subjective motives such as political relevance, access to resources, and strategic adaptation played an important role in shaping activists' behavioral transformation. These findings indicate that the transformation of activism was influenced not only by structural factors, but also by actors' rational calculations within the post-reform political environment.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature on post-authoritarian civil society by integrating political behavior theory, patronage, and co-optation into a single analytical framework. This study demonstrates that the boundary between civil society and the state in post-reform Indonesia has become increasingly fluid, where former opposition actors gradually become integrated into formal power structures. Co-optation therefore operates not only as a mechanism of state control, but also as a process of negotiation and adaptation through which activists adjust their political orientations and strategies.

The implications for democracy are ambivalent. On the one hand, activists' involvement in state institutions may expand political representation and provide opportunities to advance reform agendas through institutional channels. On the other hand, integration into patronage networks and institutional structures may reduce activists' autonomy and weaken the critical function of civil society. As a result, democratic decline in Indonesia does not necessarily appear through the collapse of formal democratic institutions, but rather through the gradual weakening of substantive participation, public criticism, and independent civic engagement.

This study also recognizes several limitations. Since the analysis relies primarily on online media reports, the findings may be influenced by media framing, editorial bias, and uneven representation of political actors. Therefore, future research should explore activists' subjective perspectives more directly through interviews or comparative case studies across activist generations and organizational backgrounds. Further studies are also needed to examine how political institutions and regulatory frameworks shape the long-term independence of civil society actors in Indonesia.

Overall, this article contributes not only to the empirical study of post-reform activism, but also to a broader understanding of how democracy evolves through the dynamic interaction between the state, civil society, and political actors operating between them.

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