



Iron Shadows Behind the Smile of Power: *Torture Under the New Order Indonesia*

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Abstract

This study critically examines the pervasive and systematic use of torture during Indonesia's New Order regime (1966-1998). This research underscores the urgent need to address the historical and ongoing implications of state-sponsored violence in Indonesia. Despite Indonesia's transition to a democratic system, the legacies of repression and torture continue to shape the country's political and social landscape. The study analyzes the mechanisms of torture under the New Order, focusing on the state's efforts to silence dissent, control political opposition, and maintain power through fear. Through an examination of archival materials, testimonies from victims, and interviews with human rights activists, this research illuminates the institutionalized practices of torture employed by the Indonesian military and police, often justified under the guise of national security and anti-communism. The work also highlights the impact of these practices on both individual lives and the broader society, contributing to a climate of fear that has persisted even after the regime's



downfall. This research makes a significant contribution by offering a comprehensive analysis of torture's role in reinforcing the power structures of the New Order, revealing the psychological and social costs of authoritarian rule. Furthermore, it emphasizes the urgent need for transitional justice and accountability mechanisms to address the crimes of the past. By providing a historical framework, the study advocates for a broader understanding of Indonesia's political transformation, shedding light on the continuing struggle for justice and human rights in the post-New Order era.

Keywords: New Order, Human Rights, Torture, Authoritarian

Introduction

The genesis of Indonesia's New Order (*Orde Baru*) is inextricably linked to one of the most violent transitions of power in the twentieth century. Emerging from the ashes of the September 30th Movement (G30S) in 1965, General Suharto orchestrated a systematic rise to power by capitalizing on political instability. The consolidation of his regime (1966–1998) was predicated on the foundational trauma of the 1965–1966 anti-communist purges, where an estimated 500,000 to over one million individuals were liquidated (Cribb, 2001). This mass violence served as a brutal preamble, establishing what scholars call "state terrorism" as a primary instrument of political control, transforming the Indonesian state into a machinery of "organized fear" (Roosa, 2006).

Central to the New Order's longevity was the construction of a narrative based on "authoritarian stability" and "developmentalism" (*pembangunan*). Under the ideological banner of *Pancasila* and the preservation of national order, Suharto's government prioritized economic growth over civil liberties. To achieve this, the regime utilized the military's "dual function" (*dwifungsi*), allowing the armed forces to permeate every level of civilian administration. In this climate, any form of political dissent was reframed as a threat to national security, justifying the use of a vast intelligence apparatus designed to monitor and neutralize perceived "enemies of the state" (Vatikiotis, 1998).

Despite the collapse of the New Order in 1998, there remains a significant lack of systematic analysis regarding torture as an institutionalized state policy rather than a series of isolated "excesses." While human rights organizations have documented numerous atrocities, academic discourse often struggles to map the precise bureaucratic architectures that normalized the infliction of pain. This study addresses the pervasive "culture of silence" that continues to shroud the regime's internal security operations. The problem is exacerbated by the Theory of Path Dependency, where the institutional habits of repression developed during the New Order continue to influence contemporary police and military behavior (Hiariej, 2010).

Furthermore, a critical problem persists in the form of entrenched impunity. Post-authoritarian Indonesia has seen the rise of a democratic system, yet the legacies of repression remain embedded within contemporary institutions. Many high-ranking officials responsible for overseeing the machinery of violence successfully transitioned into the democratic era without facing legal accountability (Mietzner, 2009). This gap between the rhetoric of democratization and the reality of accountability has led to a stagnant transitional justice process, where victims remain marginalized and the state's past criminal conduct is rarely addressed in formal judicial settings.

To address the complexities of this dark era, this study seeks to answer the following core questions:

- How was torture institutionalized under the New Order? What were the specific bureaucratic chains of command and institutional structures—such as the Command for the Restoration of Security and Order (*Kopkamtib*)—that facilitated systematic violence?
- What political, legal, and ideological mechanisms justified its use? How did the regime employ the "security approach" and anti-communist rhetoric to legalize and moralize state-sponsored violence (Bourchier, 2014)?
- How do its legacies persist in contemporary Indonesia? To what extent have the psychological traumas and institutional habits of the New Order era survived the transition to democracy, hindering human rights reform?

The primary objectives of this research are:

- To analyze torture as a mechanism of authoritarian governance: To demonstrate that torture was a calculated political tool designed to enforce silence and extract compliance from political actors (Aspinall, 2005).

- To examine institutional structures enabling state violence: To map the military units involved in interrogations, identifying how they operated under a veil of secrecy and legal immunity provided by extra-constitutional bodies like *Bakorstanas*.
- To assess implications for transitional justice: To evaluate the failures of the *Ad Hoc* Human Rights Courts in addressing New Order-era crimes, advocating for a comprehensive truth-seeking process.

This study holds profound significance for both the academic community and Indonesian civil society. By providing an in-depth analysis of the "iron shadows" behind Suharto's "Smiling General" persona, this research contributes to the global body of scholarship on authoritarianism and human rights. It challenges the developmentalist defense of the New Order by exposing the human cost of the regime's achievements (Robinson, 2018).

Moreover, the research is highly relevant to contemporary debates regarding democratic consolidation. As Indonesia faces a perceived "democratic backsliding," understanding the historical patterns of state repression is essential for safeguarding current civil liberties. By illuminating the mechanisms of past state violence, this study serves as both a historical record and a contemporary warning, emphasizing that without addressing the crimes of the past, the foundations of a truly just and democratic Indonesia remain fragile (Hadiz, 2003).

Theoretical Framework

A. Authoritarianism and State Violence

The analytical crux of the New Order's longevity lies in the conceptualization of repression as an essential, rather than incidental, tool of regime survival. In authoritarian structures, state violence is rarely a sporadic outburst; it is a calculated administrative function designed to preserve the hegemony of the ruling elite. According to the Theory of State Terrorism, the government utilizes its monopoly on the legitimate use of force to deliberately instill fear in the civilian population to achieve political ends (Sluka, 2000). In Indonesia, the transition from the Old Order to the New Order necessitated a violent "reset" of the social contract, where the state's

primary responsibility shifted from revolutionary mobilization to the enforcement of "order" and "stability" (*Kamtib*).

Scholars of authoritarianism often distinguish between "low-intensity" and "high-intensity" repression. Under Suharto, the regime mastered a fluctuating scale of violence that allowed it to maintain a facade of constitutionalism while simultaneously operating an extra-judicial shadow state. This dualism is essential for regime survival because it allows the state to appeal to international developmental norms while privately liquidating internal threats. The Bureaucratic-Authoritarian Model suggests that in such states, the military and technocratic elites prioritize national security over civil liberties, viewing human rights not as universal protections but as obstacles to the overarching goal of national developmentalism (O'Donnell, 1988).

A central pillar of this framework is the role of surveillance and the "Panoptic gaze" of the state. Drawing from Foucault's (1977) theories on Discipline and Punish, the New Order constructed a society where the threat of violence was omnipresent, even if the violence itself was not always visible. The regime's intelligence apparatus, most notably *Kopkamtib*, functioned as an invisible eye that permeated the domestic sphere. Surveillance serves as a preemptive form of state violence; by making citizens aware that they are being watched, the state reduces the need for overt coercion, as individuals begin to self-censor their political behavior in a process of psychological internalisation of state power (Tanter, 1991).

Coercion in the New Order was also deeply rooted in the ideological construction of the "Internal Enemy." By framing political dissent as *anti-Pancasila* or "communist-inspired," the regime moralized its use of violence. This Dehumanization Theory posits that state violence becomes socially acceptable—and even applauded by loyalist segments—when victims are portrayed as existential threats to the nation. Torture, in this context, is reimagined by the perpetrator as a necessary "surgery" on the body politic, a perspective that allows military and police personnel to commit atrocities while maintaining a self-image of patriotic duty (Herman & Chomsky, 1988).

The New Order's stability was maintained through what Levitsky and Way (2010) call Competitive Authoritarianism, where democratic institutions exist but are heavily skewed in favor of the incumbent through coercive means. Violence was utilized to ensure that elections were never truly competitive and that civil society remained fragmented. By strategically targeting community leaders and student

activists for detention and torture, the state signaled the "price of opposition." This selective violence creates a "chilling effect" across the broader population, where the fear of the state's iron shadow prevents the formation of a cohesive counter-hegemonic movement (Aspinall, 2005).

The economic dimension of state violence cannot be overlooked, particularly the Political Economy of Repression. The New Order utilized violence to protect capital accumulation and attract foreign investment. By suppressing labor rights through the threat of military intervention, the regime created a "stable" environment for global markets. In this theoretical framework, torture and state-sponsored violence are seen as the "security costs" of developmentalism. The regime's ability to deliver economic growth provided a secondary layer of legitimacy that often masked the underlying brutality of its security apparatus (Hadiz, 1997).

Institutionalized violence also necessitates a complex Bureaucracy of Fear. For torture to be systematic, it requires training, specialized facilities, and a chain of command that ensures plausible deniability. The New Order's military structure facilitated this by creating regional commands (*Kodam*) that functioned as localized centers of repression. This decentralization allowed the regime to maintain a national image of stability while localized "cleansing" operations were carried out. The bureaucracy ensures that violence is efficient, documented, and reproducible across different geographical contexts (Rejali, 2007).

State violence also functions as a tool of Social Fragmentation. By rewarding informants, the New Order eroded the social capital necessary for resistance. The state's coercive power was amplified by its ability to turn neighbors against neighbors, creating a climate of profound mutual suspicion. This atomization of society is a hallmark of successful authoritarianism; when individuals are too afraid to trust one another, the possibility of organized dissent evaporates. Violence, therefore, is not just used to kill bodies, but to sever the social bonds that constitute a healthy, resisting civil society (Robinson, 2018).

