



## Reshuffling the Deck? Military Corporatism, Promotional Logjams and Post-Authoritarian Civil-Military Relations in Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

This article seeks to explain the increasingly regressive (or illiberal) behaviour on the part of the Indonesian military. It focuses on the expansion of the Army's Territorial Command structure, the growing military intrusion into civilian polity and the stunted progress of military professionalism. It provides an organisational, rather than political, perspective. Conceptually, the article synthesises various approaches to comparative politics to explain why and how military personnel policies affect political behaviour. Empirically, using a series of original datasets of hundreds of officers, the article demonstrates how promotional logjams – too many officers but too few positions available – over the past decade help explain the regressive behaviours we recently witnessed. It is further argued that the lack of institutionalisation in personnel policies gave rise to and prolonged these logjams. This article draws attention to the importance of intra-organisational dynamics in understanding the state of civil–military relations in post-authoritarian Indonesia.

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Post-authoritarian Indonesia; military reform; corporatism; personnel policy; civil–military relations; Indonesian military

Reforming the Indonesian military is central to the narrative of post-Suharto political development. Suharto could not have maintained his New Order regime for over three decades without the military (then called *Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia* or ABRI) and its *dwi-fungsi* (dual function) doctrine. Under Suharto, *dwi-fungsi* allocated the military both socio-political and security and defence roles (see Honna 1999). ABRI officers were appointed to key political, social and economic positions at every level of government while its Territorial Command (KOTER) structure boosted their ability to intervene in local affairs, maintain internal security and provide the occasional repression of regime critics (Aspinall 2010, 22). By the 1990s, much of the public resentment of Suharto was also directed against ABRI's overbearing role as the guardians of the New Order. Reforming the military was therefore one of the key demands of the reform (*reformasi*) movement that toppled Suharto in May 1998.

Successive post-Suharto governments have implemented different elements of a military reform agenda. The military, now called *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* (TNI) was separated from the police, had its socio-political units liquidated, lost its reserved parliamentary seats and cut formal ties to political parties (Sukma 2013, 123). In

addition, the TNI commander no longer heads the defence ministry, while the legislature (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* or DPR) oversees the defence sector and active-duty officers cannot hold elected office. By the time of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's second term (2009–2014), the TNI's involvement in national and local political institutions fell to its lowest level since the 1950s (Mietzner 2011a, 132).<sup>1</sup> The TNI also gradually revamped its doctrine, inserted humanitarian law into its officer training curriculum and embarked on a multi-year technological modernisation drive under the Minimum Essential Force blueprint issued in 2010.<sup>2</sup> Taken together, the TNI made 31 specific organisational changes to accommodate post-authoritarian reform and its political role and civil–military relations (Basuki 2013, 140–141).

At the same time, the TNI has been unapologetic about its past human rights abuses and kept many of its prerogatives. This included control over organisational expansion, personnel promotion and budgetary processes and stacking the Ministry of Defence (MoD) with officers, rather than transforming it into a civilian institution. While the government should have subsumed the TNI's business activities by 2009, little is known about what has happened since then. Nor has there been transparency about off-budget financial activities, such as the provision of protective services in conflict areas like Papua. In other words, the TNI retains “significant pockets of political influence” (Mietzner 2011a, 132). There are also issues surrounding the military justice system, intelligence transparency and the management of conflict areas (Kontras 2008; Diprose and Azca 2019). By the end of Yudhoyono's term, the military reform agenda was losing steam, although his administration asserted in 2008 that the process was already “85% completed” (*Kompas*, October 9, 2008).

Recently, under President Joko Widodo (or Jokowi), the military reform process may be “walking backwards.” By mid-2017, he allowed at least four active duty generals to hold State-Owned Enterprises commissioner positions, issued a verbal order for the TNI to boost food sufficiency programmes and allowed soldiers to be involved in government eviction activities (*Koran Tempo*, February 7, 2018). He also appointed senior retired generals into key positions in his administration, including General Wiranto (Co-ordinating Minister for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs), General Luhut Pandjaitan (Co-ordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs), General Moeldoko (Chief of Staff), General Ryamrizard Ryacudu (Defence Minister), and General Agum Gumelar (Presidential Advisory Board). The TNI has also been re-inserting itself into non-military affairs, from counter-terrorism to anti-drug campaigns and civic action programmes (Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict 2015). Between 2014 and 2017, the TNI and MoD signed 133 deals with dozens of civilian ministries, civil society organisations and universities on programmes ranging from basic military training to rural development projects.

Some have questioned the TNI's professionalism as well. General Gatot Nurmantyo, TNI Commander from 2015 to 2017, was criticised for his political rhetoric and behaviour such as public visits to prominent Islamic clerics, making accusations against the police and preparing a team to run for office upon retirement (*Koran Tempo*, September 27, 2017). Senior officers have also been advocating antiquated notions of “State Defence” and “Proxy War,” exacerbating the TNI's preoccupation with domestic political, social and economic issues over the regional strategic environment.<sup>3</sup> Under President Jokowi, the TNI have repeatedly expanded their command structure and

units. For the Army, this included adding a new Strategic Army Reserve (KOSTRAD) infantry division and two new Regional Territorial Commands (KODAM) in Sulawesi and Papua. The TNI plans to continue its organisational expansion for another 5 to 10 years (see Laksmana 2019b). Some consider the Army's territorial structure as potentially providing the organisation with a tool of repression and political power as it mirrors civilian political institutions and reaches down from the province to the village level, as was the case for ABRI under the New Order (Sundhaussen 1978).

What explains this regressive turn in the state of military reform? Why is the military increasingly displaying illiberal political behaviour? As Diprose, McRae, and Hadiz (2019) explain, the military's increasingly illiberal politics can be viewed as part of a highly-contested arena of civil–military relations where early post-authoritarian reforms were far-reaching but ultimately incomplete. This framing follows a tradition of examining military reforms using democratic standards of military professionalism and civil–military relations (see Mietzner 2009; Baker 2015). Some scholars similarly argue for the salience of civil–military factors in explaining military reform patterns: the weaknesses of political and regulatory institutions (Sebastian and Gindarsah 2013), the lack of institutionalised civilian control (Mietzner 2011b; Gunawan 2017), the dynamics of elite conflict (Mietzner 2006), the nature of democratic transition (Malley 2008) and the role of civil society groups (Scarpello 2014). Others proposed intra-military contestations (Hafidz 2006), doctrinal and political culture (Rinakit 2005; Widjajanto 2010) and military business interests (Rieffel and Pramodawardhani 2007) as drivers of the military's political behaviour.

While each of these factors affect military reform at different times and under various conditions, they are all part of a democratic benchmarking to measure the progress of military reform. This benchmarking is partially rooted in the literature on the Indonesian military's historic preoccupation with elite civil–military conflicts (see, for example, Crouch 1978; Sundhausen 1982; Mietzner 2006). It also has to do with the arrival of the Security Sector Reform (SSR) agenda based on liberal models of peace and state building proposed by a coalition of civil society activists, academics and a group of reform-minded generals in the early 2000s (Jackson 2011; Sukma 2013, 125).<sup>4</sup>

A political or civil–military lens is valuable then in explaining the various elite dynamics underpinning the progress or regress of military reform. Ultimately, such reforms are connected to broader contestations between new and old forces. Nevertheless, this lens cannot fully account for the full range of military behaviour and political outcomes that may be considered illiberal. After all, the TNI is not an exclusively political force; it is an organisation with its own governing logic. While no single approach – whether political, sociological or economic – can always explain all TNI behaviours, this article will show that an organisational perspective can enrich existing explanations by providing additional context and explain some of the regressive military behaviours seen in recent years.

This article focuses on three regressive behaviours: (i) the expansion of the Army's KOTER structure; (ii) the growing military intrusion into the broader civilian polity; and (iii) the stunted progress of military professionalism, exemplified by the growing conservative discourses within the officer corps. While the organisational perspective does not claim to explain all the TNI's different illiberal behaviours in recent years, it

provides a more nuanced explanation for these three specific regressions than the civil–military perspective alone.

The analysis is built on two elements: conceptual and empirical. Conceptually, I synthesise from various literature in comparative politics – from the political economy of institutions to civil–military relations – to answer why and how intra-organisational dynamics affect the political behaviours of militaries. While an organisational perspective generally considers a wide range of policies (from education to administrative functions and operational duties), this article focuses on personnel policies and how officers rise and rotate through the ranks. Empirically, using a series of original datasets involving hundreds of officers, I identify promotional logjams among colonels and generals over the past decade. I suggest that these logjams have broad political implications and provide the organisational contexts needed to understand the three regressive behaviours. It is further argued that the lack of institutionalisation in personnel policies – as seen by the political and haphazard nature of officer appointments and the frequency of organisational tinkering – helps explain why these logjams have persisted since the 1990s.

This analysis builds on the previous research on the promotional patterns of Indonesian Army officers and how they shape the TNI’s response towards democratic transition and its early consolidation phase. It follows Chandra and Kammen (2002) in highlighting the importance of historical recruitment patterns, their effects on career prospects and the institutional adjustments that accommodated the senior officers most disadvantaged by a changing of civil–military relations. But this article departs from their work in two ways. First, the outcomes and explanatory variables studied here are different. Chandra and Kammen (2002) looked at how promotional patterns created conflicting “generational” interests within the officer corps. This article instead focuses on why promotional logjams persisted over the past decade and how such intra-military dynamics shape the three illiberal behaviours mentioned above. Second, this article examines the logjams of the senior TNI leadership in all three services and their academies (Army, Navy, and Air Force) under Yudhoyono and Jokowi. This is presented with data on the TNI’s organisational development and personnel policies more broadly.

The following section describes the conceptual framework, explaining why intra-organisational dynamics such as promotion policies are central to the military’s corporate interests. The key insight is that intra-military power relations (between different groups or generations) mediate and eventually shape civil–military relations. The subsequent section examines how the TNI’s personnel systems should work and how they vary in practice by showing different empirical markers of the TNI’s under-institutionalised personnel policies. The third section analyses the promotional logjams among mid-rank officers as a precursor to similar problems at the general-rank level and the fourth section describes how senior officers have been rotated under Presidents Yudhoyono and Jokowi. It is also demonstrated how the interaction between political considerations and under-institutionalised personnel policies worsens promotional logjams. The implications of promotional logjams for Indonesia’s civil–military relations and broader polity are examined in the fifth section. Finally, brief conclusions are drawn on what intra-military dynamics and civil–military relations can tell us about the broader state of Indonesia’s post-authoritarian trajectory.

