

Civil-military relations in Indonesia: promoting a professional military character from the new order era to the reform era

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Abstract

Civil-military relations in Indonesia have experienced ups and downs during several periods of government, namely since the old order, new order, and reform order eras. Military involvement in the political sphere during the new order government has sparked criticism of the professionalism of the Indonesian national army, as it is considered to have been used as a tool to maintain power through repressive actions. This study uses qualitative methods with literature review techniques to analyze the state of civil-military relations in Indonesia from the new order era to the reform era in an effort to shape a reformist military character. Military control over civilians during the new order era was driven by the need to create political stability and security for the sake of development. However, after the new order era, Indonesia continued to make major changes in realizing a professional national army. In the reform era, the military was under civilian control, which did not allow active military personnel to enter the political and public bureaucratic areas.

Keywords: civil and military relations, military character, new order, reform era

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Introduction

The military is a group of armed, trained individuals who work for the state, following the state's instructions, within an organized structure and with permanent duties to maintain state security (Janowitz, 1964; Noor, 2020; Otterbein, 2008; Rosidah, 2019). But in reality, loyalty to duty is not always directed towards the country, because in practice there are many mixed structures and chains of command that can cause military members to get caught up in the law and violate military ethics on the grounds of "obeying orders" (Agus & Dzaki, 2023; Wibisono, 2023). The state is an area of manifestation of civil authority that cannot be represented by seeing how civil supremacy as a military controller in state and political life. In a democratic state, the military should be placed under civil authority, allowing it to focus on and perform its duties professionally to maintain state security. Democracy seeks to separate the duties and functions of civil and military personnel as then regulated by law.

Civil-military relations in Indonesia are always interesting to re-examine, considering its history which has often experienced ups and downs during various periods. The involvement of the military in politics during the New Order era was considered a significant contributor to the powerlessness of civilians in governance, referring to the weakening of civilian political institutions' ability to control the

executive, as the executive supported by military power (Affan, 2025a; Apandi et al., 2025). Following the fall of the new order regime, several attempts have been done by civilian actors to place the military under civilian control. As is known, in 1998, there was a reform movement that not only had an impact on changes in the economic sector but also the Indonesian political sector, where changes in the political sector affected the existence of the military in the Indonesian political arena, namely by eliminating the dual function of national armed forces (Basuki, 2014; Djuyandi et al., 2025). After the new order, there was a ban on active military members participating in elections, running for state office, or holding positions in the bureaucracy. Civilian control of the armed forces also occurred in the field of defense and security which is closely related to the main function of the armed forces. This is in stark contrast to what happened during the new order regime.

Civil-military relations play an important role in supporting democratic political stability, the defense sector policy-making process, security, integrity, and the sovereignty of a country (Chakravorty, 2018; Pantev et al., 2005). Indonesia has a history of strong military positions in politics and government during the new order era, in which a number of active military personnel served as heads of local government (governors, regents/mayors), ministers, members of the legislature, and heads of government agencies (Anwar, 2020; Prasetiadi et al., 2021). A publication by Harold Crouch states that many military personnel were found to occupy positions as heads of regional governments. In the period from 1965 to 1968, the number of civilian regents and mayors in West Java fell from 15 to only 3, in Central Java and Yogyakarta the number of civilian local heads decreased from 38 to 19, in East Java from 33 to 20, and in 1969, the number of military regents and mayors throughout Indonesia increased from 147 to 271. From this situation, it can be seen that there was an imbalance and instability in the government at that time. The strong position of the military threatened freedom of expression and military professionalism.

However, military dominance during the new order era began to decline when the New Order regime fell in 1998. The executive and legislative branches issued new regulations placing the military under civilian control to minimize the recurrence of military domination and prevent the military from engaging in practical political activities. This civilian control included a ban on military personnel holding government positions, a prohibition on the nomination of military personnel for government positions, and a ban on military participation in general elections. Thus, by implementing civilian control, military personnel could maintain their professionalism. (Basuki, 2014; Djuyandi, 2012; Suparno, 2012).

Civilian control of the military also aims to optimize the ability of civilian elites to implement all state policies without military intervention. It implies that all state decisions must be formulated and overseen by a civilian authority with democratic political legitimacy. Croissant et al. divide five areas of state policy that can be used as indicators of civilian control over the military in a democratic country, namely domestic security, public policy, elite recruitment, military organization, and political defense (Croissant et al., 2013; Croissant & Kuehn, 2017). Civilians should control the five areas proposed by Croissant over the military in a democratic country. Civilian and military relations in an authoritarian country certainly do not have civilian control. It is different if we see civilian control over the military in a democratic country. The absence of civilian control in an authoritarian country impacts the existence of a civilian government that is often stepped over by the military. Certainly, this occurred in Indonesia during the era of independence and the new order.