The "Smile of Power" was reinforced by the Theory of Legalism, where the regime passed sub-laws and emergency decrees providing a veneer of legality to repressive acts. The Anti-Subversion Law was so vaguely defined it allowed the state to detain almost anyone indefinitely without trial. This "rule by law" allowed the New Order to argue it was acting within its sovereign rights. Torture rooms were thus hidden behind the technicalities of the law, creating a legal labyrinth that made it almost impossible for victims to seek redress (Bourchier, 2014).

The framework must account for the Persistence of Violence beyond the act itself. State violence under the New Order was intended to be "intergenerational," where the stigma of being associated with a "subversive" family member resulted in social and legal marginalization for decades. This created a permanent underclass of citizens who were "administratively disappeared." This theoretical understanding shows that New Order violence was not merely about the physical act of torture, but about the long-term project of maintaining power through the total subjugation of the individual's political life (Roosa, 2006).

B. Torture as Political Instrument

Torture as a political instrument transcends the utilitarian goal of information extraction; it is, fundamentally, an act of Symbolic Domination. In the interrogation rooms of the New Order, the objective was rarely to uncover a "truth" the state did not already know. Instead, torture served as a ritual of total submission, where the state demonstrated absolute power over the physical body. Elaine Scarry's (1985) *The Body in Pain* posits that torture "unmakes the world" of the victim, shrinking their entire existence to the boundary of their skin and replacing personal identity with a state-defined reality of agony.

The symbolic nature of torture is crucial because it transforms the victim into a "spectacle" of state power. Even when conducted in secret, its effects are intended to be felt by the broader community. The broken bodies of released prisoners serve as living warnings—visceral symbols of what happens to those who challenge the *Orde Baru*. In this sense, torture is a form of Political Communication. It is the state's most direct way of speaking to its subjects, sending a message that the social contract is built not on consent, but on the capacity to inflict suffering (Hiariej, 2010).

From the perspective of Psychological Warfare, torture is designed to induce "Learned Helplessness." By subjecting a prisoner to unpredictable and uncontrollable pain, the torturer destroys the victim's sense of agency. This is not merely about silence; it is about creating a state of "brokenness" where the individual is no longer capable of resistance even after they are freed. The New Order utilized sensory deprivation and psychological humiliation to ensure the "subversive" was not just silenced, but dismantled. This totalizing control is the ultimate goal of the authoritarian state (Rejali, 2007).

Social control is also maintained through the Complicity of the Witness. The institutionalization of torture requires a cast of bystanders—doctors who certify the victim is fit for more pain, clerks who file reports, and soldiers who guard doors. This creates a circle of complicity that binds the apparatus of the state together through shared guilt. By involving multiple institutional layers, the New Order ensured that the survival of the regime was linked to the survival of the torturers themselves, making the system highly resistant to internal reform (Cohen, 2001).

Furthermore, torture functions as a tool for Forced Confessions that serve propaganda needs. In the New Order, torture was used to extract "confessions" that validated the state's narrative regarding communist conspiracies. These were then broadcast to justify further repression. In this theoretical cycle, torture creates the very "evidence" the state needs to legitimize its existence. The "truth" in an interrogation room is a state-constructed product, and torture is the industrial process used to manufacture it, turning the victim into a prop for the regime's theatrical display of security (Roosa, 2006).

The gendered dimension of torture also plays a pivotal role. As feminist scholars note, the New Order frequently utilized Sexualized Violence to break both male and female activists. For women, torture often targeted their identity as "moral" subjects, using sexual assault to "honor-shame" their communities. For men, emasculation through physical abuse was used to destroy their standing in traditional patriarchal structures. By weaponizing gender, the state attacks the foundational cultural identities of the victims, making the "shame" of torture an enduring barrier to social reintegration (Grossmann, 2014).

In the theoretical framework of Sovereign Power, torture is the moment where the state's power is most "intense." According to Agamben (1998), the state creates a "state of exception" where the individual is reduced to "bare life"—a life that can be harmed without it being considered a crime. In the interrogation centers of the New Order, the law was suspended, and the torturer became a mini-sovereign. This exercise of raw power is the "Shadow" behind the "Smile," reminding every citizen that their legal rights are a gift from the state, revocable at any moment.

Torture also acts as a Screening Mechanism. By observing how individuals react to interrogation, intelligence services could identify those who were "irreconcilable" and those who could be turned into informants or "re-educated." This selective use of violence allowed the New Order to manage dissent with surgical precision. It was not about killing everyone; it was about identifying and neutralizing "infection"

points in the social body while co-opting the vulnerable. This strategic use of torture reflects a sophisticated understanding of power (Tanter, 1991).

Therefore, torture as a political instrument is deeply tied to the Erasure of Memory. By forcing victims to deny their beliefs or betray comrades, the torturer forces the victim to participate in the destruction of their own political history. This "moral injury" is often more damaging than physical pain. It ensures that even if the victim survives, they remain haunted by "betrayal," making them less likely to return to politics. The state thus wins twice: once by breaking the body, and again by poisoning the memory of resistance (Scarry, 1985).

C. Transitional Justice and Collective Memory

Transitional justice in post-authoritarian Indonesia is defined by the tension between the "Politics of Forgetting" and the "Duty to Remember." Following the fall of Suharto in 1998, the nation entered a period of *Reformasi* that promised accountability. However, the theoretical framework of Elite Capture suggests that because the transition was "pacted"—where New Order elites remained in power—true accountability was structurally inhibited. Transitional justice mechanisms, such as Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs), were often established but lacked the teeth to prosecute high-ranking officials, leading to a "perpetual transition" (Mietzner, 2009).

The failure of accountability has profound implications for Collective Memory. In the absence of state-sanctioned "truth," the narrative of the New Order remains a contested site of memory politics. Memory is an active political process. The New Order was highly effective at Memory Engineering, creating a national history that justified its violence (e.g., propaganda films). In the post-Suharto era, the struggle for transitional justice is essentially a struggle to "de-colonize" the Indonesian mind from three decades of state-sponsored historical distortion (Heryanto, 2006).

Memory politics often revolves around the Sacralization of the Victim. For the victims of New Order torture, "testifying" is a form of resistance. By telling their stories, survivors challenge the state's attempt to erase them. However, as memory theorists argue, the state often engages in "selective remembering," honoring certain victims while continuing to marginalize others, such as those labeled "communist."

This hierarchy of victimhood prevents a holistic understanding of state violence and reinforces the social divisions the New Order originally created (McGregor, 2007).

The role of Archives and Documentation is critical. In an authoritarian state, the archive is a tool of control; in a transitional democracy, it is a tool of liberation. The struggle to open secret files is a struggle for the "Right to Truth." Without access to the state's records of torture, the memory of the New Order remains anecdotal. The "Iron Shadows" persist because the documents that would bring them to light remain under the control of the very institutions—the military and police—that committed the original acts (Tanter, 1991).

Collective memory is also shaped by the Spatiality of Trauma. Locations once centers of torture—military barracks or secret "safe houses"—serve as silent witnesses. How a society treats these sites is an indicator of its commitment to justice. In Indonesia, many sites of violence have been "sanitized" or erased, a process of Architectural Amnesia that aids the state's desire to "move on" without looking back at its history (Robinson, 2018).

The "Persistence of the Past" explains why New Order habits—such as torture in criminal investigations—remain common. Institutional Path Dependency suggests that when institutions are not fundamentally purged, they carry their old "operational DNA" forward. This is why transitional justice is a prerequisite for healthy democracy. Without a clear "break" from the New Order's methods, the "Smile of Power" remains a thin veneer over old habits of repression (Hadiz, 2003).

Transitional Justice and the International Community also play a role. Global human rights norms pressure domestic governments to establish accountability. However, the geopolitical "shrugging" of Western powers during the Cold War—many of whom supported the New Order—has complicated the quest for justice. The memory of the New Order is thus a global issue; the "shadows" extend to international archives where foreign support for the regime's apparatus is still being uncovered (Simpson, 2008).

Collective memory is further contested through Cultural Production. In the post-New Order era, works like Joshua Oppenheimer's *The Act of Killing* have done more to challenge national memory than formal commissions. These cultural interventions perform a "rupture" in the state's narrative, forcing the public to confront the reality of torture. This "cultural transitional justice" is often the only available avenue where the formal judicial path is blocked by elite interests (Heryanto, 2006).

Guarantees of Non-Recurrence emphasize that transitional justice is about the future. By documenting and remembering the "Iron Shadows" of the New Order, society creates a "moral firewall" against the return of authoritarianism. Memory work is an act of "Democratic Vigilance." As long as the smile of power can hide the shadow of the torture room, the transition to democracy remains incomplete (Aspinall, 2005).

To meet the requirements of academic depth and structural rigor, the following revision of Section 3 provides a comprehensive historical and institutional analysis. Each sub-chapter consists of at least six paragraphs, integrating specific legal frameworks, military doctrines, and scholarly discourse regarding the New Order's foundations.

Historical Foundations of Repression

A. The 1965–1966 Mass Killings

The New Order regime was inaugurated not through a democratic mandate, but through a cataclysmic rupture in the Indonesian social fabric. The 1965–1966 mass killings served as the foundational "original sin" of the regime, providing both the political vacuum and the coercive precedent necessary for Suharto's ascendancy. Following the mysterious events of the September 30th Movement (G30S), the military launched a scorched-earth anti-communist campaign. As Robinson (2018) articulates, this was not a spontaneous outburst of communal fury, but a systematic, military-led operation to liquidate the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), then the third-largest communist party in the world.

The scale of the violence established a "culture of terror" that would underpin the regime for the next thirty-two years. By encouraging—and in many cases, forcing—civilians to participate in the killings, the military created a society bound by collective trauma and shared guilt. This "communal complicity" ensured that the survivors remained silent, as the line between perpetrator and bystander became blurred. This period saw the birth of the "Internal Enemy" narrative, where anyone associated with the Left was stripped of their humanity and legal protection, setting the stage for decades of state-sponsored torture.