## Military Corporatism, Promotion Policies and Political Behaviour

This section proposes a conceptual framework to understand why and how intra-organisational dynamics shape the military's political behaviours. It begins from the premise that organisations are different from institutions (North 1990; Scott 1995). Organisations require some degree of institutionalisation to function, but not all institutions require an organisation. Militaries are organisations because they were intentionally set up with some structure: it has some guarantee of personnel and resources, rules to regulate internal behaviour and ensure control and is driven by functionally defined goals (Norden 2001, 109). As such, a military has its own institutional framework governing the interactions of those persons who constitute the organisation (Knight 1992, 3). Different militaries have different degrees of institutionalisation, which is better understood as “behavioural routinisation”: how organisational “rules of the game” and behaviours become regularised, routinised or made predictable (Levitsky 1998, 80). Specifically, it is the process whereby officers' expectations are stabilised and behaviours routinised by a commonly agreed upon set of professional and meritocratic rules and practices.<sup>5</sup>

How are these institutions inside the military developed? They are forged within wider social and political conflicts. After all, militaries are complex political communities with central concerns identical to any political community: who should rule and how the “citizens” should live (Rosen 1991, 19). Following the social conflict approach to political economy, this article views institutions as embodying specific power arrangements. Institutions that might appear dysfunctional persist because elites are prepared to sacrifice efficiency when their positions and interests are threatened (Rodan, Hewison, and Robison 2006, 7). Distributionally, institutional arrangements favour the actors capable of asserting their strategic advantage under normal conditions (Knight 1992, 14). But in periods of uncertainty, the elite might adopt a risk-averse strategy: creating institutions for “collective welfare” accommodating the “average actors” (Knight 1992; Tsebelis 1990). This was the case for the TNI after it ended its largest military operation launched in 2003 against the Free Aceh Movement. As the Aceh conflict goes back to the late 1970s, the 2005 Helsinki process that ended the conflict deprived the TNI of a key institutional *raison d'être*.

While political economists traditionally use the social conflict approach to understand the evolution of political regimes, I borrow the logic and lower the level of analysis to below the state to the military. Just as the social conflict approach “foregrounds local power relations” at the domestic level to “mediate” international systemic material relations (Hameiri and Jones 2014, 5), the organisational perspective views intra-military power relations mediating the effects of and shaping domestic power relations (that is, civil–military relations). As the next sections will show, promotional logjams reflect the conflicting interests between different military academy generations, between the military and other coercive instruments of the state such as the police and between senior military leaders and the president. As such, these intra-military, inter-agency and civil–military relations provide the context in which we see the expansion of the KOTER structure, the intrusion of the military into the broader polity, and the TNI's stunted professionalism. The expansion of the KOTER structure, for example, could be seen as a way to accommodate different military generations – ensuring they all get key positions – and keep civil–military relations stable.

What, then, are the key interests and power relations that shape intra-military dynamics? The classic literature on military corporatism in civil–military relations provides some answers (see Huntington 1957; Perlmutter 1977). As used here, “military corporatism” is not the “corporate state” of comparative politics (see Collier 1995).<sup>6</sup> Rather, “corporatism” is used to identify a system of self-regulation by autonomous groups (Winkler 1976, 101). Military corporatism refers to both the degree of military “corporateness” and the corporate interests its leaders seek to defend. Corporateness is thus the degree to which the military’s corporate character and identity are developed and institutionalised. The military’s “corporateness” stems from the common and long period of educational and professional experiences among officers and from the formalisation and application of the standards of professional competence and responsibility (Huntington 1957, 10; Abrahamsson 1971, 12).

This article focuses on the corporate interests most militaries seek to defend: (i) maintaining internal cohesion, discipline and morale; (ii) protecting image, prestige and legitimacy; and (iii) securing material interests, ranging from defence budget to personnel promotions (Bellin 2012, 131; see also Nordlinger 1977).<sup>7</sup> As a corporate body, the military also strives for internal control to protect these interests (Finer 2002, 47). As such, the military’s corporate orientation is tied to intra-organisational problems, such as officer socialisation or bureaucratic struggle within the officer corps (Perlmutter 1977, 6). Promotion policies, the focus here, are therefore central to the corporate nature of the military.

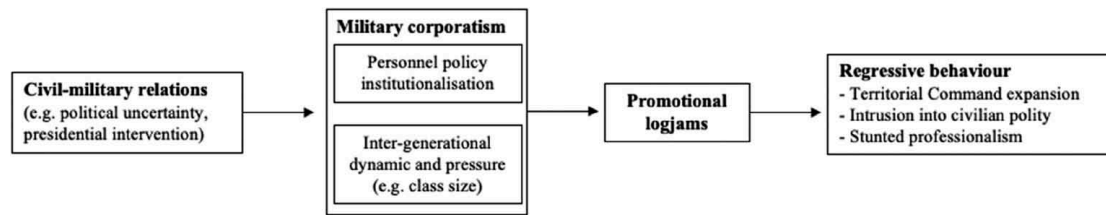
The power relations and conflicting interests within the military over who gets promoted and why they get promoted therefore determine whether and how the military can defend its corporate interests, either against external political control or against other agencies undermining its coercive monopoly. In other words, intra-military dynamics shape civil–military relations and “filter” domestic developments. Unsurprisingly, then, influence over who is promoted to positions of senior command is the source of power inside the military (Rosen 1991, 20). Two inter-related conditions are salient for this battle for influence over promotions.

First, the extent to which personnel policies are institutionalised. To minimise intra-organisational conflicts, the military leadership should develop and institutionalise personnel and promotion policies: clear paths of career advancement and recruitment under a common standard of authority and a stable agreement over professional development (Bellin 2004, 145). This allows the military to be rule-governed, predictable, meritocratic and eventually develop integrated patterns of behaviour and attitudes in the Weberian sense.<sup>8</sup> Conversely, under-institutionalisation means career advancement is organised arbitrarily, politically or patrimonially and discipline is maintained through external political intervention (Belkin 2005, 145; see also Moore and Trout 1978). For example, a president is more able to intervene in officer appointments when the military has yet to institutionalise its promotion policies. Under these conditions, professional standards rarely develop as the military focuses more on politics. Furthermore, the institutionalisation of personnel policies determines whether factional conflicts emerge and whether civilian political leaders and other coercive state agencies can undermine the military’s corporate interests. This conception of personnel institutionalisation will guide the analysis of the TNI’s experience in the following section.

The second condition in the battle for influence over promotions is the extent to which intra-military generations are in conflict with one another and whether inter-generational “transfer of power” proceeds smoothly. Generally, a military generation refers to a group of officers who share a similar outlook grounded in their training and cohort experiences (Waisbord 1991, 158). Military generational markers are usually political, such as a national crisis, organisational including academy experience, or operational such as in a particular campaign (Whitson 1968; Stepan 1977). In Indonesia, there were marked differences between the 1945 generation forged in revolutionary battle and the post-1957 generation as the first graduates of the academy (Weatherbee 1982). There were also different professional experiences between officers groomed under Suharto with combat tours in East Timor and those who rose through the ranks in the democratic era, without combat experience. Patron–client relations (for example, between president and generals) are also a frequent characteristic of military generations. Inter-generational dynamics shape and reflect the power relations inside the military as they determine which groups will control the organisation and how promotions are allocated for each group member. Structural shifts in the TNI’s officer corps, for example, created different incentives based on differential career prospects and consequently different attitudes towards reform (Chandra and Kammen 2002, 117). In other words, intra-organisational pressures such as class size or career prospects are often filtered through the inter-generational dynamics within the officer corps.

These two conditions – personnel policy institutionalisation and inter-generational dynamics – help explain why promotional logjams persist and why some illiberal behaviours emerge. The under-institutionalisation of personnel policies encourages different generational groups within the officer corps to rely on patron–client relationships or other informal institutions to secure key positions, whether to defend group interests (against other generations) or defend the military from external control and competition (for example, with police). Consequently, presidential intervention into appointments, including favouring one generation over another, is more likely, which further undermines efforts to institutionalise personnel policies. The military leadership might also create institutional arrangements such as boosting the number of available jobs to stabilise inter-generational politics or strengthen the defence of the corporate interests, which amplify their conservative tendencies and hinder professionalism. “Conservative” means that the military focuses on maintaining established procedures and values stability, predictability, autonomy and control over its environment, even if this involves a staunch defence of the status quo or authoritarian hierarchical norms (Perlmutter 1977, 2; Wolpin 1981, 13; Zisk 1993, 11, 20).

Under these two conditions, intra-organisational pressures pertaining to personnel management and promotions are poorly managed or politically manipulated to suit the different competing powers within the military and in their relations with the political leadership. One key consequence is the presence of promotional logjams within the officer corps. As intra-organisational pressure builds up, the military leadership eventually needs to manage and alleviate such logjams. But given the nature of military corporatism and civil–military relations, the ensuing institutional solutions could be seen as regressive or illiberal by the broader polity as they include, for example, the militarisation of civilian posts. These arguments and how they apply to the TNI are illustrated in [Figure 1](#). The next section first describes the TNI’s under-institutionalised personnel policies.



**Figure 1.** Civil–military relations, military corporatism and regressive political behaviour: causal pathway Source: Summary of author’s arguments

### Under-institutionalisation of Personnel Policies

The lack of institutionalisation of personnel policies explains the promotional logjams witnessed in the TNI over the past decade. This article does not try to explain why such under-institutionalisation occurs in the first place – a task better left for future research – but instead focuses on demonstrating the under-institutionalisation of personnel policies as an explanatory factor for promotional logjams. This under-institutionalisation can be observed in: (i) the haphazard and political manner of senior officer appointments; and (ii) the constant tinkering of organisational structures since the 1950s. To understand these factors, the following section will first describe how officers enter the TNI and ideally move up the ranks. It then highlights some of the TNI’s personnel policy challenges – that is, how officers get promoted in practice. Lastly, the frequency of organisational tinkering over the past six decades is discussed as a key organisational indicator of the lack of institutionalisation.

### How Officers Should Move Through the System

TNI personnel are divided into non-commissioned officers (*Bintara*), privates (*Tamtama*) and commissioned officers (*Perwira*). There are 22 ranks in total, from private second class (*Prajurit Dua*) to general/admiral/air marshall (four-star generals), with Academy graduates commissioned as second lieutenants. Officers either come from the military Academy system or the Career Soldier Officer School (SEPA PK). For the Army, there is also the Army Officer Candidate School system (SECAPA AD). Most Army officers do not come from the Academy. Between 2008 and 2012, on average, the Academy, officer school and officer candidate school respectively provided 17%, 8% and 50% of new officers annually (Seskoed 2012, 17). Almost exclusively it is Academy graduates who are promoted to the highest positions.