A professional military is not only willing to be supervised by civilian political authorities but also complies with all decisions taken by the government, both regarding the formulation of defense policy agendas and strategic development plans in the national defense sector (Fissell, 2025). Although civilian authorities' actions in the defense sector are limited, a professional military is not immune to criticism (Hanson & Knuppe, 2025). An interesting case related to civilian control occurred in the defense and security sector, specifically regarding the Leopard tank in 2012. The military's purchase proposal for the Leopard tank in 2012 created an imbalance in goals between civilians and the military. The military's goal in proposing the purchase of the tank was for the long term and saw that Indonesia could not yet produce it. However, the House of Representatives as a representative of the civilian political group was actually against the purchase proposal because Indonesia was not compatible with using the Leopard tank and also considered geographical conditions (Kompas.com, 2012).

Indonesia is a democratic country, where the benchmarks of a democratic state are not limited to general elections or freedom of expression, but also encompass other aspects, such as civil-military relations, which must be synergistic. One of the most critical indicators of democratic maturity is civilian control over the military. However, in reality, this civilian control always presents challenges. In a democratic and developing country like Indonesia, civil-military relations have a powerful history. When the military is involved in national defense affairs, challenges arise from the civilian side. Can civilians authorities demonstrate their strength in determining national defense policy? Can civilian political authorities also maintain the professionalism of the Indonesian national armed forces by not bringing the military back into political affairs?

If we look back, traces of this military power are very easy to find in Indonesia, this is due to the totalitarian-militaristic regime. In this case, when talking about traces of the very strong role of the military, it can be seen from the new order era. During the new order, the military played a highly active role in policy-making and political decision-making. At that time, military-controlled politics prevailed, and civilian control over the military was very weak. However, after the new order ended, the military's role in controlling politics gradually began to decline as it slowly relinquished its control over politics. One of the efforts made after the New Order to ensure the military was under civilian control was to prohibit active military members from participating in general elections, either as voters or as candidates. The prohibition on active military personnel voting is based on the reason of maintaining the neutrality of the national armed forces (Djuyandi, 2012; Ramadantica, 2024; Sugeng, 2021).

Much of the scholarship on civil-military relations seeks to understand the complex and dynamic interactions between civilian authorities and the armed forces within a state. This work explores the distribution of power, influence, and authority between these key actors, with the aim of preventing conflict (Adebowale et al., 2024; Alamsyah et al., 2022; Pickering & Kiyani, 2024). Other studies on civil-military relations analyze civilian control over the military, which has the capacity to establish an established political order (Croissant et al., 2010; Feaver, 1999), as well as the impact of military coups, in which the armed forces seize power from civilian leaders, which is seen as the most blatant form of military insubordination and has historically been a major focus of civil-military relations studies (Kyed & Lynn, 2024; Pion-Berlin & Dudley, 2020).

The core normative assumption in this field of study is the belief that civilian political leadership should hold the ultimate authority in a country's strategic decision-making process. This study examines the evolution of civil-military relations in

Indonesia, comparing the military governance of the new order regime with the reforms initiated post-1998. By analyzing this historical trajectory, it highlights the shift in the military's role towards a professional one and its implications for civilian oversight.

Research Methods

The research method used in this study is qualitative, while the approach is descriptive approach. This method and approach was chosen because the topic being studied cannot be explained by measurements, and this study also does not intend to conduct an influence test. In this study, researchers must search for data as deeply and widely as possible on the topic being studied into a form of description which is oriented towards the process and events in accordance with the facts found during the study.

Secondary data was selected based on specific criteria, namely, to explain the history of civil-military relations in Indonesia from the new order era to the reform era and the transition of the Indonesian national armed forces to a professional military. This literature review is a data collection method closely related to the data collection, reading, writing, and processing of the research topic. It gained from various books, journals, and media publications, and the period of the data sources sought ranged from the new order era to the post-reform era, including the early days of the Prabowo Subianto administration.

After collecting secondary data, the next stage is to validate the data using triangulation techniques. To increase the validity and dependability of research findings, triangulation using secondary data involves contrasting and comparing data from multiple sources. It consists of cross-checking data to identify recurring trends and ensure no single source or approach has skewed the results. Triangulation aims to provide a more reliable picture of the phenomenon being studied and reduce bias.