Institutional consolidation began immediately through the creation of the Command for the Restoration of Security and Order (*Kopkamtib*). This extra-constitutional body was granted sweeping powers to arrest, detain, and interrogate anyone suspected of involvement in the G30S. Under the leadership of Suharto and later Admiral Sudomo, *Kopkamtib* became the primary vehicle for political "screening." This process involved classifying citizens into categories (A, B, and C) based on their degree of perceived communist involvement, a move that effectively institutionalized social discrimination and administrative disappearance (Roosa, 2006).

During these purges, the military refined the interrogation techniques that would later become standard practice. Torture was utilized during this phase not just for information, but as a "cleansing ritual" to force victims to denounce their ideology and comrades. The mass arrests led to the creation of a vast network of concentration camps, the most infamous being the Buru Island penal colony. In these spaces, torture and forced labor were used to break the spirits of intellectuals, artists, and activists, establishing a blueprint for the regime's future handling of dissent in Aceh, Papua, and East Timor.

The 1965 violence also served as a tool for military unification. By focusing on a common "communist threat," Suharto was able to purge the armed forces of leftist officers and consolidate a loyalist core. This internal cleansing transformed ABRI (Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia) into a monolithic political actor. The success of the anti-communist purge convinced the military leadership that violence was the most efficient way to manage political pluralism, leading to the adoption of the "Security Approach" as the official doctrine of the state.

The 1965–1966 killings provided the New Order with its "foundational myth": that the military had saved the nation from a godless communist apocalypse. This myth was used to justify the suspension of civil liberties and the permanence of military intervention in politics. By framing the regime as the "guardian of the nation," any act of state violence—no matter how brutal—could be justified as a necessary defense of the state's survival. This ideological framework ensured that the iron shadows of torture remained hidden behind the "Smile of Power."

B. Institutionalization of the Security Apparatus

Under the New Order, the military was transformed from a traditional defense force into a domestic surveillance and governance machine. This was formalized through the *Dwifungsi* (Dual Function) doctrine, which theoretically and legally justified the military's involvement in all aspects of civilian life, from the village level to the highest echelons of the cabinet. ABRI became the backbone of the regime, acting as both a political partner and a coercive enforcer. As Mietzner (2009) notes, the military's territorial command structure ensured that no corner of the archipelago was free from state monitoring.

This territorial structure, ranging from the provincial level (*Kodam*) down to the village level (*Babinsa*), created a "capillary" system of control. The *Babinsa* served as the state's eyes and ears on the ground, monitoring local gossip, religious activities, and social gatherings. This hyper-local surveillance meant that potential dissenters were often identified and detained before they could organize. The institutionalization of the security apparatus effectively turned the entire country into a military-administrative zone, where "security" took precedence over the rule of law.

The intelligence network was further bolstered by specialized agencies such as Bakin (State Intelligence Coordination Agency) and later Bais (Strategic Intelligence Agency). These organizations operated with near-total autonomy and secret budgets, answerable only to the President. They developed sophisticated "dirty tricks" and interrogation manuals that standardized the use of psychological and physical torture. The intelligence services were not merely collecting data; they were actively engineering social outcomes by intimidating opposition figures and infiltrating independent organizations.

Central to this apparatus was the use of clandestine detention centers and "safe houses." These facilities were often located in nondescript suburban houses or within military compounds, away from public view and judicial oversight. In these "black sites," interrogators from the Kopassus (Special Forces) or intelligence units could apply extreme torture techniques without fear of legal repercussions. These centers functioned as "liminal spaces" where the victim's legal identity was erased, leaving them at the total mercy of their captors (Tanter, 1991).

The security apparatus also included the Wilayatul Hisbah-style morality policing precursors and various paramilitary groups often funded by the state. These "civilian" militias, such as Pemuda Pancasila, provided the regime with plausible deniability. When the military wanted to intimidate a labor union or a student group, they often utilized these proxies to commit acts of violence and torture, framing the events as "communal friction" rather than state policy. This "outsourcing" of violence became a hallmark of the New Order's sophisticated control mechanism.

The institutionalization of the security apparatus was completed by the integration of the police into the military structure. By placing the police under the same command as the army, the New Order ensured that civilian law enforcement was subordinate to military security priorities. This meant that criminal investigations were often handled with military brutality, and the "security approach" permeated even the most mundane aspects of domestic policing. The resulting system was one where the state's primary interaction with its citizens was through the lens of potential threat and coercive response.

C. Legal Justifications and Emergency Powers

To maintain a facade of constitutionalism, the New Order utilized a "rule by law" strategy that provided legal cover for state violence. The primary ideological tool was the National Security Rhetoric, which framed every act of repression as a necessary defense of *Pancasila* and the 1945 Constitution. By utilizing the concept of "National Resilience" (*Ketahanan Nasional*), the regime argued that internal dissent was a form of "ideological subversion." This rhetoric allowed the state to classify human rights activists and religious leaders as "extremists" of either the "Left" or "Right" (Bourchier, 2014).

The most potent legal weapon in the regime's arsenal was the Anti-Subversion Law (Presidential Decree No. 11/1963). Originally a product of the Sukarno era, the New Order expanded and weaponized it to allow for the indefinite detention of anyone suspected of "disturbing public order." This law effectively bypassed the criminal procedure code, granting security forces the power to hold suspects in *incommunicado* detention for years. It created a legal "black hole" where the right to

a lawyer and the right to trial were suspended in the name of *Kamtib* (Security and Order).

The regime also utilized a series of "Special Decrees" (*Tap MPRS*) that granted the President and the military extraordinary powers during perceived crises. These decrees often stayed in effect for decades, creating a permanent state of emergency. Under these powers, the state could ban books, dissolve organizations, and censor the press without judicial review. This legal framework ensured that "torture" was never officially recognized; instead, it was documented in reports as "special interrogation" or "persuasive measures," hidden behind administrative euphemisms.

Furthermore, the New Order utilized the "Normalization of Campus Life" (NKK/BKK) laws to suppress student activism. By criminalizing political activity within universities, the state turned academic institutions into controlled zones. Students who defied these laws were often abducted and subjected to "re-education" through torture. This use of the law to regulate intellectual life ensured that the "Iron Shadow" reached into the minds of the nation's youth, preventing the emergence of a critical intelligentsia that could challenge the regime's legitimacy.

Judicial independence was systematically dismantled to ensure that the courts functioned as an extension of the executive. Judges were appointed and promoted based on their loyalty to the New Order, and the Ministry of Justice controlled the administrative and financial aspects of the judiciary. This meant that even if a victim of torture managed to bring their case to court, the outcome was predetermined. The "Impunity Gap" was thus legally engineered; the law was not a shield for the citizen, but a sword for the state (Hadiz, 2003).

At this context, the legal justifications of the New Order served to create a "culture of impunity." Torturers operated with the absolute confidence that they were acting "within the law," or at least within the "higher law" of national survival. This "legalized violence" made it incredibly difficult for international human rights bodies to intervene, as the regime could always point to its own domestic statutes as justification. This legacy of "rule by law" remains a significant challenge for contemporary Indonesia, as many of the legal habits and bureaucratic structures of the New Order era continue to resist the reforms of the democratic age.

Mechanisms of Torture Under the New Order

A. Sites of Detention and Interrogation

The geography of repression under the New Order was defined by a vast and opaque network of detention facilities that bypassed the formal judicial system. These sites ranged from established military prisons to "unofficial" or clandestine detention centers known as "safe houses." Major military installations, such as the Salemba Prison in Jakarta and the Moncongloe camp in South Sulawesi, served as central hubs for political detainees. However, much of the systematic torture occurred in decentralized, temporary facilities managed by local military commands (*Kodim*) or intelligence task forces. In these liminal spaces, detainees were held in *incommunicado* status, stripped of legal identity and access to counsel, creating an environment where violence could be inflicted with total anonymity (Tanter, 1991).

The conditions of confinement within these facilities were inherently torturous, designed to induce physical and psychological collapse. Overcrowding was chronic, with prisoners often packed into cells with minimal ventilation or light, facilitating the spread of disease and malnutrition. Sleep deprivation was enforced through constant noise or the threat of midnight interrogations. According to victim testimonies, the lack of medical care and the deliberate restriction of food and water were used as secondary forms of coercion (Roosa, 2006). These conditions were not merely logistical failures but were calculated "soft" torture techniques intended to break the prisoner's resistance before formal questioning even began.

Furthermore, the New Order utilized remote penal colonies for long-term "ideological purification." The most notorious was Buru Island, where thousands of "Category B" prisoners (alleged communists against whom there was insufficient evidence for trial) were subjected to forced labor and isolation for over a decade. In these remote sites, the absence of public scrutiny allowed for a "state of exception" where military guards exercised absolute sovereignty over the bodies of the interned. The spatial isolation of these camps served a dual purpose: it neutralized the political influence of the detainees while sending a chilling message to the broader society about the permanence of state-sanctioned disappearance.

The "unofficial" detention centers, often referred to as *Rumah Tahanan Militer* (RTM), operated with even less oversight than the labor camps. These were often

residential villas or commercial buildings converted into interrogation hubs during periods of heightened social unrest. Because these sites did not officially exist, they became the primary locations for the most extreme forms of physical violence and "disappearances." The use of these clandestine sites reflects the regime's sophisticated "dual-track" strategy: maintaining a facade of legal prison administration for the international community while operating a shadow network of torture for internal security.

Institutional coordination between various security branches—including the Kopkamtib and local Babinsa—ensured a steady flow of detainees into these facilities. The "screening" process determined which site a prisoner would be sent to based on their perceived threat level. High-value political targets were often moved between multiple secret locations to disorient them and prevent their families or human rights lawyers from locating them. This "carceral archipelago" (Foucault, 1977) was the physical manifestation of the New Order's surveillance state, a hidden infrastructure of pain that sustained the regime's political order.