In the Army, officers must go through three phases of professional “concentration” to advance their career: basic (*dasar*), advanced (*lanjutan*) and special (*khusus*). These concentrations are spread out over four periods depending on rank and length of service: (i) basic development (from lieutenant to captain), with a minimum service length of seven years; (ii) professional development (from major to lieutenant colonel), with a service length between 16 and 23 years; (iii) service and advanced development (colonel), with a service length between 20 and 28 years; and (iv) post-service (brigadier general until end of commission), with a service length of minimal of 24 to 27 years (Seskoed 2012, 7). With a retirement age of 58, most officers should thus serve about 35 years.



Ideally, officers should have assignments in both territorial and tactical forces – combining unit command, staff and territorial assignments – while attending a series of military schools (Lowry 1996, 121). Attending five military schools is the minimum requirement to reach a general rank. For the Army, it begins with the branch’s basic officer course followed by the company commander course for first lieutenants or captains, with the other services having equivalent schools. As a major or lieutenant colonel, an officer would then attend the service staff and command colleges (SESKOAD for Army, SESKOAL for Navy, and SESKOAU for Air Force). Colonels attend the joint senior service staff college equivalent (SESKO TNI), while senior colonels and general-rank officers attend the National Resilience Institute (*Lemhannas*), where the student body includes military officers, senior civilian government officials and business leaders (Rabasa and Haseman 2002, 58).

Each officer can expect to advance based on several benchmarks: the baseline commission tenure, military education, operational accomplishments and service medals, track-record (as reflected in their “talent scouting” report and Assessment Scorecard (*Daftar Penilaian* or DAPEN)), and “socio-metric” score (how well one is accepted by peers, superiors and subordinates). Additional assessments are required depending on the position, including psychological tests or placement record (tour of duty/area). For the Army’s command appointments at the colonel level, there are additional competency tests and promotion boards.<sup>9</sup> Finally, the promotion and rank boards (officially *Dewan Kepangkatan dan Jabatan* or WANJAK) almost always have the last call on appointments.<sup>10</sup>

### **How Officers Really Move Through the System**

If several generations of TNI officers have been meritocratically promoted based on the above framework, then we should expect to observe signs of personnel policy institutionalisation. Instead, we consistently see several problems. First, at the civil–military level, promotions have been haphazardly decided based on patrimonial considerations or the intervention by politicians. For much of the New Order, it was accepted that an officer’s professional record was less significant than his political connections and Suharto’s political calculations, and it was known that he vetted all senior appointments. At the same time, the military enjoyed a reasonable degree of administrative freedom in the appointment of lower- and middle-ranking officers (Chandra and Kammen 2002, 96). Suharto’s successors varied in this practice. Presidents Habibie, Sukarnoputri and Jokowi were relatively hands-off – save for the most important posts – while Presidents Wahid and Yudhoyono were more hands-on, albeit with different approaches and consequences. Such methods have implications for civil–military relations, as we will see in the following sections.

Second, there are two basic problems at the organisational level. On the one hand, the formal structure and institutions are defective. For example, the TNI does not practice the “up or out” personnel management system, where an officer is strictly provided with a certain length of service to reach higher positions. Instead, most academy graduates are all but guaranteed to reach colonel or brigadier general rank, regardless of the duration they take to do so. Consequently, there will be times when officer rotations and promotions are quick and successive and command tenures short.

In the 1990s, for example, the academy class of 1965 saw more than 100 of its members become generals in rapid succession; some served less than six months so that others could be promoted too (Rabasa and Haseman 2002, 60). As will be discussed below, this pattern is recurring.

On the other hand, the formal personnel system is competing with informal institutions – the unwritten socially shared rules that are created, communicated and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels (Helmke and Levitsky 2004). These informal rules are often borne out of practice or culture. Some may seem harmless. For example, there is an unwritten rule for each academy class that 20% will get promoted faster, 60% will stay and 20% will fall behind (Seskoed 2012, 43). Others are problematic. For example, as an outgoing officer can recommend a suitable replacement, it is common for a classmate to fill the vacancy (Kammen and Chandra 1999, 43–44). This contributes to promotional logjams as some academy classes may dominate strategic or command positions at the expense of younger cohorts.

Additionally, while the rise and fall of academy classes are often about the availability of positions and class sizes (see below), they are also indicative of a larger problem of favouritism. Throughout the military, senior officers cultivate personal loyalty and support by mentoring juniors, whose personal obligation to the senior “*bapak*” (literally “father”) is deep and long lasting (Lowry 1996, 125). *Bapak*-ism, however, is established in official documents as officers are supposed to be military leaders in the broadest sense of the word, as “commander, teacher, trainer, and father” (Seskoed 2012, 7). Often this patronage provides social capital and private goods that the organisation cannot provide, from supplementary income to transportation. But occasionally, such patronage can lead to abuses of authority. Personnel officers, for example, benefit from “gifts” to affix their signatures on assignment orders and particularly for lucrative territorial command slots which reportedly command large payments from hopeful candidates (Rabasa and Haseman 2002, 61).

Third, the implementation of promotions and appointments is problematic. The personnel structure discussed above only provides a generic direction of a merit-based system but there has yet to be a thorough managerial and implementing guidelines at the service levels on down (Bimo 2016, 214). Consequently, we see problems in the implementation of the formal pattern. For example, each officer should have a phased officer commission contract divided into Primary (ten years) and Secondary (20 years and beyond) with evaluations in between. In practice, the transition from Primary to Secondary is almost automatic (Saleh 2009, 50).

The measures used to evaluate an officer’s eligibility for promotion are also problematic. On the one hand, some career evaluations seem highly contested; foreign and domestic operations are scored lower than military education, although the officers think that the former is more challenging than the latter (Seskoed 2012, 32). On the other hand, the forms and data used to assess service records are incomplete or inaccurate. The DAPEN form, for example, a key administrative assessment of personality, skill, physical health, as well as personal and professional potential, have often been hurriedly filled subjectively and haphazardly by superior officers (Murfi 2016, 146). The socio-metric score, meanwhile, is only available to those who graduated from the academy up to 2000, leaving those who graduated since 2001 unscored (Saputro 2016, 52). Additionally, the officers responsible for scoring these measures have insufficient information on the scoring and why it matters

(Seskoad 2012, 44). In short, almost half of the promotion measurements are almost meaningless.

Further, the Army does not have an integrated online system of complete data for all its officers across the different units over time (Seskoad 2012, 42). In 2016, there were discrepancies in personnel data across almost all levels and units (Mu'tamar 2016, 168). The data quality is worse for officers assigned outside of the TNI such as the MoD (Saputro 2016, 51). The lack of data reliability is exacerbated by the lack of transparency. This lack of transparency is visible when “outside interests” can influence personnel appointments (Mu'tamar 2016, 169). When “blindness” is required to prevent bias and influence, such as how the identities of promotion board members are supposed to be secret, they are often leaked. The leaked information, along with the lack of transparency, opened lobbying doors for officers who wanted to get ahead of the curve (Interviews, with mid-rank Army officers, Magelang, February 2016 and Jakarta, March 2016).

### **Constant Organisational Tinkering**

Another indicator of the under-institutionalisation of personnel policy is frequent organisational tinkering. This is known as “organisational validation”: an adjustment or patchwork recalibration of existing structures but not their fundamental overhaul (Nurhasim 2003, 65). While the term was popularised after 1998, validation activities went back to the 1950s. As Table 1 shows, over the past 62 years, there were 23 structural changes to the organisation or some new structure roughly every three years.

The frequency of organisational changes means that the military could never formulate and implement a long-term personnel management system. Some changes, however, were more significant than others. The changes created by then ABRI Commander General Benny Moerdani in the early 1980s, for example, represented the sharpest break between an old organisational structure and a new one since the unification of the armed forces in 1962. Among several changes, Moerdani eliminated a whole tier of combined-service inter-regional commands (*Kowilhan* and *Kostranas*) and amalgamated the 16 KODAMs into ten (see Anderson 1985). His rationale was to streamline and centralise the command and control system and have a smaller number of personnel but of higher quality to ensure that the military could technologically modernise. Post-New Order processes merely tinkered with the structure Moerdani created (Nurhasim 2003).

Furthermore, few of the regulatory documents specifically govern personnel management. And when such documents were issued – as in 1988, 1990 and 1991 – they were quickly revised in 1992 and again in 1998 (see Table 1). The lack of focus on personnel management is also reflected in the bureaucratic focus of TNI commanders. Since 1998, as Figure 2 shows, organisational development and validation, along with the consequent administrative procedures, dominated the TNI commanders’ basic policy and executive directives, considered the military’s most important bureaucratic documents. As the documents show, despite the dominant focus on organisational tinkering, there was a lack of attention to personnel management (see Figure 2). The small number of changes to the personnel management system thus could not keep up with the large scope and frequency of organisational change for the first post-authoritarian decade.