These sites were more than just places of confinement; they were "theaters of power." In the interrogation room, the state's absolute authority was ritualistically enacted upon the body of the detainee. The architecture of these facilities—soundproofed rooms, specialized lighting, and specialized furniture—was intentionally designed to amplify the victim's sense of isolation and vulnerability. By controlling the physical environment of the prisoner, the New Order security apparatus asserted total control over their biological and political existence, ensuring that the "Iron Shadow" was a lived, inescapable reality for those deemed a threat.

B. Methods and Practices

Physical torture under the New Order was characterized by its systematic and standardized nature, reflecting a high degree of institutional training among interrogators. Methods commonly documented by human rights groups included the application of electric shocks (*setrum*), the crushing of limbs with heavy furniture, and "stress positions" where detainees were forced to stand or crouch for days. These practices were designed to maximize pain while minimizing the risk of immediate death, ensuring that the victim remained "available" for continued interrogation. As Rejali (2007) notes, these techniques were often "clean" in the sense that they left

fewer permanent external marks, allowing the state to maintain plausible deniability regarding atrocities.

Psychological coercion was equally pervasive and often more damaging in the long term. Interrogators employed "refined" techniques such as mock executions, threats against the prisoner's family members, and the forced witnessing of the torture of other detainees. The goal was to destroy the victim's sense of reality and agency, inducing a state of "learned helplessness." By alternating between brutal violence and brief periods of "kindness" (the "Good Cop/Bad Cop" routine), the state sought to break the prisoner's psychological defenses and force a total ideological capitulation. This psychological dismantling was essential for the extraction of the "confessions" that the regime used for its propaganda efforts.

Sexual violence was utilized as a specific and pervasive instrument of both physical and symbolic domination. For female detainees, rape and sexual humiliation were used to "shame" the victim and her family, attacking the cultural and moral foundations of the Acehnese, Papuan, or activist communities. For male prisoners, sexualized torture and emasculation were used to destroy their standing within traditional social hierarchies. As Grossmann (2014) argues, sexual violence under the New Order was not the result of "undisciplined" soldiers but was a calculated tactic of war intended to destroy the social fabric of resisting groups, making it a "biological" extension of political repression.

The use of "re-education" and ideological indoctrination often accompanied physical abuse. Prisoners were forced to attend lectures on *Pancasila* and state ideology while being subjected to sensory deprivation. This forced synthesis of pain and ideology was intended to "reset" the political identity of the detainee. The regime sought not just to silence the opposition but to "convert" them into compliant subjects of the New Order. This process of "ideological surgery" was a hallmark of the regime's sophisticated approach to social engineering, where torture acted as the "anesthesia" for a forced political transformation.

Standardized "tools of the trade" were distributed throughout the military's territorial commands. Interrogation manuals and specialized equipment ensured that a detainee in North Sumatra would experience roughly the same "methodology" as one in East Java. This standardization suggests a centralized "pedagogy of pain" overseen by high-level intelligence officers. The professionalization of torture meant that it became a routine administrative task for the personnel involved, a

phenomenon described by Arendt (1963) as the "banality of evil," where the infliction of suffering is integrated into the mundane bureaucracy of state security.

The practice of "disappearance" served as the ultimate method of torture, targeting the families and communities of the victims. By refusing to acknowledge the detention or the fate of a prisoner, the state inflicted a permanent state of psychological agony on the survivors. This "unresolved grief" functioned as a form of communal torture, ensuring that the "Iron Shadow" persisted long after the physical interrogation ended. The uncertainty of a loved one's fate acted as a social paralyzer, preventing mobilization and ensuring that the fear of the state remained a deeply personal, intimate trauma for millions of Indonesians.

C. Targeted Groups

The primary and most enduring targets of New Order repression were alleged members and sympathizers of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). Following the 1965 purges, millions were subjected to "political screening" that resulted in mass imprisonment, torture, and civil death. The stigma of being "ET" (*Eks-Tapol* or ex-political prisoner) was applied not only to the individuals but also to their children and grandchildren, creating an intergenerational class of "administrative pariahs." For these individuals, torture was a lifelong experience of surveillance and marginalization, justified by the regime's "latent danger of communism" (*bahaya laten*) narrative (Roosa, 2006).

Student activists and intellectuals formed another significant target group, particularly during the "Normalization of Campus Life" (NKK/BKK) era of the late 1970s and early 1980s. When students protested against corruption, environmental degradation, or Suharto's re-elections, the state responded with abductions and "special interrogations." The goal was to neutralize the campus as a site of critical political thought. High-profile abductions of activists in 1997-1998, such as the *Tim Mawar* (Rose Team) operations, demonstrated that even as the regime neared its collapse, it continued to view the youth as a mortal threat that required the "iron" intervention of torture.

Labor organizers and farmers resisting land seizures were frequently targeted to ensure the "stability" required for foreign investment. Strikes and land protests were routinely met with military force. The most famous case, the murder and torture of

the labor activist Marsinah in 1993, highlighted the regime's willingness to use extreme violence to suppress demands for fair wages and worker rights. Torture in these cases was used to extract names of "ringleaders" and to intimidate the broader labor movement into submission, effectively protecting the "Political Economy of Repression" that underpinned the New Order's developmentalist agenda (Hadiz, 1997).

Religious and ethnic minorities, particularly in restive provinces like Aceh, East Timor, and Papua, faced systematic state violence under the guise of "counter-insurgency." In these Military Operation Zones (*Daerah Operasi Militer* or DOM), the distinction between combatant and civilian was deliberately blurred. Entire villages were subjected to "collective interrogation," where torture was used as a tool of communal intimidation. The "security approach" in these regions was characterized by a racialized and xenophobic rhetoric, where local aspirations for autonomy were framed as "separatist treachery" that justified the total suspension of human rights (Robinson, 1998).

The Chinese-Indonesian community also lived under a permanent "shadow of suspicion," often becoming scapegoats during periods of economic crisis. While the regime utilized Chinese tycoons to build the economy, it simultaneously suppressed Chinese cultural expression and utilized the threat of "communist ties" to keep the community in a state of political vulnerability. During riots, such as those in May 1998, the state's failure to protect—or its active incitement of—violence against the Chinese community functioned as a form of "outsourced" torture, using communal terror to deflect popular anger away from the regime's leadership.

The diversity of the targeted groups illustrates that the New Order's use of torture was not "blind" violence but was surgically applied to any segment of society that threatened the regime's "Smile of Power." Whether it was a peasant defending his land, a student writing a poem, or an alleged communist in a remote village, the mechanism of torture was the state's universal response to the "threat" of an independent voice. By mapping these targeted groups, we see that the New Order was not a state for all Indonesians, but a state for those who remained silent, built upon the broken bodies of those who dared to speak.

Torture, Fear, and Social Control

A. Producing Obedience Through Fear

The New Order's survival was predicated on the systematic production of obedience, achieved through a meticulously calibrated "economy of fear." Unlike the chaotic violence of the 1965 purges, the subsequent decades utilized a more refined "security approach" where the threat of torture was more effective than the act itself. Fear was disseminated through the strategic use of public trials and disappearances. While high-profile trials of "subversives" were broadcast to demonstrate the state's legal reach, the forced disappearance of lower-level activists served as a chilling reminder of the state's extra-judicial capacity. These "iron shadows" ensured that the populace remained in a state of perpetual psychological alert, internalizing the boundaries of permissible political behavior.

This environment culminated in a pervasive climate of silence (*budaya bisu*). The state did not merely punish dissent; it made the social cost of speaking out prohibitively high. Neighbors were encouraged to monitor one another through the *Siskamling* (Neighborhood Security System), effectively turning every community into a decentralized extension of the intelligence apparatus. When the state demonstrated its ability to abduct individuals from their homes—only for them to return weeks later as broken, silent versions of themselves—it sent a visceral message: the state owns not only the law but the physical safety of the body. This fear-induced obedience allowed the regime to maintain a facade of "Pancasila Democracy" while suppressing any authentic political pluralism.

B. Media Control and Narrative Construction

The institutionalization of torture was accompanied by a totalizing control over the "national truth." The New Order utilized propaganda and state censorship to ensure that the violence of the interrogation room was never reflected in the public mirror. The Ministry of Information, through the *SIUPP* (Press Publication Enterprise License), held the power of life and death over media outlets. Newspapers that dared to report on human rights abuses or military brutality faced immediate closure. This created a sanitized public discourse where state violence was reframed as "necessary

measures" for national stability, and the victims were portrayed as "anti-development" agitators or agents of foreign ideologies.

The criminalization of dissent was the legal corollary to this narrative construction. Through the use of "Hate-Sowing" articles (*Haatzai Artikelen*) and subversion laws, the regime transformed political criticism into a criminal offense. By controlling the language of the law and the media, the state managed to "moralize" its cruelty. Torture was never called "torture" in the press; it was referred to as "intensive development" or "national screening." This linguistic manipulation ensured that the majority of the population remained insulated from the regime's brutality, while those who were targeted found themselves unable to articulate their suffering in a public sphere that had already been colonized by state rhetoric (Heryanto, 2006).

C. Psychological and Social Consequences

The long-term impact of the New Order's repression is best understood through the lens of trauma and intergenerational effects. The "Iron Shadows" did not vanish with the release of a prisoner; they were transmitted to the next generation. Children of political prisoners grew up in a household defined by the "absent presence" of the state's violence. Psychological studies on *Eks-Tapol* (ex-political prisoner) families reveal a high prevalence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and "learned silence" (Roosa, 2006). The trauma was not just individual but communal, as entire regions (such as Aceh or East Timor) were conditioned to view the state as a predatory force rather than a protective one.

The stigmatization of survivors acted as a secondary, post-confinement form of torture. The New Order implemented the "Clean Environment" (*Bersih Lingkungan*) policy, which barred survivors and their families from working in the civil service, the military, or even certain private industries. This social death ensured that the "subversive" remained a pariah, unable to reintegrate into the social fabric. Stigmatization turned the survivors into "walking warnings," discouraging others from associating with them. This isolation further intensified the psychological damage of the original torture, as the victim was forced to live in a society that not only ignored their pain but actively punished them for it, ensuring that the regime's control persisted long after the physical wounds had healed.

This final section has been expanded to provide the required academic depth, consisting of at least eight paragraphs per sub-chapter. It integrates complex sociopolitical analysis, in-text citations, and a comprehensive list of over 15 scholarly references.

Post-1998 Reformasi and the Legacy of Torture

A. Democratic Transition and Institutional Reform

The collapse of the New Order in May 1998, precipitated by a devastating financial crisis and massive student-led demonstrations, marked the beginning of the *Reformasi* (Reformation) era. The immediate aftermath of Suharto's resignation saw an explosion of democratic energy, as the transitional government under B.J. Habibie moved to dismantle the most visible pillars of repression. This period was characterized by the release of hundreds of political prisoners, the lifting of draconian press censorship, and the repeal of the notorious Anti-Subversion Law. The legislative centerpiece of this era was the enactment of Law No. 39/1999 on Human Rights and Law No. 26/2000 on Human Rights Courts, which formally criminalized torture and established a legal framework for prosecuting "gross violations of human rights" (Mietzner, 2009).

Security sector reform became the focal point of institutional restructuring. A pivotal achievement was the formal separation of the Indonesian National Police (Polri) from the Armed Forces (then ABRI, now TNI) in 1999. This was intended to demilitarize domestic law enforcement and transition from a "security approach" to a "rule of law" approach. Furthermore, the military's *Dwifungsi* (Dual Function) doctrine was officially abolished, forcing the TNI to withdraw from formal political roles and parliamentary seats. However, scholars argue that these reforms were "procedural" rather than "structural," as the military's territorial command system—the very infrastructure that facilitated localized torture—remained largely intact (Hiariej, 2010).

The transition also involved a significant shift in the constitutional landscape. Through four amendments to the 1945 Constitution between 1999 and 2002, Indonesia introduced a robust Bill of Rights. These amendments explicitly prohibited torture and established the right to life as a non-derogable right. This legal

revolution aimed to synchronize Indonesian domestic law with international standards, such as the UN Convention Against Torture (UNCAT), which Indonesia had ratified in late 1998. The goal was to create a "firewall" against the return of state-sponsored violence by embedding human rights at the very core of the state's legal identity (Lindsey & Butt, 2016).

Despite these high-level changes, the "culture of the station" within the police and military proved resistant to reform. While the top-level leadership spoke the language of human rights, the rank-and-file officers often continued to rely on "persuasive" methods involving physical coercion. The lack of a comprehensive vetting process meant that personnel trained in New Order interrogation techniques remained in active service, creating a "grey zone" where democratic laws were enforced by authoritarian-trained actors. This institutional inertia highlights the difficulty of erasing the "Iron Shadows" through mere legislative decree (Sebastian, 2006).

Furthermore, the decentralization of power (*Otonomi Daerah*) introduced in 2001 had unintended consequences for institutional reform. While it shifted power away from Jakarta, it also allowed local elites—many of whom were products of the New Order—to consolidate their own coercive apparatuses at the provincial level. In some regions, this led to the emergence of "mini-Suhartos" who utilized local militias to maintain control, replicating the New Order's repressive tactics on a smaller, more fragmented scale. This fragmentation made it difficult for the central government to enforce a uniform standard of human rights across the archipelago (Hadiz, 2010).

The role of the international community was also critical during this phase. Organizations like the World Bank and the IMF pressured Indonesia to implement "good governance" reforms as a condition for economic recovery. However, these reforms often prioritized fiscal transparency over human rights accountability. As a result, the "security sector" was often reformed in terms of its budget and management, but its history of violence was largely bypassed to maintain political stability. This "stability-first" approach by international actors arguably provided a shield for those who wished to avoid a full accounting of past atrocities (Robinson, 2018).

The transitional period also saw the birth of the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) as a more independent body. While it had existed since 1993, the post-1998 era gave it the power to conduct formal pro-justicia inquiries into gross violations. These inquiries were intended to be the first step

toward prosecution. However, the commission's findings were frequently ignored by the Attorney General's Office, revealing a deep-seated institutional friction between the new human rights bodies and the old judicial guard. This friction served as a constant reminder that the "Smile of Power" could still deflect the "Sword of Justice" (Crouch, 2010).

The democratic transition failed to address the economic roots of state violence. The New Order's military had been heavily involved in "off-budget" businesses, often utilizing torture and intimidation to secure land and resources. *Reformasi* attempted to nationalize these businesses, but the process was slow and often incomplete. The continued economic autonomy of certain military units meant they retained the incentive and the means to use coercion to protect their commercial interests, particularly in resource-rich provinces. Thus, the legacy of torture remained inextricably linked to the unresolved issues of military commercialism and land grabbing (Honna, 2003).

B. Persistent Impunity

Despite the legislative progress, the post-1998 landscape has been marred by a profound and persistent culture of impunity. The *Ad Hoc* Human Rights Courts established to prosecute New Order-era crimes, such as the Tanjung Priok (1984) and East Timor (1999) cases, have largely failed to deliver justice. In almost every instance, high-ranking military commanders were acquitted, while only a few low-level subordinates faced minor sentences. This pattern of "legal theater" suggests that the judiciary remains vulnerable to intimidation and political interference. The persistence of impunity serves as a psychological continuation of the New Order, signaling that the "Iron Shadows" still hold significant sway over the state's legal apparatus (Cohen, 2001).

The political resistance to truth-seeking is deeply rooted in the survival of New Order-era elites within the democratic government. Many individuals allegedly involved in the machinery of torture successfully reinvented themselves as democratic politicians or business moguls. Consequently, efforts to establish a national Truth and Reconciliation Commission (KKR) have been systematically sabotaged. In 2006, the Constitutional Court struck down the KKR Law, and subsequent attempts to revive it have been met with fierce opposition from the

military and conservative political factions. This "strategic amnesia" is a deliberate political project designed to protect the reputations and careers of those who operated the interrogation rooms of the past (McGregor, 2007).

The role of the Attorney General's Office (AGO) has been particularly controversial in maintaining this impunity. Under Indonesian law, Komnas HAM conducts the investigation, but only the AGO can prosecute. Time and again, the AGO has returned dossiers to Komnas HAM citing "insufficient evidence" or "technical flaws," creating a "ping-pong" game of administrative delay. This tactic allows the state to appear to be following the law while ensuring that no actual trials take place. This "administrative obstruction" is a sophisticated form of impunity that avoids the international outcry associated with outright refusal to investigate (Bourchier, 2014).

Furthermore, the principle of Retroactivity became a major legal hurdle. While the Human Rights Court Law allows for the prosecution of past crimes, conservative legal scholars and politicians argued that this violated the principle against retroactive punishment. This legalistic defense was used to shield perpetrators of pre-2000 atrocities, including the 1965 killings and the "Petrus" extrajudicial killings of the 1980s. By hiding behind the technicalities of legal theory, the state managed to exclude the most significant periods of New Order violence from the reach of the new courts (Lindsey & Butt, 2016).

The persistence of impunity is also maintained through the intimidation of witnesses and victims. Many survivors of New Order torture are still too afraid to testify in court, fearing retaliation against their families. In several high-profile cases, witnesses have been harassed or offered "settlements" to withdraw their testimony. Without a robust witness protection program, the "Iron Shadow" of the past continues to silence the voices needed to bring the truth to light. The state's failure to protect those who seek justice is, in itself, a form of complicity in the continuation of New Order-style repression (Aspinall, 2005).

Impunity has also been "normalized" through the promotion of alleged perpetrators to high-ranking government positions. When individuals accused of overseeing torture in East Timor or Aceh are appointed as ministers or military chiefs, it sends a clear message that human rights records do not matter for career advancement. This "meritocracy of the brutal" reinforces the belief within the security forces that violence is a risk-free tool for success. It erodes the moral authority

of the democratic state and alienates the survivor community, who see their torturers honored by the very government that promised them *Reformasi* (Mietzner, 2009).

The "Politics of Forgetting" is also manifested in the national education system. School textbooks continue to gloss over the regime's record of torture and mass violence, often framing the New Order as a period of "peace and prosperity" with a few unfortunate "excesses." By controlling the narrative of the past, the state ensures that the next generation remains unaware of the systematic nature of the "Iron Shadows." This educational amnesia is a crucial component of the impunity architecture, as it prevents the formation of a public consensus that would demand accountability (Heryanto, 2006).

The lack of international pressure has allowed the "Impunity Gap" to widen. During the early 2000s, the "Global War on Terror" led many Western nations to prioritize security cooperation with the Indonesian military over human rights concerns. This shift in geopolitical priorities allowed the TNI to regain its standing as an indispensable partner, reducing the leverage that international human rights groups once had. The "Shadows" of the New Order were thus allowed to persist because the global discourse had shifted from "democracy promotion" to "stability and counter-terrorism," mirroring the very rhetoric Suharto had used to justify his own repression (Simpson, 2008).

C. Civil Society and Human Rights Advocacy

In the vacuum left by state inaction, the burden of truth-seeking has fallen on NGOs and victim networks. Organizations such as KontraS (The Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence) and IKOHI (Indonesian Association of Families of the Disappeared) have played a critical role in documenting atrocities and keeping the memory of the "Iron Shadows" alive. These groups have acted as "shadow archives," collecting testimonies and evidence that the state refuses to acknowledge. Their work ensures that the history of the New Order is not written solely by the perpetrators but is countered by the lived experiences of those who survived the interrogation rooms (Hiariej, 2010).

The *Aksi Kamisan* (Thursday Protests) represents the most visible and persistent form of this advocacy. Every Thursday since 2007, victims and their families have stood in silence before the Presidential Palace in Jakarta, wearing black and holding

umbrellas. This "silent resistance" is a powerful symbolic challenge to the state's "noisy amnesia." It serves as a weekly reminder that the "Iron Shadows" are still waiting for the light of justice. The protest has survived multiple presidencies, becoming a foundational part of Indonesia's democratic landscape and a bridge between the victims of the New Order and a younger generation of activists (Roosa, 2006).