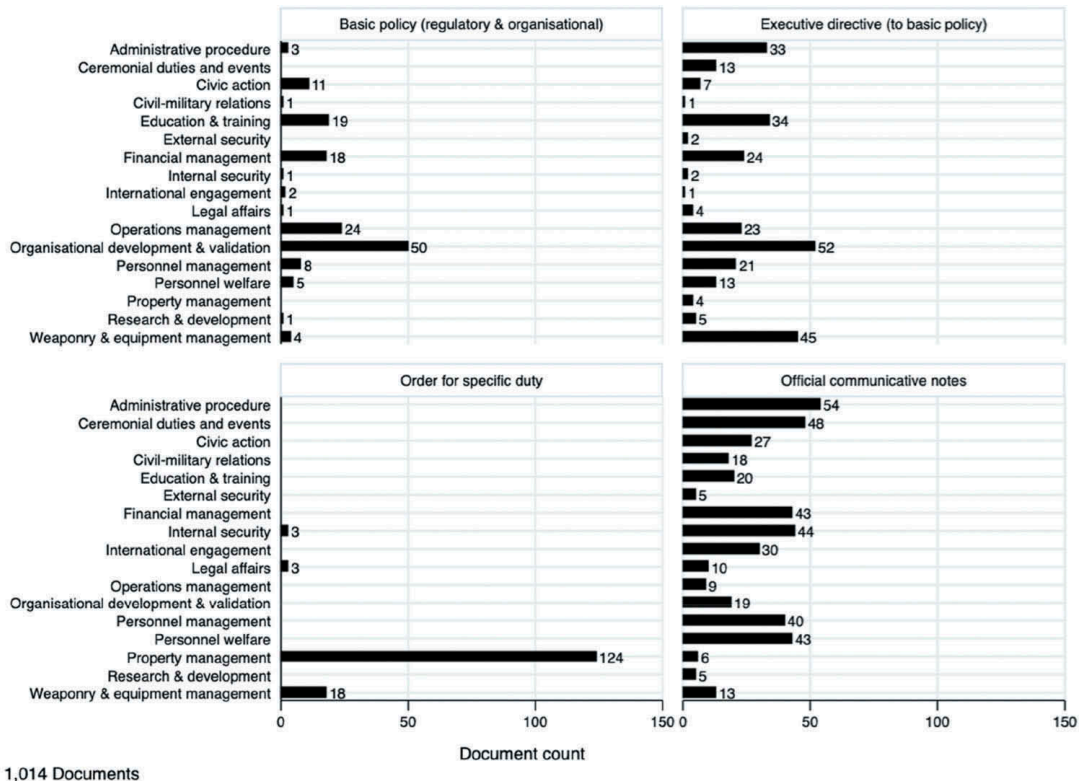
**Table 1.** Key documents regulating military organisational structure and personnel

Year	Official document	No.	Subject
1954	Law (UU)	29	State defence structure, authority, organisation and procedure
1962	Presidential Decision (Keppres)	225	Armed forces leadership, structure and organisation
1967	Presidential Decision (Keppres)	132	Changes to national defence and security organisation and procedures
1969	Presidential Decision (Keppres)	79	Refinements to previous defence reorganisation decision (No. 132/1969)
1970	Minister of Defense/Armed Forces Commander Decision	157	Organisation and procedure of the Army
1974	Presidential Decision (Keppres)	7	Refinements to previous defence reorganisation decision (No. 79/1969)
1982	Law (UU)	20	Structure and organisation of state defence and security
1983	Presidential Decision (Keppres)	46	Organisation and structure of the Department of Defense and Security (Dephankam)
1983	Presidential Decision (Keppres)	60	Organisation and structure of the armed forces (ABRI)
1988	Law (UU)	2	Soldiers of the armed forces
1990	Governmental Regulation (PP)	6	ABRI soldier administration
1991	Armed Forces Commander Regulation	6	Basic guidebook on ABRI soldier management
1992	Armed Forces Commander Decision (Kep-Pangab)	8	Refinements to Army (TNI-AD) organisation and procedure
1992	Armed Forces Commander Decision (Kep-Pangab)	9	Refinements to Navy (TNI-AL) organisation and procedure
1998	Minister of Defense/Armed Forces Commander Decision	9	Refinements to ABRI general staff, social-political offices
1999	Armed Forces Commander Decision (Kep-Pangab)	16	Organisation and structure of the military command and control centre
1999	Presidential Instruction (Inpres)	2	Separation of TNI and police
2000	Military Commander Decision (Kep-Pang TNI)	2	Organisation and structure of TNI general staff
2002	Law (UU)	3	State defence
2004	Law (UU)	34	Indonesia National Military (TNI)
2009	Presidential Regulation (Perpres)	10	Organisational structure of the military (TNI)
2010	Governmental Regulation (PP)	39	TNI soldier administration
2016	Presidential Regulation (Perpres)	62	Refinements to previous document on TNI organisational structure

The constant structural tinkering without personnel planning may have been deliberate to accommodate possible organisational changes in the future (Saputro 2016, 51).

The data from Table 1 and Figure 2 demonstrate the lack of institutionalisation of personnel policies, which is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. In a legislative hearing in September 2014, the TNI leadership announced new organisational validation plans.<sup>11</sup> Current TNI Commander General Hadi Tjahjanto has also stated that the military will establish new units and continue the validation process. Meanwhile, formal TNI personnel management guidelines have only just begun to emerge. But the documents lack definitive instructions on how the tour of duty and promotions should be developed, provide insufficient attention to advanced formal (civilian) education and they fail to provide a solution to favouritism (Aliabbas and Darby 2015). It will take some time before the documents can be sufficiently institutionalised to professionally manage the TNI's personnel system. But if we expect organisational changes and tinkering to continue in the future, then such institutionalisation is unlikely to be forthcoming.

The preceding analysis demonstrates how the TNI's career advancement system has been organised haphazardly, subjected to political interventions and hindered by constant tinkering. Indeed, according to a recent internal survey of hundreds of TNI



**Figure 2.** Organisational directives issued by TNI commander, 1998–2010

Source: Author calculations and classification of TNI commander regulations, notes and letters released by TNI General Headquarters between February 1998 and December 2010.

officers, the majority felt that personnel policies – including promotions – have been formulated and executed “unsatisfactorily” (Tippe 2012, 148–158). These are the intra-organisational pressures that the TNI leadership had to deal with over the past decade. The framework outlined above argues that inter-generational dynamics and the under-institutionalisation of personnel policies could lead to promotional logjams, especially if the president intervenes in officer appointments. The following sections elaborate these arguments.

### Promotional Logjams within the Officer Corps

Over the past decade, a paradox has emerged in officer appointments and promotions. On the one hand, the military has publicly claimed that it needs more personnel to meet its requirements. On the other hand, various assessments have shown that the TNI continues to experience logjams among its ranks, especially among mid-ranked majors to colonels and also for brigadier generals. How can the military require more personnel when it cannot provide positions for its existing officers? To address this question, we need to examine the broader organisational and personnel policy contexts. There are two parts to this.

First, the need for more personnel. In 2012, the Army claimed that it needed some additional 12,000 personnel to meet its Table of Personnel (TOP) requirements. As Table 2 shows, the extra personnel requested were meant for all Army units or

**Table 2.** Indonesian Army (TNI-AD) personnel table of organisation, 2012

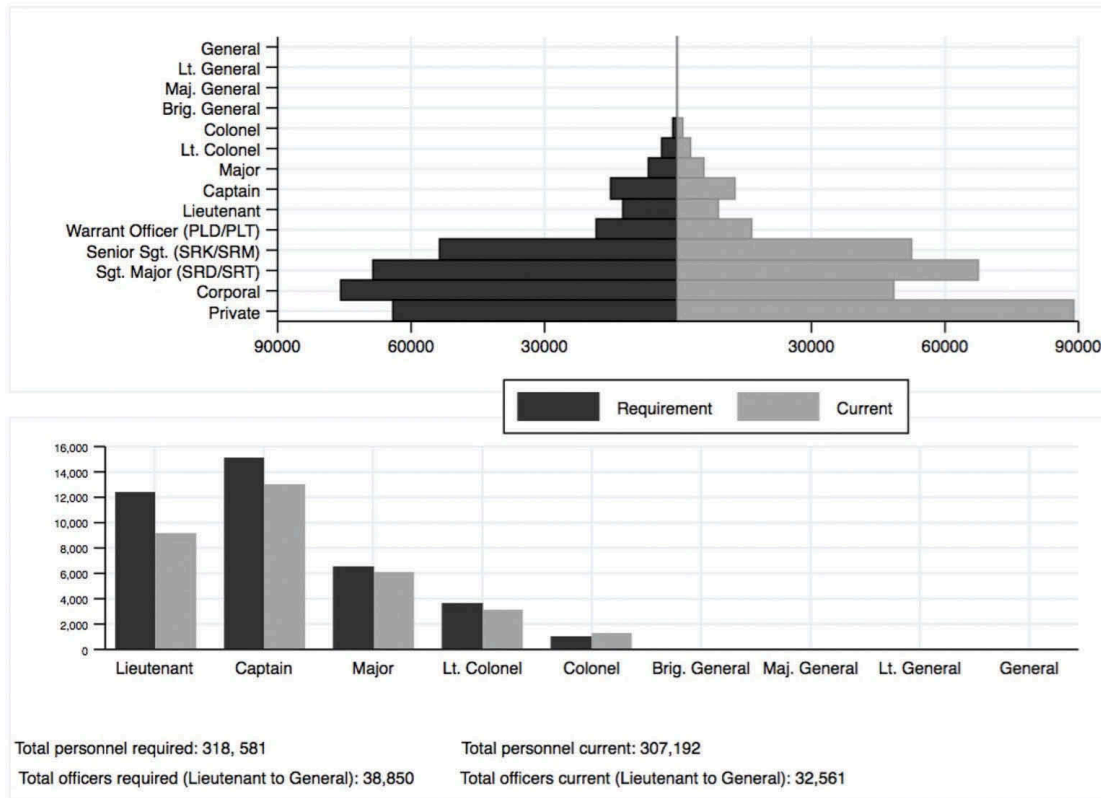
Command	Required	Current	Gap
Regional Military Command (KODAM)	254,545	243,425	-11,120
Strategic Army Reserve (KOSTRAD)	28,335	28,990	655
Army Special Forces (KOPASSUS)	5,728	5,029	-699
Central Executive Agencies (BALAKPUS) (Total):	26,190	2,4787	-1,403
- Army Headquarters (MABESAD)	1,373	2,183	810
- Directorates	9,590	8,844	-746
- Education and training	11,199	10,355	-844
- Administrative	1,032	975	-57
- Centres	2,996	2,430	-566
Total	314,798	302,231	-12,567

Source: Author calculation based on information provided in Arifin (2013, 23).

branches, except for KOSTRAD and the Army Headquarters, where there had been officer surpluses. The specific necessities – and therefore available posts – vary across units because the units are different in size, function and significance. Additionally, some positions can only be filled by those with specific qualifications and they cannot be filled by anyone in the same rank. The TOP in Figure 3 further shows the uneven development of the career structure that should resemble a pyramid. Instead, below the officer level, there is a large surplus of non-commissioned officers (*Bintara*) and privates (*Tamtama*) numbering in the thousands. While this fact may not create critical problems for senior officer promotional logjams as most *Bintara* and *Tamtama* are unlikely to reach the uppermost senior ranks, the surpluses demonstrate the poor management of defence resources. This is particularly seen when most of the defence budget goes to personnel expenses (salaries, benefits, and education and training) but the TNI complains about a lack of government welfare support. The uneven TOP pyramid also reflects the fact that personnel surpluses at the lower levels are mostly located among non-combat troops (Arifin 2013, 23).

Second, despite the varying personnel needs of different units and branches, at the broader organisational level, there remain too many officers and too few positions available for them. Figure 3 reveals where the surplus officers – the strongest indication of promotional logjams – are located: at the upper mid-rank positions, especially colonels. Indeed, there has been a growing chorus from within the ranks that logjams continue to occur from majors to colonels (Seskoed 2012, 27–29; Budiyanto 2009, 21; Mu'tamar 2016, 168). These logjams are particularly visible for lieutenant colonels and colonels who graduated from the Academy in the 1980s. In 2010, Army colonels were put “on hold” before being given their promotional posts: 66 (mostly from class of 1986) for three years, 141 (mostly from class of 1987) for two years and 376 (mostly from class of 1988) for one year (Seskoed 2010, 42–43). By 2012, 412 lieutenant colonels and junior colonels were caught in promotional logjams (Seskoed 2012, 42–43). Between 2011 and 2017, the Army on average had a surplus of some 30 generals and about 330 colonels per year (see Figure 4). These surplus officers, often classified as Out of Formation (*Luar Formasi*) personnel, are then given “non-jobs” such as “expert staff” or “special assistant” to various offices or headquarters (Rabasa and Haseman 2002, 60).<sup>12</sup>

For the Army, promotional logjams are bound to increase in the coming years. One conservative SESKOAD (2010, 21) assessment shows a rising surplus of colonels of 200 alumni per year. But as Figure 5 demonstrates, when the assumption is compared to actual SESKOAD graduates over the past seven years, the surplus more than doubled

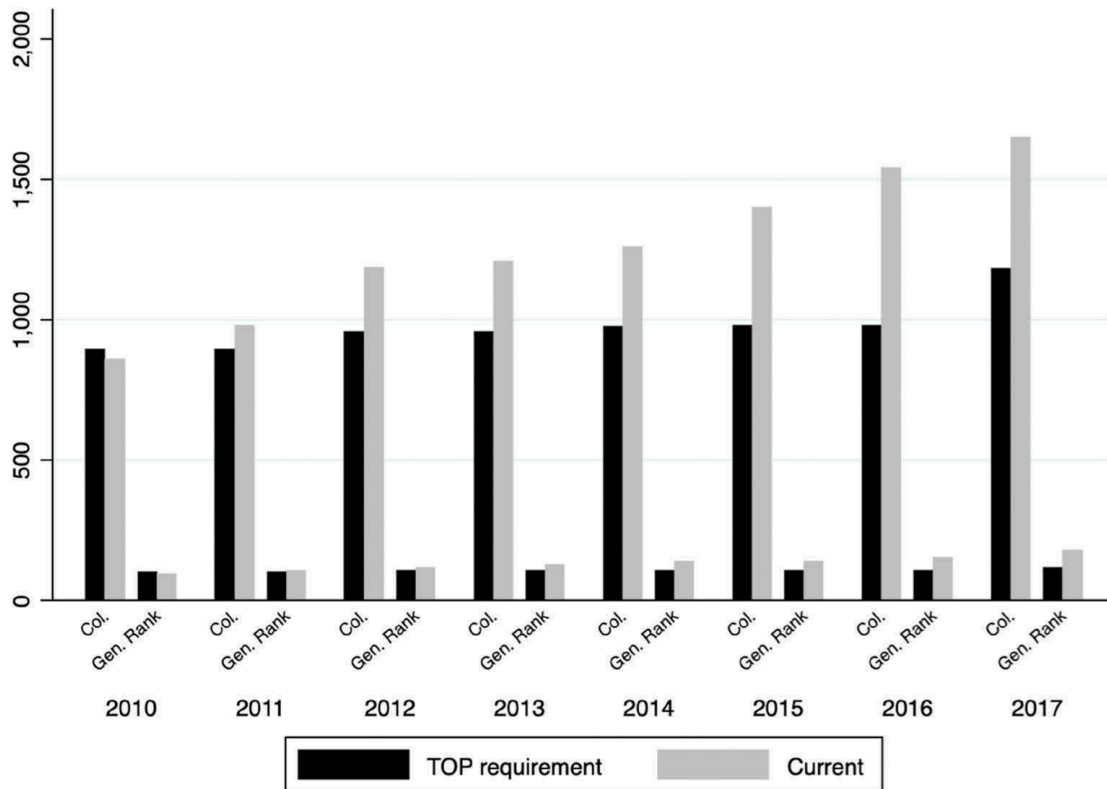


**Figure 3.** Indonesian Army (TNI AD) organisational table of personnel, 2012

Source: Author calculations based on Seskoad (2012).

from 200 to 300 per year between 2014 and 2017 to about 500–600 by 2027. Considering that personnel policies are likely to remain under-institutionalised, the logjams will likely worsen and create broader problems throughout the Army, from dwindling resources to intra-military conflicts.

Many officers blame post-New Order developments for the logjams. First, the end of *dwi-fungsi* meant that the TNI had to accommodate officers returning from various New Order posts. Such posts meant surplus officers could be placed in civilian government agencies, foundations, business entities or socio-political organisations. These assignments allowed for promotions without blocking the path of those within the military (Rabasa and Haseman 2002, 55). By one Army account, there were 12,446 military personnel assigned to non-military positions throughout Indonesia as the New Order ended (Prayogo 1998, 323). Second, the 2004 extension of the mandatory retirement age from 55 to 58 meant that there have been fewer officers retiring over the past decade. This means that the younger generation of officers (especially the 1980s Academy classes) will not get to their senior appointments as the older generation (especially the late 1960s and 1970s Academy classes) have occupied them for longer periods. The logjams for younger officers quickly accumulated as their Academy classes are larger (discussed below). This is why one officer complained that the retirement age extension was executed without “a thorough assessment” of its likely career pattern consequences (Saputro 2016, 44).



**Figure 4.** Indonesian Army (TNI-AD) officer surplus, 2010–2017

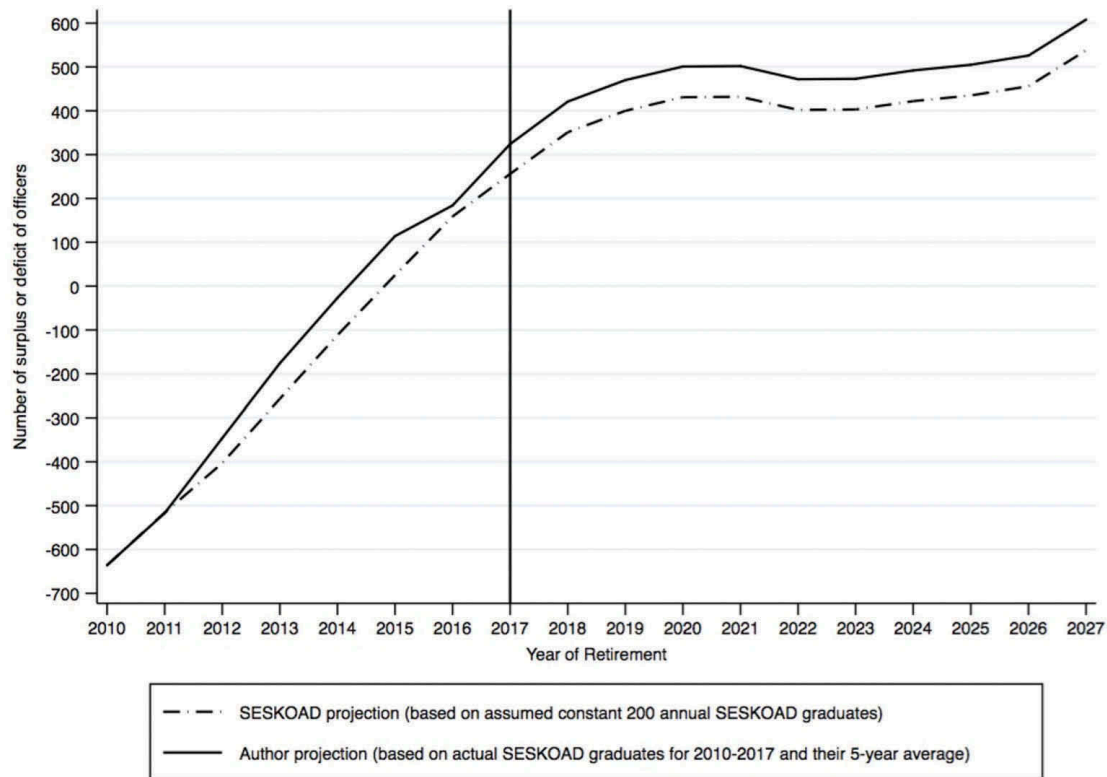
Note: TOP = Table of Personnel, Col = Colonels, Gen. Rank = Brigadier General, Major General, Lieutenant General and General. Source: Author calculations based on an internal policy research report drafted by MoD in 2017 to address promotional problems within the officer corps.

These New Order legacies are worsened by the lack of institutionalisation in personnel policies noted above. As promotions continue to be in flux, the TNI is increasingly unprepared to accommodate the growth in the graduating class size of the Academy, especially those from the 1980s (see Figure 6). Informal institutions, including Academy patrimonialism, also continue to influence appointment decisions. Many Academy classmates often end up working together, as an outgoing post holder could “recommend” his replacement and often supports his Academy classmate (Rabasa and Haseman 2002, 53). Some Academy classes then end up dominating key positions for several years, exacerbating the promotional logjams for junior classes. Peacefully managing this inter-generational promotion – and by implication, “transfer of power” – thus became a central preoccupation of successive post-Suharto presidents, as the next section shows.