Civil society has also utilized "Universal Jurisdiction" and international legal avenues to bypass the domestic impunity gap. By filing cases in foreign courts or submitting reports to UN special rapporteurs, Indonesian NGOs have kept the pressure on the Jakarta government. This "boomerang pattern" of advocacy—where domestic actors go international to pressure their own state—has been essential in preventing the total erasure of the New Order's crimes. While it hasn't led to many trials, it has succeeded in making "Human Rights" a permanent part of the Indonesian political lexicon, something the state can no longer ignore (Rinaldo, 2013).

The role of digital activism has transformed advocacy in the 21st century. Social media platforms have allowed NGOs to bypass state-controlled narratives and reach a global audience. Campaigns like #MenolakLupa (Refusing to Forget) have trended during elections, forcing candidates to address their human rights records. This "digital memory work" is particularly important for reaching the youth, who did not experience the New Order firsthand. By translating archival testimonies into accessible digital content, activists are ensuring that the "Iron Shadows" remain a topic of contemporary debate rather than a forgotten historical footnote (Heryanto, 2006).

Victim networks have also focused on Psychosocial Support, recognizing that the legacy of torture is as much about healing as it is about justice. Organizations have established support groups for survivors of 1965 and the 1998 abductions, providing a space for shared trauma to be processed. This "community of survival" is a form of resistance against the New Order's project of social fragmentation. By coming together, survivors reclaim the agency that the torturer tried to destroy. This grassroots healing is a prerequisite for any future formal transitional justice process, as it empowers victims to eventually take the stand (Grossmann, 2014).

Furthermore, civil society has been instrumental in advocating for Local Truth Commissions. In provinces like Aceh, where the national government has been slow to act, local governments and NGOs have collaborated to establish regional

commissions to document DOM-era (Military Operation Zone) atrocities. These local efforts serve as "laboratories of justice," proving that truth-seeking is possible even in a difficult political climate. They provide a blueprint for what a national process could look like, emphasizing a victim-centered approach that prioritizes truth and acknowledgment over mere legal retribution (Aspinall, 2009).

Cultural production—including film, literature, and art—has become another vital tool for advocacy. Documentaries like *The Act of Killing* and *The Look of Silence* by Joshua Oppenheimer have forced a national conversation on the 1965 massacres that was previously impossible. Similarly, the "Manusia 1965" (People of 1965) photography projects and various memoirs by former political prisoners have humanized those whom the New Order spent decades demonizing. This cultural "rupture" is often more effective than legal reports in changing the public's "common sense" about the regime's history (Heryanto, 2006).

The ongoing demands for justice emphasize that the "Legacy of Torture" is a contemporary issue. NGOs argue that the failure to punish past torturers has led to the "normalization of violence" in current policing, particularly in Papua and in the handling of agrarian conflicts. Civil society advocacy is thus a fight for the Future of Democracy. By demanding an accounting for the "Iron Shadows" of the past, these groups are trying to ensure that the "Smile of Power" in contemporary Indonesia is a genuine reflection of a state that respects the rights of its citizens, rather than a mask for old, iron habits of repression (Hadiz, 2003).

This final expanded section provides a global and comparative analysis of the New Order's repressive machinery. Each sub-chapter consists of at least eight paragraphs, utilizing complex political discourse and integrating over 15 scholarly references across the entire paper's framework.

Comparative and Global Perspectives

A. Indonesia in the Context of Cold War Authoritarianism

The systematic use of torture under the New Order was not an isolated phenomenon but was deeply embedded in the global geopolitics of the Cold War. Following the 1965 transition, Indonesia became a strategic bulwark against communist expansion in Southeast Asia. This alignment granted the Suharto regime significant

"geopolitical capital," allowing it to institutionalize repression with the tacit, and often explicit, support of Western powers. The "Jakarta Method"—a term coined to describe the state-sponsored liquidation of the Left—became a grim blueprint for other anti-communist crusades across the Global South, emphasizing that developmental success was frequently purchased at the cost of human rights (Bevins, 2020).

The ideological justification for state violence was often exported via international military training programs. The United States, through programs like the International Military Education and Training (IMET), provided Indonesian officers with exposure to "counter-insurgency" doctrines that prioritized internal security over civilian oversight. As Simpson (2008) argues, these programs often standardized interrogation techniques that, while framed as "intelligence gathering," functioned as systematic torture. This globalized "pedagogy of pain" ensured that the New Order's security apparatus was technically proficient and ideologically aligned with the broader Western project of containment.

The New Order's "Security Approach" mirrored the National Security Doctrine adopted by military juntas in Latin America. This doctrine posited that the primary threat to the state was not external invasion but "internal subversion" by domestic actors. By reframing citizens as potential combatants, the regime justified the total suspension of legal safeguards. This ideological framework was not purely domestic; it was a localized version of a global authoritarian trend where "Order" was prioritized over "Law." The international community's willingness to ignore these "Iron Shadows" in exchange for market access provided the regime with a durable "authoritarian shield" (Heryanto, 2006).

Economic "modernization" served as a secondary layer of global legitimacy. The "Berkeley Mafia"—a group of U.S.-educated Indonesian economists—implemented neoliberal policies that were lauded by the World Bank and IMF. However, these policies required the violent suppression of labor and agrarian movements to ensure a "stable" investment climate. This link between global capital and local torture suggests that New Order repression was a functional requirement of a specific model of peripheral capitalism. Torture, in this context, was the "security cost" paid by the Indonesian people to facilitate the country's integration into the global economy (Hadiz, 1997).

The role of Intelligence Diplomacy was also critical. Western intelligence agencies, including the CIA and MI6, maintained close ties with Bakin and

Kopkamtib, often sharing lists of suspected subversives. This cooperation created a transnational network of surveillance where the "Iron Shadows" of the New Order were monitored and managed by global actors. This complicity meant that when torture occurred, the international response was muted by a "shared interest" in the neutralization of the Left. The silence of the international community was not a passive failure but an active policy choice designed to protect the "Smile of Power" (Tanter, 1991).

Furthermore, the New Order utilized the concept of "Asian Values" to deflect international human rights criticism in the 1990s. By arguing that "Western" concepts of individual rights were incompatible with "Eastern" communal harmony, the regime sought to create a cultural exemption for its repressive practices. This discourse was shared by other regional autocrats, such as Lee Kuan Yew and Mahathir Mohamad, creating a regional bloc of "illiberal democracies." This collective resistance to global human rights norms allowed the New Order to maintain its torture chambers while appearing to be a sophisticated participant in regional diplomacy (Bourchier, 2014).

The "state of exception" in Indonesia was also facilitated by the lack of regional human rights mechanisms. Unlike Europe or the Americas, Southeast Asia during the Cold War lacked a regional court to which victims could appeal. ASEAN's principle of "non-interference" ensured that Suharto's internal "cleansing" operations remained a strictly domestic affair. This institutional vacuum allowed the New Order to operate with a degree of impunity that was increasingly impossible for its counterparts in other parts of the world. The regional architecture was, in effect, designed to protect the sovereign's right to repress its own people (Lindsey & Butt, 2016).

Indonesia's experience highlights the "Dark Side of Developmentalism." The New Order proved that a state could achieve significant poverty reduction and infrastructure development while simultaneously operating a machinery of torture. This "Indonesian Model" was studied and sometimes emulated by other developing nations, suggesting that the "Iron Shadows" were not a bug in the system but a feature of a specific path to modernity. Understanding the New Order thus requires a global lens that recognizes how local pain was often the currency of global stability and economic expansion (Robinson, 2018).

B. Lessons from Other Transitional Justice Processes

The experiences of the Southern Cone dictatorships in Latin America offer critical parallels and lessons for Indonesia's struggle with the legacy of torture. In Argentina, the transition was marked by the "Trial of the Juntas," a rare instance where high-ranking military officials were held criminally accountable for disappearances and torture. This process emphasized that judicial accountability is essential for delegitimizing the "security approach." In contrast, Indonesia's reliance on "pacted transitions" has left its military legacy largely unchallenged, suggesting that without a clear judicial rupture, the institutional "operational DNA" of the past remains active within modern security forces (Sikkink, 2011).

Chile's experience with the Rettig and Valech Commissions provides another layer of comparison. These commissions specifically documented torture and "disappearances," creating an official state record of atrocities. While they initially focused on truth over punishment, they eventually created the evidentiary basis for later prosecutions. For Indonesia, the Chilean lesson is that the documentation of torture must be a state-led project to be truly transformative. Without an official "Blue Book" of New Order atrocities, the memory of torture remains fragmented and easily dismissed by those in power as "unverified allegations" (Wright, 2007).

South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) provides the most famous alternative: the "restorative justice" model. By prioritizing truth-telling in exchange for amnesty, the TRC aimed to create a shared national narrative to heal a fractured society. However, the South African lesson for Indonesia is also a cautionary one. The absence of subsequent prosecutions for those who refused to tell the truth has led to a sense of "unfinished justice" and persistent racial inequality. In Indonesia, where even the "truth" part of the equation has been sabotaged, the South African model remains an aspirational but currently unreachable goal (Gibson, 2004).

The concept of Lustration, common in post-communist Eastern Europe, also offers a potential (though unused) pathway for Indonesia. Lustration involves barring former officials of the repressive regime from holding public office in the new democracy. Indonesia's failure to implement any form of lustration allowed New Order elites to "hibernate" during the early years of *Reformasi* and then re-emerge as key political players. The "Iron Shadows" persist in Indonesia because the people who cast them were never removed from the halls of power, illustrating the danger

of a transition that prioritizes "reconciliation" without any form of institutional purging (Stan, 2009).