### Officer Rotational Patterns under Yudhoyono and Jokowi

The previous analysis suggests that Academy class size, solidarity and the bloated size of the SESKOAD graduates were the challenges at the “input level” of the personnel system. The personnel system also faces challenges in “processing,” especially the constant organisational tinkering and the flawed formal procedures competing with informal institutions. These problems assist in understanding the “output,” senior level





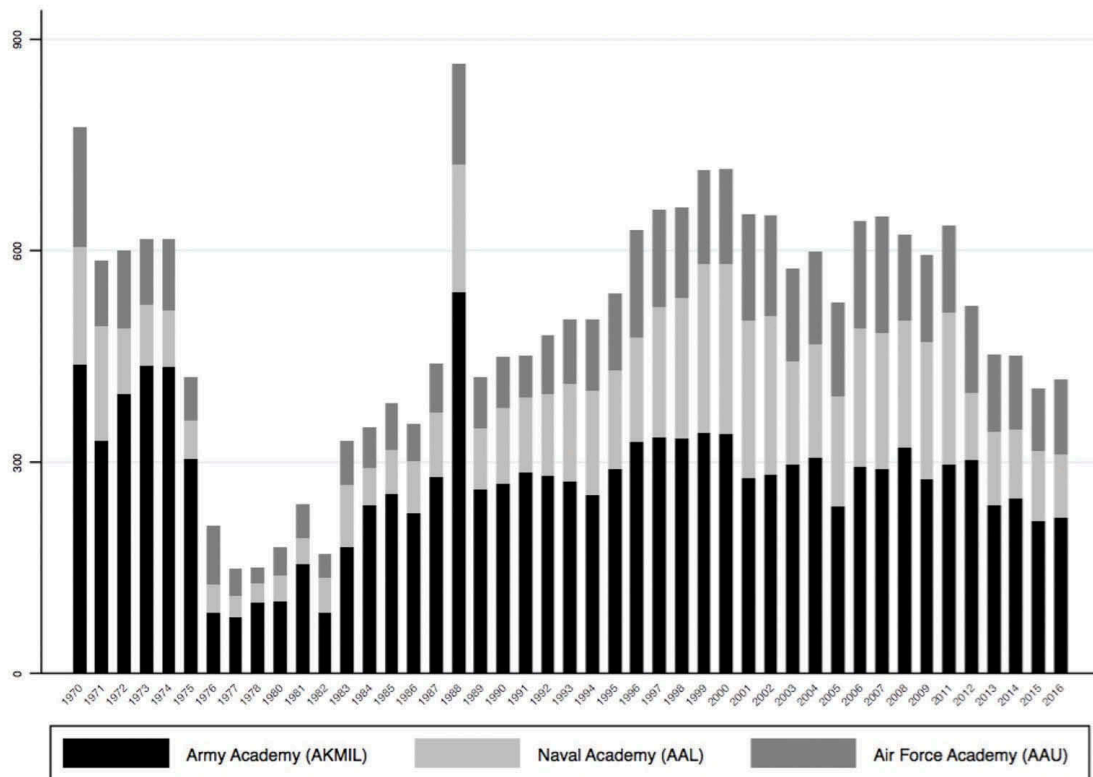
**Figure 5.** Current and projected surplus of senior Army officers, 2010–2027

Note: The projection is based on post availability for Army officers upon graduating from the Army Staff and Command College (SESKOAD). Sources: The figures represent author calculations based on SESKOAD (2010) accounting for available posts, current personnel, normal retirement rates and annual SESKOAD graduation rates (Colonels and above).

promotional logjams, which shape inter-generational dynamics and civil–military relations under Yudhoyono and Jokowi.

The burgeoning size of the officer corps that resulted from the larger military academy classes from 1965 to 1975 help explain the increasing frequency of senior officer rotations during the 1990s and early 2000s (see Figure 6). As the larger classes reached the middle ranks, more officers competed for a limited number of posts. The military responded by reducing the mean tenure of officers to maximise the number of officers who could hold command opportunities and thus minimise discontent (Chandra and Kammen 2002). This pattern continued, albeit in lesser frequency, until the Yudhoyono presidency in 2004.

Prior to this, a big wave of senior officer rotations between 2003 and 2005 affected more than 100 men (Editors 2005). These rotations were significant because of the rise of Aceh command experience as a promotional stepping stone and because of the rise of the Academy class of 1977, which was the smallest cohort (see Figure 6). The post-Suharto Aceh insurgency was then the only large-scale combat experience the TNI could use to assess the operational effectiveness of its officers. Like the East Timor war (1975–1999), the Aceh insurgency provided battleground experience for officers to “earn their stripes” (see Honna 2013). It is worth noting that large-scale insurgencies are also where some officers have been accused of human rights abuses. Yudhoyono, himself from the class of 1973, used the rotations to gradually but carefully solidify his



**Figure 6.** Military Academy graduates annual cohort size, 1970–2016

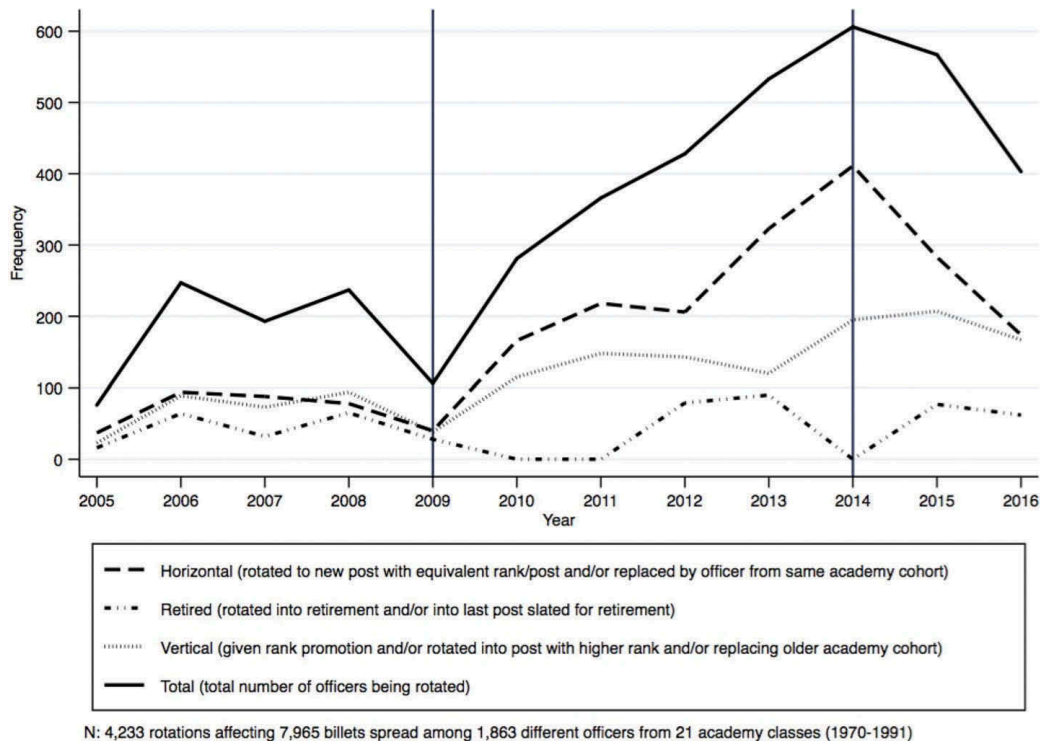
Source: Author calculations based on various issues of the Academy cohort yearbook and other official reports.

hold over the military leadership, especially as the larger Academy classes of the 1980s moved up in the ranks (Editors 2005).

But senior officer rotations slowed during Yudhoyono's first term (see Figure 7). This is partially due to the developing but still fragile Aceh peace process, where Yudhoyono needed to carefully manage the TNI leadership to prevent any military backlash over its corporate interests in that conflict. Unsurprisingly, Yudhoyono relied on his Academy classmates up to the class of 1978 and kept them longer in strategic positions (Editors 2008, 79). The knock-on effect was that the larger Academy classes of the 1980s were held back, which was exacerbated by the retirement age extension noted above.

Figure 7 also shows that the decline in retirement numbers was temporarily reversed in 2012–2013. It further indicates that, during his first term, President Yudhoyono used horizontal rotations, where officers were rotated within the same rank or positions were rotated among the same Academy class, for classes of 1974–1976, while classes of 1977–1978 saw a gradual surge in promotions or vertical rotation. Vertical rotation corresponds to the notion of “regeneration,” the orderly passing of staff and command posts from senior to junior officers (Chandra and Kammen 2002, 104, 111).

Excessive horizontal rotations, however, impeded regeneration, exacerbated logjams for the class of 1980s and increased inter-generational tensions within the officer corps. For Yudhoyono, this logjam was a “time bomb that needed to be defused” (Editors 2008, 99). After all, just as the logjams in the mid-1990s led to the intra-military conflicts associated with Suharto's downfall (Chandra and Kammen

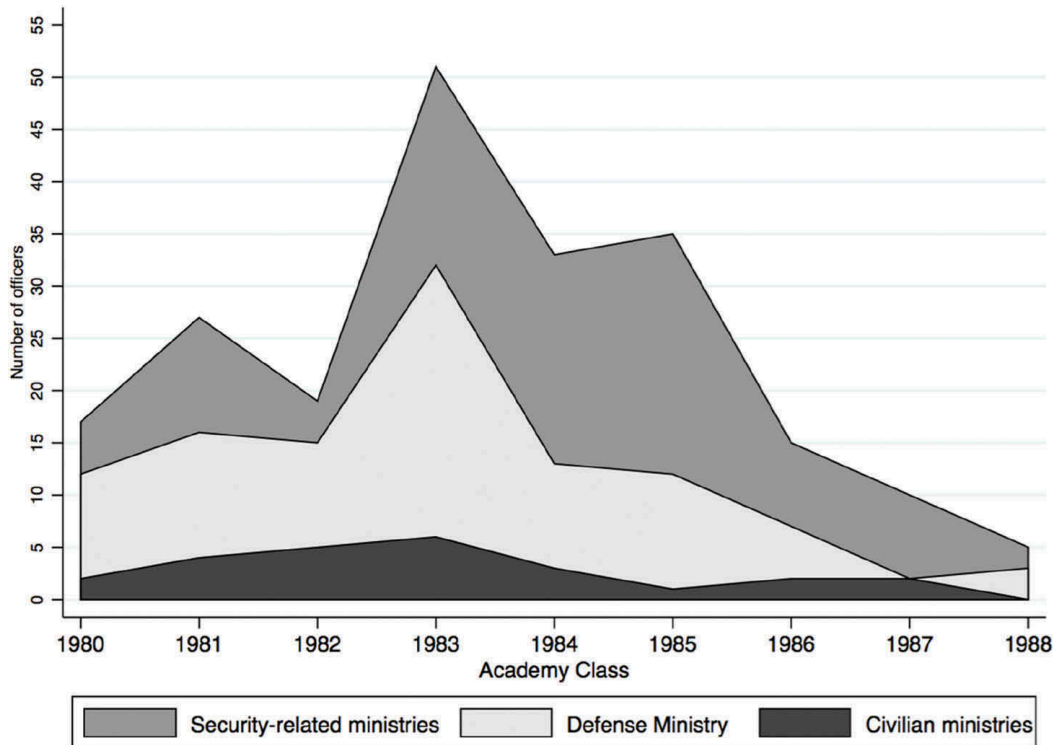


**Figure 7.** Senior officer rotation under Yudhoyono and Jokowi, 2005–2016

Note: Yudhoyono presidency: 2004–2014; Jokowi presidency: 2014–present. Source: Author calculations based on TNI commander decision letters on personnel rotation (issued 2005–2016).

2002, 112), there were concerns that the story might be repeated if the classes of the 1980s were held back too far as well. To reduce tension, Yudhoyono carefully managed rotations by ensuring that standards of professionalism were strictly enforced while providing “compensation” to the officer corps. These measures included a greater use of the MoD and *Lemhanas* to secure new jobs as well as sending more officers to civilian security ministries, such as the Co-ordinating Ministry of Political, Legal, and Security Affairs or the State Intelligence Agency, while expanding the TNI’s organisational structure and “upgrading” dozens of high-ranking posts (Editors 2008, 96–99). Figure 8 details 349 senior officer appointments from the Academy classes of 1980–1988 to non-military positions between 2005 and 2016. These officers came from across the three services and almost two dozen of them were assigned to the non-TNI institutions at least twice, with a few assigned three or four times. These assignments indicate the intrusion into civilian polity, at least as far as non-TNI institutions are concerned.

Meanwhile, the expansion of the territorial structure in the early to mid-2000s was publicly justified as a response to the growing violence in various provinces (Chandra and Kammen 2002, 112). The first such move was made with the creation of Kodam XVI Pattimura for the Moluccas on May 15, 1999, a scene of bloody post-Suharto local conflicts. Then Defence Minister General Wiranto had also announced a phased return to the pre-1980s system of 17 KODAMs, creating new posts and additional jobs to accommodate the bloated officer corps and offset the loss of jobs caused by the abolition



**Figure 8.** Senior officers appointed to non-TNI institutions, Academy class of 1980s, 2005–2016

Note: Security-related ministries include the Co-ordinating Ministry for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs, State Intelligence Agencies, National Resilience Council, *Lemhannas*, State Intelligence Agency, Maritime Security Coordination Agency. Civilian ministries include National Search and Rescue Agency, Supreme Court, National Cryptography Agency, National Counter-Terrorism Agency, State-owned Enterprises, and Presidential Office. Source: Author calculations based on TNI commander decision letters on personnel rotation issued 2005–2016.

of *dwi-fungsi* (Editors 2000, 132). In April 2007, the Army created five new infantry brigades under KODAMs Diponegoro (Central Java), Bukit Barisan (Aceh), Brawijaya (East Java), Tanjungpura (West Kalimantan) and Trikora (West Papua) (Editors 2008, 97–98). Additionally, in September 2006, the Army established a new KOREM 033 in the Riau Islands. In late 2007, it planned to create a third KOSTRAD Infantry Division in West Papua (but built in South Sulawesi in 2018) and another KOREM in the Flores. These “mid-level” command positions suited the TNI leadership’s urgency to increase the number of colonel posts (Editors 2008, 99), hundreds of whom had been experiencing logjams for a decade (see above).

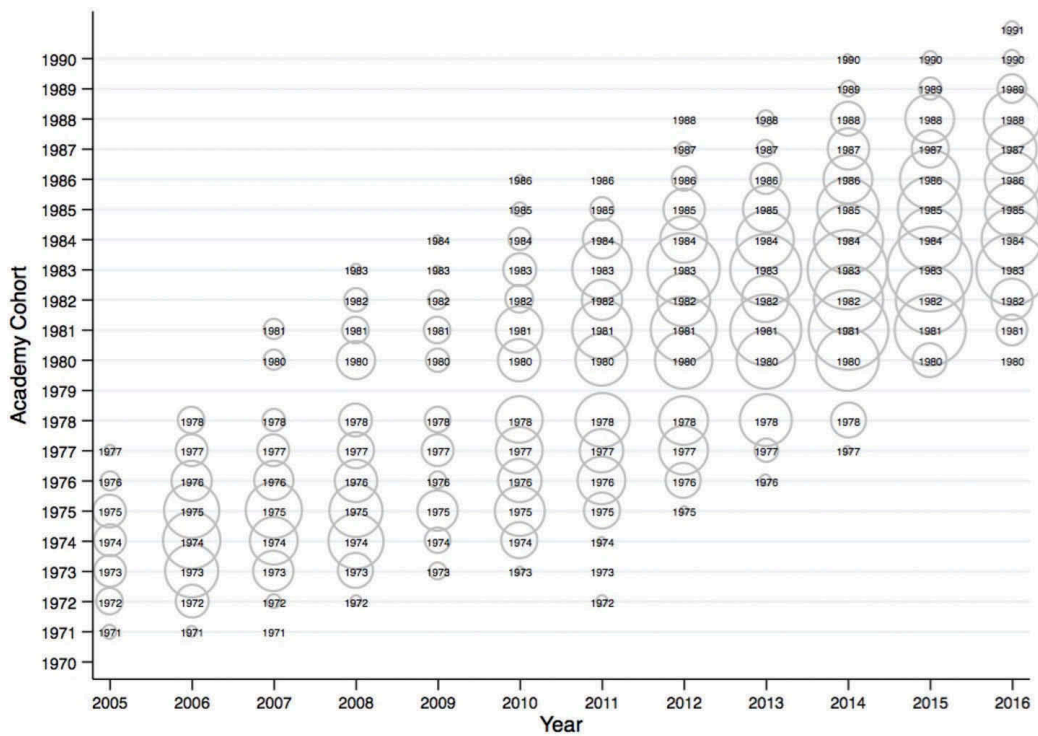
In President Yudhoyono’s second term, an international peacekeeping centre (PMPP) was established along with an international co-operation centre. Both were headed by a one-star general. The army also established a new KODIM in Papua and Bekasi and three new raider battalions under the West Kalimantan KODAM. The Navy established two new bases in North Sulawesi and North Maluku and formed a new Marine battalion in Riau. Finally, the Air Force set up new radar stations in Merauke, Timika and Saumlaki and a new maintenance unit in Bandung (see details in Editors 2014, 107–108). Even though internal security challenges had largely subsided, these organisational expansions continued under both Yudhoyono and Jokowi, as noted above, to accommodate the larger Academy classes.

After Jokowi became president in 2014, however, the frequency of rotation declined (see Figure 7). Retirement figures increased slightly but horizontal and vertical rotations all went down in his first two years. That organisational changes take time and resources – new positions could not be created fast enough while assignments to civilian and security-related ministries are limited – exacerbated the logjams. Indeed, the 1987 class, the largest in Academy history, only became part of the senior rotation as Yudhoyono’s second term was ending (see Figure 9). The classes of 1974–1986 had almost 300 graduates each, while classes 1987 and 1988 alone had roughly double that (see Figure 6). Figure 9 also suggests that the pace of organisational expansion could not keep up with the class size of 1987 and later classes as their graduates only enter senior rotation patterns late, which would effectively shorten their general-rank tenure.

The preceding analysis shows how the organisational pressures of Academy class size, retirement age extension and shrinking posts created different career prospects for different generations. It has also shown how the under-institutionalisation of personnel policies and presidential intervention in senior officer rotations further exacerbated promotional logjams. The next section further elaborates how logjams, in turn, led to regressive political behaviours.

### Personnel Logjams and Regressive Behaviours

The previous sections have established that intra-military institutions reflect the power relations between and arrangements of its elite. The nature of military corporatism in particular “mediates” the power relations between Presidents Yudhoyono and Jokowi



**Figure 9.** Senior officer rotation under Yudhoyono and Jokowi, per Academy class

Source: Author calculations based on TNI commander decision letters on personnel rotation, issued 2005–2016.

and the TNI, resulting in institutional solutions – including territorial structure expansion and the militarisation of civilian polity – to inter-generational dynamics. This section expands the argument that logjams led to regressive or illiberal political behaviours in several ways.

First, organisational tinkering expanding the personnel structure and available posts means that the defence budget will almost always be spent more on human resources than on capital expenditure for military modernisation. In recent years, Indonesia has spent roughly more than half of its defence budget on personnel salaries and benefits with only between 20% and 30% allocated to research and development and weapons procurement. Expanding the territorial structure also ensures that civil society groups will always be concerned about the Army's repressive power and political potential. Indeed, most post-1998 military reforms were possible because they did not yet touch the “core” corporate interest – personnel management – too much but further the incentives to overhaul the organisation. Military personnel policies thus represent what Honna (2013, 186) calls a “grand bargain,” the post-authoritarian consensus where the TNI supports civilian-led democracy while civilian leaders respect TNI autonomy. In other words, given the inter-generational politics within the officer corps and the nature of civil–military relations, the TNI responded by giving extra “breathing room” to its officers and soldiers, allowing them to gradually enter civilian polity and providing them with additional jobs to accommodate the growing number of Academy graduates.

Second, the under-institutionalisation of personnel management promotes factionalism. As officers compete for scarce organisational resources, likely along informal institutional lines, such as Academy solidarity or *bapak*-ism, military factionalism is a recurring pattern. In the early 1970s, it developed between followers of General Ali Moertopo, Special Operations Chief and Suharto's Personal Assistant, and General Sumitro, Head of Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order or KOPKAMTIB, Suharto's secret police (Jenkins 1984). In the 1990s, factionalism developed between followers of Lieutenant General Prabowo Subianto, Suharto's son-in-law and Army Special Forces Commander and General Wiranto, ABRI Commander. While Suharto's divide-and-rule style of the officer corps exacerbated such rivalries, inter-generational dynamics and the absence of fully institutionalised personnel policies provide the foundations for factional potential.

The military leadership and civilian leaders thus need to account for such factional dynamics when seeking to advance military reform. The military's long and destructive history of factional conflicts also means that institutional solutions have to be designed to ensure that intra-organisational pressures do not undermine the military's corporate interests. After all, when factionalism has worsened, there have been damaging civil–military conflicts that have spilled into the public domain, such as, for example, armed coup attempts and local riots (Crouch 1978; Anderson and McVey 1971; Sundhausen 1982; Chandra and Kammen 2002). When and how these conflicts arise often depends on how the president manages officer appointments. President Habibie allowed the officer corps to choose its own leaders while Wahid intervened and exploited intra-military factionalism (see Hafidz 2006). Megawati let the TNI set its own reform pace while Yudhoyono directly but carefully managed the TNI leadership as we see in the previous section. President Jokowi's approach to civil–military relations parallels Megawati's and Habibie's.