Comparative scholarship on "The Justice Cascade" suggests that human rights trials have a deterrent effect on future leaders. By successfully prosecuting dictators like Pinochet or Milosevic, the international community has sent a message that sovereign immunity is not absolute. However, Indonesia's successful resistance to this "cascade" suggests that large, strategically important states can still opt-out of global justice. The "Persistence of Impunity" in Jakarta serves as a counter-narrative to the global trend toward accountability, showing that the "Iron Shadows" can survive even in a globalized legal environment (Sikkink, 2011).

The role of Archives and Secret Police Files in Germany (the Stasi files) and Brazil (the *Brasil: Nunca Mais* project) highlights the power of the written record. In these countries, opening the files allowed victims to see the names of their torturers and understand the bureaucracy of fear. In Indonesia, the archives of Kopkamtib and Bakin remain classified, protected by a state that fears the "explosive" power of its own history. The lesson from abroad is clear: the light of the archive is the most effective way to dissipate the shadows of the secret police (McGregor, 2007).

Furthermore, the Psychosocial Reparations model used in Rwanda and Cambodia emphasizes that healing from torture is a communal process. These countries integrated traditional justice mechanisms (like the *Gacaca* courts) with modern legal forms. Indonesia has a rich tradition of local dispute resolution (*Adat*), yet this has rarely been utilized in the context of New Order crimes. By ignoring indigenous models of justice and reconciliation, the Indonesian state has missed an opportunity to ground transitional justice in the cultural reality of its diverse population (Hiariej, 2010).

Finally, the global perspective reveals that Transitional Justice is a "Long Game." In many countries, it took 20 or 30 years before the political conditions were right for meaningful trials or truth commissions. The current "stagnation" in Indonesia should not be viewed as a final failure but as a period of "contestation." As seen in the recent trials of elderly Khmer Rouge leaders or Spanish judges investigating Franco-era crimes, the "Duty to Remember" often outlives the perpetrators. The "Iron Shadows" may be long, but the comparative history of justice suggests that they eventually meet the dawn of accountability (Roosa, 2006).

This final discussion section synthesizes the political, legal, and sociological dimensions of New Order repression. Each sub-chapter has been expanded to 10

paragraphs, integrating a rigorous analysis that contrasts scholar opinions, legal provisions, and authoritarian theories.

Discussion

A. Torture as a Structural Pillar of Authoritarian Stability

The systematic application of torture under the New Order was far from a peripheral "excess" of overzealous officers; it functioned as a central structural pillar of authoritarian stability. Within the framework of the New Order, the maintenance of power required the absolute neutralization of any ideological or social alternative. Torture provided the regime with the ultimate tool for "enforced consensus." By targeting the physical body, the state sought to dominate the political mind, ensuring that the cost of dissent was not merely imprisonment but total physical and psychological destruction. This "Iron Shadow" created stability by liquidating the leadership of the opposition before it could reach critical mass.

Scholars like Robinson (2018) argue that this stability was built on a foundational trauma—the 1965 massacres—which served as a "permanent warning" to the citizenry. From a theoretical perspective, this aligns with the State Terrorism Framework, where the government utilizes its monopoly on violence to instill fear in a population to achieve political goals. Unlike the sporadic violence of a failing state, New Order torture was disciplined and directed. It was the "silent partner" of the regime's economic successes, ensuring that the social disruptions caused by rapid developmentalism did not translate into political upheaval.

The strategic use of torture allowed the regime to bridge the gap between its "Developmentalist" goals and its "Security" requirements. For the New Order to attract the foreign investment necessary for economic growth, it had to project an image of a disciplined, strike-free, and politically dormant workforce. Torture was the invisible mechanism that enforced this discipline. When labor organizers like Marsinah were "disappeared" and interrogated, the regime was communicating to both domestic and international audiences that the "Smile of Power" was backed by an uncompromising coercive capacity.

From a legal-institutional perspective, the Dwifungsi doctrine provided the military with the structural reach to apply this pillar of stability at every level of

society. By embedding military personnel in civilian administration (*Babinsa*), the state ensured that the "threat" of torture was omnipresent. This resonates with Foucault's (1977) concept of the Panopticon, where the mere possibility of being watched—and subsequently punished—forces the subject to self-regulate. In the New Order, the "Panopticon" was physicalized through the territorial command system, making torture a geographically ubiquitous threat.

Furthermore, torture served as a mechanism for Elite Consolidation. By involving various branches of the security forces in the act of repression, Suharto created a "circle of complicity." Officers who participated in or oversaw torture were bound to the regime's survival; the fall of the New Order would mean their own legal vulnerability. This shared culpability acted as a stabilizer, preventing internal military coups and ensuring that the security apparatus remained fiercely loyal to the executive. Violence, in this sense, was the glue that held the authoritarian coalition together.

The New Order also utilized torture to manufacture Ideological Uniformity. Interrogations often included "re-education" components where victims were forced to recite *Pancasila* or denounce their alleged "anti-national" beliefs. This forced synthesis of pain and patriotism was intended to create a "monolithic national identity." Scholars such as Heryanto (2006) note that this process was designed to erase the memory of a pluralistic, politically active Indonesia, replacing it with a sanitized, obedient version of the "Family State."

Moreover, torture functioned as a Selective Screening Tool. The regime did not need to torture everyone; it only needed to torture the "right" people to send a message. By targeting specific nodes of resistance—intellectuals, labor leaders, and student activists—the state could paralyze entire movements with minimal overt violence. This "surgical repression" is a hallmark of sophisticated authoritarianism, where the state maintains a facade of constitutionalism while using the "iron" of torture to manage the margins of society that refuse to be co-opted.

International support, or at least indifference, further solidified torture as a pillar of stability. During the Cold War, the "Jakarta Method" was seen by Western powers as a regrettable but necessary tool for regional anti-communist containment. This international "license to repress" allowed the New Order to institutionalize torture without fear of economic sanctions. As Simpson (2008) observes, the regime's stability was essentially subsidized by a global geopolitical order that prioritized "orderly" dictatorships over "chaotic" democracies.

The symbolic dimension of this stability cannot be understated. The "Smile of Power" was only effective because the population knew what was behind the smile. The state's ability to "disappear" individuals created an aura of Sovereign Omnipotence. Torture was the ultimate proof that the state's power was absolute—reaching even into the private agony of the individual. This psychological dominance ensured that the "Social Contract" in Indonesia was based not on consent, but on a well-grounded fear of the state's capacity to inflict unbearable pain.

Torture as a structural pillar ensured the Persistence of the Regime across generations. By stigmatizing the families of those tortured or "screened," the state created a permanent underclass of "pariahs" who served as a social deterrent. This intergenerational punishment meant that the "Iron Shadow" followed the victims' children, ensuring that the memory of state violence prevented the emergence of new resistance. In the New Order, stability was not just a contemporary condition; it was a future-oriented project built on the broken bodies and silenced voices of the past.

B. The Normalization of Violence in Bureaucratic Systems

A critical finding of this research is the degree to which violence was normalized within the New Order's bureaucratic systems. Torture was not treated as a moral crisis or a legal anomaly; it was standardized as an administrative task. Through bodies like *Kopkamtib* and the territorial command structure, the infliction of pain was professionalized. Standardized interrogation manuals and specialized facilities transformed torture into a routine part of security operations. This "banality of evil," as Arendt (1963) described it in other contexts, allowed military personnel to commit atrocities while viewing themselves as disciplined civil servants.

The bureaucratic normalization of torture was facilitated by a Chain of Deniability. Orders for "intensive interrogation" would pass through multiple layers of the bureaucracy, often using euphemisms that masked the brutality of the act. This administrative distancing allowed high-ranking officials to claim they never ordered "torture," while field officers felt they were simply fulfilling "security directives." This structural ambiguity is essential for the long-term survival of a repressive system, as it prevents the concentration of moral guilt on any single individual.

From a legal standpoint, the Normalization of Violence was achieved through the "Rule by Law" (as opposed to the Rule of Law). The New Order passed a series

of sub-laws and emergency decrees that provided a veneer of legality to extra-judicial acts. The Anti-Subversion Law, for instance, was so vaguely defined that it allowed the bureaucracy to categorize almost any activity as a "security threat." When violence is authorized by the state's legal framework, it ceases to be "violence" in the eyes of the bureaucrat; it becomes "enforcement."

Furthermore, the Specialization of Repression played a key role. Specific units, such as the *Satgas Intel* (Intelligence Task Forces), were trained specifically in techniques that would extract information or induce fear without leaving detectable marks. This "technicalization" of torture moved it away from the realm of "sadism" and into the realm of "expertise." Interrogators saw themselves as specialists in a necessary, if unpleasant, field of statecraft. This professional identity provided a psychological shield that prevented the empathy that might otherwise hinder the act of torture.

The bureaucracy also utilized Documentation and Reporting as a tool of normalization. Ironically, the New Order was meticulous in its record-keeping. The filing of reports on "political screening" and "interrogation outcomes" integrated torture into the standard office workflow of the military and police. When an act is documented, categorized, and filed, it becomes part of the "official reality." This paper trail, though often classified, served to legitimize the violence within the internal culture of the security forces, making it as mundane as a tax report (Tanter, 1991).

Socially, the normalization of violence was reinforced by the Militarization of Civil Service. Many retired military officers held positions in the Ministry of Home Affairs or as local governors. They brought with them the "Security Approach" (*Pendekatan Keamanan*), ensuring that bureaucratic responses to social problems—such as land disputes or strikes—often defaulted to coercive measures. This ensured that the "Iron Shadow" was not just confined to the military barracks but permeated the entire administrative life of the nation, from the provincial capital to the village hall.

The Culture of the Station (the police and military subculture) also rewarded "toughness" and the ability to extract results. In a system where promotion was based on the ability to maintain "stability," those who utilized violence effectively were often the ones who moved up the ranks. This created an institutional "survival of the most repressive," where the internal values of the bureaucracy were diametrically

opposed to the stated legal protections of the citizens. Violence became the "secret language" of success within the New Order's hierarchy.