Aside from expanding the organisational structure and placing officers into civilian bureaucracies, the TNI has also tried to expand its non-military roles. In some cases, such expansion has led to local TNI-police rivalries over spoils and resources driven by the increasingly competitive career future for TNI officers as domestic security functions shifted to the police (Honna 2011, 263; Diprose and Azca 2019). Over time, intra-military and inter-service conflicts have occupied the TNI leadership's energy. Expecting the TNI to develop professionalism or invest in operational readiness and modernisation is extremely difficult under these conditions. Unsurprisingly, the Army leadership has hinted that the decline in soldiers' discipline over the past decade has been caused by the chaotic personnel management system (Budiyanto 2009, 22).

Third, with promotional uncertainty and inter-generational tension looming within the officer corps, senior leaders are increasingly conservative, publicly focused on stability, predictability, autonomy and control. The propagation of State Defence programmes or Proxy War concepts reflect this tendency. In fact, TNI commanders like General Moeldoko and General Nurmantyo used such rhetoric to rally the organisation as a mechanism to defend the military's corporate interests. Moeldoko went against the Jokowi administration's policy of eschewing a "megaphone diplomacy" with China over the Natuna islands and the South China Sea when he penned a *Wall Street Journal* opinion piece claiming China had encroached on Indonesian waters (Moeldoko 2014). Nurmantyo, meanwhile, famously gave public interviews and speeches arguing that there were communist remnants hiding across Indonesia and that the country's democracy has gone overboard (*Tempo Online*, June 6, 2017). Lieutenant General Agus Sutomo, former Army Special Forces Commander, gave speeches about Proxy War in many public forums (see *TribunNews* November 21, 2014). Army Chief of Staff General Mulyono also warned about the possible revival of communism (*DetikNews*, September 30, 2015). This rhetoric all serves to underscore the TNI leaders' growing conservatism amidst organisational uncertainty.

But there have been inter-generational dynamics at play too. These generals and their classmates were from the 1980s Academy classes and came into ABRI at the height of the New Order. As junior officers they served in East Timor and worked to maintain the Suharto regime. As mid-ranked officers, they had to deal with the uncertainty of democratic transition and the intra-military conflicts of the late 1990s. More importantly, as senior officers, they had to wait in line as promotional logjams plagued the TNI and their initial general-rank posts only came towards the end of Yudhoyono's first term (see [Figure 9](#)). These officers from the 1980s generation – including Moeldoko (class of 1981), Nurmantyo (class of 1982), Sutomo (class of 1984), and Mulyono (class of 1983) – echo these conservative tendencies.

Consequently, if the TNI leadership is now filled with the 1980s generation, then strong conservative voices roaring amidst promotional logjams and organisational uncertainty might push aspiring officers to "out conservative" their peers. After all, without clarity on how to get promoted, the best strategy is to follow the most senior leaders. Military professionalism is thus further stunted. When Indonesia faces security crises, such as during bilateral maritime crises with China in recent years (see [McRae 2019](#)), conservative officers are more likely to defend the corporate interests by promoting security-first, hard-line military responses and justifying the acceleration of the

TNI's Minimum Essential Force plans (see *DetikNews*, December 6, 2017). When internal security challenges arise, such as events in Papua, the TNI is likely to advocate similar hard-line policies and expand the territorial structure, for example. Overall, the growth in the number of conservative generals is shaped by intra-organisational dynamics which consequently further hinder military professionalism and increase the intrusion into the civilian polity even as the KOTER expands.

Finally, and perhaps more importantly, the confluence of promotional logjams, underdeveloped personnel systems and unstable civil–military relations has consequences for the broader polity. First, the pressure to accommodate officers after the end of the New Order, as we saw above, paved the way for the rise in bureaucratic secondments of officers into civilian agencies and ministries, from the State Intelligence Agency to the National Search and Rescue Agency. In other places, such as the MoD or Co-ordinating Ministry for Political, Legal, and Security affairs, an influx of officers meant that one of the key mandates of military reform – civilianising the defence establishment – remains unfulfilled. The same could be said for the notion of abolishing the KOTER structure, which has now been expanded to accommodate the classes of the 1980s. Second, the organisational uncertainty over structure and personnel also meant that doctrinal development or operational reform would stagnate, eventually creating what analysts have called an “idle troop” problem (Sebastian and Gindarsah 2013, 27). The growth in memorandums of understanding signed between the TNI and defence ministry with civilian agencies in recent years should also be seen in this light.

## Conclusion

This article has provided a conceptual framework to explain the illiberal trend in the Indonesian military reform process in recent years. It has illustrated the value of adopting an organisational perspective in understanding civil–military relations, which nevertheless considers the broader social and political context within which military reform has regressed. It has provided empirical evidence of promotional logjams involving hundreds of colonels and dozens of generals and explained how these have affected civil–military relations as well as the institutional evolution of the TNI under *reformasi*. It has also demonstrated how intra-organisational dynamics significantly drive three specific regressive behaviours: the growing intrusion of the military into the broader polity, the expansion of the KOTER, and the military's stunted professionalism. In this connection, personnel policies have been shown to be particularly central in deciding the allocation of authority and the accompanying benefits within the officer corps. Taken together, the article has demonstrated that any assessment of the TNI and civil–military arena would be incomplete without accounting for key intra-organisational dynamics.

Yet these dynamics do not occur independently of context. The parallel trajectory between the ebbs and flows of military reform and those of the broader political reform process should be noted. Like military reform, political reforms have been significant since 1998, although they are by no means complete or invulnerable to reversal. Some argue that Indonesia's democratic reform stagnated by 2012 as conservative elite factions tried to roll back reforms in the areas of electoral management, corruption, and the protection of minority rights (Mietzner 2012). Others note that reform has



slowed rather than stagnated (McRae 2013, 290). There have also been ongoing debates over the extent to which New Order stalwarts have reinserted themselves into the democratic regime via oligarchic politics (see Hadiz and Robison 2013).

Diprose, McRae, and Hadiz (2019) conclude that while there has been an illiberal turn in Indonesian politics and society, it has been uneven – sub-nationally, sectorally and in particular arenas of contestation. As such, given the contested nature of political reforms, perhaps analysts could devote more in-depth attention to untangling the processes of contestation over specific elements of reform. Such contestation underlines the importance of power and how variations in the progress of reform are contingent on the constellations of and contestations between new and old powers. The issues of organisational reform within the TNI scrutinised in this article are ultimately bound to these power structures as well.

## Notes

1. Aside from the end of formal political roles for the TNI, such as its parliamentary representation, the military's informal political influence has also waned. Since 1999, retired military officers consist of only around 11% of cabinet-level appointments (around five men per administration), a significant decline from the New Order days. Similarly, less than 10% of governors were retired military officers by 2010 (that number was 80% in the early 1970s). At the local political level, powerful bureaucrats, wealthy entrepreneurs and political activists have also sidelined retired military officers. While hundreds of retired military officers have joined political parties since 1999, they have won fewer than 4% of all local elections since 2015. Fewer than 3% (16 of 560) of elected national legislators in 2014 were retired military officers. The TNI has also been sidelined from key institutions, including the Constitutional Court, Home Affairs Ministry and the State Intelligence Agency. Details are provided by Mietzner (2011a, 132), Buehler (2010) and Laksmana (2019a).
2. The Minimum Essential Force blueprint is essentially a list of military technologies and weaponry the TNI needs to acquire by 2029 to obtain the minimum necessary capability to address day-to-day security needs for maintaining national security.
3. State Defence programmes aim to recruit civilians to defend the state by providing basic military training, including the use of weapons and the reinforcement of state ideology among ordinary citizens. While the use of Proxy War as a concept in Indonesia goes back to the mid-2000s, under General Nurmantyo, it focuses on unspecified “foreign” efforts to control Indonesia's resources using domestic collaborators such as non-governmental organisations, the media or other individuals (see Reza 2017; *Tirto.id*, September 27, 2017).
4. The SSR discourse also expanded the military reform agenda to include other actors, such as the police or the intelligence agencies, and the redrawing of the broader national security architecture (see Lorenz 2015). The SSR community generated useful studies on Indonesia's security challenges (Widjajanto 2004; Prihatono 2006). It also helped shape and pass military reform laws on State Defence (2002), TNI (2004), State Intelligence (2011) and Defence Industry (2012).
5. This is closely related but not equivalent to Huntingtonian military professionalism, which is closer to institutionalisation as “value infusion” rather than as behaviour routinisation (see Huntington 1957; Levitsky 1998).
6. Most analyses of Southeast Asian and Indonesian politics employ corporatism to describe a system of interest representation that results in the planned integration of society's associational interests into the decision-making structures and policy arena of the state. In short, corporatism is a pattern of state–society relations in which the state plays the leading role in structuring and regulating interest groups (see, for example, Higgott et al. 1985; Milne 1983; MacIntyre 1994).

7. There are critiques of the argument that militaries seek to defend their corporate interests narrowly and rationally (see Taylor 2003; Lee 2008).
8. Ideally, officers are admitted through a competitive system of examinations, given extensive training, and evaluated using merit-based procedures to determine who may rise through the ranks and take command (Pion-Berlin 1992, 87). Discipline is maintained through a clear and strict chain of command underpinned by the inculcation of a service ethic and the strict enforcement of a merit-based hierarchy (Norden 2001, 111; Bellin 2004, 145).
9. As outlined in TNI Commander Regulation No. 59 (2008), these strategic positions are Commanders of Military Resort (KOREM), Primary Kodam Regiments (RINDAM), Infantry Brigades (BRIGIF), Regiment, Battalion, Military District (KODIM) and Intelligence Detachment.
10. The chief of staff chairs the board at the flag-rank level, the deputy chief of staff chairs it for the colonels and the assistant for personnel chairs the majors up to lieutenant colonels.
11. These included the creation of three TNI Joint Regional Defence Commands, a TNI Centre for Basic Military Physical Training and the reorganisation of several KOSTRAD divisions. The TNI also hopes to gradually reduce its military and civilian personnel by about 1,000 men and women. Data provided in *Renstra TNI tahun 2015–2019*, a presentation slide by the TNI leadership during a DPR hearing on September 15, 2014 in Jakarta.
12. These are personnel who are part of an “organic” unit but do not occupy a position within the TOP. They include officers seconded to non-military positions, United Nations peace-keeping missions, suspension pending an investigation, or “in between” posts (Hendrianus 2016, 89).

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