Normalization also required the Dehumanization of the Subject within bureaucratic discourse. In official documents, victims were referred to as "elements" (*oknum*), "subversives," or "G30S/PKI remnants." By stripping the victim of their name and humanity, the bureaucracy made the act of torture a technical interaction with a "security problem" rather than a violent assault on a human being. This linguistic dehumanization is a prerequisite for any bureaucratic system of torture, as it allows the "Iron Shadow" to operate without a "Face."

Furthermore, the Persistence of Impunity within the system acted as a bureaucratic guarantee. Personnel were aware that as long as they were acting in the interest of *Kamtib* (Security and Order), they would be protected from legal consequences. This "Administrative Immunity" meant that there were no internal bureaucratic checks on the use of torture. Without the threat of disciplinary action or prosecution, the use of violence became a cost-free and high-reward tool for the ambitious bureaucrat or officer.

The normalization of violence has proved to be the regime's most enduring legacy. The Path Dependency Theory suggests that once a bureaucracy develops a certain way of operating, it is incredibly difficult to change. Even after the fall of Suharto, the "operational DNA" of the New Order remains embedded in the Indonesian security forces. The continued reports of torture in contemporary police investigations suggest that while the "Smile of Power" has changed, the underlying bureaucratic habits of the "Iron Shadow" remain a structural feature of the state apparatus (Hiariej, 2010).

C. The Tension Between Political Stability and Accountability

The transition to *Reformasi* in 1998 brought the inherent tension between the desire for political stability and the demand for human rights accountability into sharp relief. In the early years of the transition, the "pacted" nature of the democratic shift—where New Order elites remained in power—meant that true accountability was structurally inhibited. These actors framed demands for justice as threats to "national reconciliation." By arguing that looking back would reopen old wounds,

they successfully protected the military from systemic prosecution, creating a "Stability-Impunity Trade-off" (Mietzner, 2009).

This tension is best analyzed through the lens of Transitional Justice Theory, which posits that a new democracy must balance the "Duty to Remember" with the "Need to Govern." In Indonesia, the governing coalition often prioritized the latter. To maintain the support of the TNI (military) during the fragile transition, the civilian leadership frequently compromised on human rights issues. This resulted in the creation of "Ad Hoc" courts that were designed to fail, serving as a form of "Justice Theater" that satisfied international critics without threatening the domestic power structure (Crouch, 2010).

From a legal perspective, the tension is manifested in the Conflict of Jurisdictions. While Law No. 26/2000 established Human Rights Courts, the Attorney General's Office (AGO) often acted as a bottleneck, refusing to prosecute cases sent by Komnas HAM. This institutional deadlock reflects the state's internal struggle: one part of the state (the human rights commission) seeks accountability, while another (the prosecution and judiciary) seeks to preserve the "stability" of the old guard. This legal "ping-pong" has left thousands of victims in a state of "unresolved justice."

The rhetoric of "Moving On" (*Move On*) has been utilized by the political elite to delegitimize the quest for accountability. By framing the demand for truth as "dwelling in the past," the state attempts to shame victims into silence. However, as scholars like Roosa (2006) argue, a democracy that is built on a "foundation of lies" and unacknowledged torture is inherently unstable. The failure to address the "Iron Shadows" means that the state's current "Smile of Power" lacks moral legitimacy, leading to a profound trust deficit between the government and the governed.

Furthermore, the tension is exacerbated by the Re-emergence of New Order Figures in contemporary politics. When individuals allegedly involved in past torture are elected to high office, it signals that "stability" has completely trumped "accountability." This creates a "Chilling Effect" on current human rights advocacy, as activists realize that the perpetrators of the past are now the policymakers of the present. The "Shadow" has not just persisted; it has been invited back into the light of the democratic sun, casting doubt on the entire *Reformasi* project.

In the context of Agrarian and Regional Conflicts, the tension between stability and accountability is a daily reality. In regions like Papua, the state often prioritizes "Territorial Integrity" (Stability) over "Human Rights" (Accountability). The

continued use of New Order-style coercive methods in these regions suggests that the state still views torture as a legitimate tool for maintaining national order. This indicates that the "Security Approach" has not been abolished; it has simply been regionalized, allowing the "Iron Shadow" to persist away from the eyes of the Jakarta elite.

Civil society's response to this tension, such as the Aksi Kamisan, serves as a constant "moral friction" against the state's desire for amnesia. These protests highlight that "Accountability" is not just a legal requirement but a psychological necessity for the nation's healing. By refusing to let the "Iron Shadows" be forgotten, activists are arguing that true stability can only be achieved through a full accounting of the state's crimes. A "Stability" that requires the silence of victims is not peace; it is merely a "frozen conflict" between the state and its history.

The international dimension also plays into this tension. Global powers often prioritize Indonesia as a "Stable Partner" in the Indo-Pacific, leading them to downplay human rights concerns in favor of security cooperation. This Geopolitical Realism provides the Indonesian government with the "stability" it needs to continue ignoring calls for accountability. The "Iron Shadows" of the past are thus protected by the "Strategic Interests" of the present, showing that the tension between justice and order is a global phenomenon that transcends Indonesia's borders.

Moreover, the "Impunity Gap" creates a dangerous precedent for future leaders. If the torturers of the New Order are never held accountable, it sends a message that the "State of Exception" can be invoked again whenever "Stability" is threatened. This erodes the "Guarantees of Non-Recurrence" that are supposed to be the hallmark of a successful transition. The failure to prosecute past torture makes the current democratic framework a "hollowed-out" structure, where the "Iron" is always ready to strike from behind the "Smile."

This study posits that the tension between political stability and accountability is the Central Crisis of Indonesian Democracy. As long as the "Iron Shadows" of the New Order remain unprosecuted, the transition to a truly just society will remain incomplete. True stability is not the absence of dissent or the silence of the tortured; it is the presence of a judicial system that holds everyone—regardless of their rank—accountable to the same standard of humanity. Until the "Shadows" are brought into the light of the courtroom, the "Smile of Power" in Indonesia will remain a haunting reminder of a past that refuses to die.

Conclusion

A. Summary of Key Findings

This research has demonstrated that torture under the New Order was not a series of isolated incidents but a deliberate governance strategy essential to the regime's survival. The institutionalization of violence through agencies like *Kopkamtib* and the military's territorial command structure ensured that the state's "Iron Shadow" was omnipresent. By professionalizing repression and integrating it into the bureaucratic workflow, the regime successfully maintained a facade of "Pancasila democracy" while systematically liquidating political dissent. Torture served as the ultimate mechanism for enforcing the "Security Approach," prioritizing regime stability over the fundamental rights of the citizenry.

The long-term societal and political impacts of this system remain a defining feature of contemporary Indonesia. The "Normalization of Violence" within the security forces has created an institutional path dependency that resists democratic reform. Furthermore, the psychological trauma inflicted upon victims and their families has resulted in intergenerational scars and a persistent "Climate of Fear." The failure to fully dismantle the New Order's carceral infrastructure means that the tools of past repression continue to cast shadows over modern legal and social interactions, complicating the nation's journey toward a truly consolidated democracy.

B. Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the field of Authoritarian Studies by utilizing the Indonesian case to highlight how regimes use "Selective Repression" and "Bureaucratic Torture" to achieve longevity. Indonesia provides a unique model where state violence was not used to destroy the state's own institutions, but rather to strengthen them through a "Circle of Complicity." This research expands the understanding of how authoritarian states utilize "Legalism" and "National Security Rhetoric" to moralize cruelty and insulate perpetrators from international and domestic scrutiny.

Furthermore, this analysis links repression with transitional justice debates by illustrating the "Impunity Gap" that emerges in pacted transitions. The Indonesian

case challenges the optimistic "Justice Cascade" theory, showing that strategically significant states can successfully resist global accountability norms through "Strategic Amnesia" and elite capture of the judiciary. This study emphasizes that transitional justice is not merely a legal process but a deeply political struggle over the control of national memory and the definition of a state's moral legitimacy.

C. Policy Implications

From a policy perspective, the necessity of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs) cannot be overstated. For Indonesia to heal, the state must move beyond "Justice Theater" and establish a credible mechanism for truth-seeking that prioritizes the "Right to Truth" for victims. An official state acknowledgment of the systematic nature of New Order torture is a prerequisite for any meaningful national reconciliation. Without a state-sanctioned record of these atrocities, the "Iron Shadows" will continue to be a source of social fragmentation and political manipulation.

Comprehensive legal reform and accountability mechanisms are equally vital. This includes the genuine implementation of the UN Convention Against Torture (UNCAT) into domestic criminal law, ensuring that torture is treated as a specific, non-derogable crime with appropriate penalties. Moreover, security sector reform must go beyond structural changes to address the "Internal DNA" of the police and military. This requires rigorous vetting processes to ensure that individuals with human rights-violating pasts are not promoted to leadership positions, thereby breaking the cycle of impunity that has persisted since 1998.

D. Limitations and Future Research

A primary limitation of this research is the need for archival access. Many of the most critical documents regarding the New Order's intelligence operations and secret detention centers remain classified or have been destroyed. Future research must advocate for the "Declassification of the Shadow State," as access to these records is essential for move from anecdotal evidence to a comprehensive bureaucratic mapping of state violence. Until the archives of *Kopkamtib* and *Bais* are opened, our understanding of the regime's inner workings will remain incomplete.

Additionally, there is a profound need for more oral history and survivor-centered methodologies. As the generation that experienced the height of New Order repression ages, there is an urgent "race against time" to document their testimonies. Future studies should focus on the gendered and localized experiences of torture, ensuring that the voices of women, ethnic minorities, and rural peasants are not lost to history. By placing the survivor at the center of the narrative, researchers can challenge the state's "Smile of Power" with the visceral, undeniable truth of the "Iron Shadow."

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