Results and Discussion

Civil-Military Relation in New Order Era

The new order era under President Suharto began with the controversial March 11, 1966 Decree, which transferred power from President Sukarno to General Suharto amid political and economic instability following the G30S/PKI incident. (Elga, 2013; Endrayani et al., 2021; Damayanti, 2022; Rohman, 2023). During the new order, the dual function of national armed forces became the doctrinal foundation for embedding military officers across political, social, and economic life. national armed forces was deployed not only as guarantor of national defence and security but also as regulator of governance, ensuring regime stability through representation in parliament, cabinet, bureaucracy, and state enterprises (Djuyandi, 2015; Crouch, 2007; Ibrahim & Welch, 2012; Siddiq, 2019; Soebijono et al., 1997). Public acceptance of the regime was limited: while some civilian elites welcomed Soeharto's rule, most citizens complied reluctantly, recognising the military's unrivalled power at that time (Darmawijaya, 2015; Rubba & Liana, 2020; Sundari, 2021).

The dominance of the Army within national armed forces dual function was particularly significant. Several structural factors explain this hegemony: the president's reliance on the Army as the highest policy executor, the Army's superior personnel numbers, its readiness, and its territorial command structure spanning the archipelago (Abdullah, 2024; Gunawan, 2021; Jenkins, 1983). Elections in this era were therefore

ritualised democratic performances, held to legitimise military-backed rule but structurally engineered to guarantee Golkar's victories (Puspitasari, 2005; Sapii et al., 2022).

Beyond politics, the military permeated the civilian bureaucracy and economy. Officers occupied strategic posts in ministries, provincial governments, and state-owned enterprises, while also managing industries, trade, and national assets (Ibrahim & Welch, 2012; Jenkins, 1983; Setiawan et al., 2013; Soebijono et al., 1997). This deep entrenchment eroded democratic control and blurred the boundaries between civilian and military authority. Ultimately, the military's unchecked power fostered systemic abuses, including human rights violations and violent crackdowns, which became recurring features of governance (Felice, 1998; Frantz, 2019).

From a theoretical perspective, the new order exemplifies Huntington's (2000) model of subjective civilian control, whereby the military aligned with ruling elites rather than remaining an apolitical instrument of the state. Civilian institutions were subordinated to military interests, adapting to national armed forces dominance instead of exercising oversight. Applying Croissant and Kuehn's (2017) framework, national armed forces extended its reach across all five domains of democratic oversight—defence policy, internal security, public administration, personnel recruitment, and economic governance—leaving no meaningful space for civilian supremacy.

Table 1. Civil–military relations in the new order era

Dimensions	New Order (Soeharto)
Civil-military model	Subjective civilian control (Huntington, 2000)
Dual function	Defence/Security + Socio-political role
Political Representation	Military seats in House of Representatives; Golkar as political vehicle
Civilian Bureaucracy	Key ministerial, gubernatorial, and bureaucratic post held by national armed forces officers
Economic governance	Military officers managed industries, trade, and state assets (Setiawan et al., 2013)
Democratic oversight	Absent—military dominated Croissant's five domains

Source: processed by author

The table synthesises the institutional features of civil–military relations during the New Order. It demonstrates how the dual function doctrine legitimised extensive military penetration of politics, administration, and the economy. In Huntington's terms, this represents a paradigmatic case of subjective civilian control, while Croissant's framework confirms the erosion of oversight across all domains.

Reflectively, the new order illustrates how the institutionalisation of *dual function* of national armed forces created a military-dominated regime cloaked in developmentalist rhetoric. While the government claimed to deliver stability and economic growth, these came at the cost of democratic substance, civilian autonomy, and respect for human rights. Civil supremacy was systematically undermined, and democracy reduced to formality, making this era a cautionary example of how military dominance can entrench authoritarianism under the guise of stability.

Civil-Military Relations in the Post-New Order Era

The fall of the New Order in 1998 marked a decisive break from the military-dominated regime and initiated a series of reforms aimed at restoring civilian supremacy. One of the earliest measures was the formal abolition of national armed forces' dual function, which had previously legitimised the military's pervasive role in politics, the bureaucracy, and the economy (Affan, 2025b; Inpantri et al., 2022). To institutionalise this reform, the government and parliament introduced sequential policies: the gradual reduction of military seats in parliament—from 100 to 75, then to 38—before their complete elimination in 2004 (Djafar, 2015). This step symbolised a major structural shift, moving representation from coercive institutions to elected civilians.

Further evidence of reform is found in three pivotal decisions during the early transition. First, in 2001, the national armed forces refused to endorse President Abdurrahman Wahid's decree to dissolve parliament, signalling a withdrawal from direct political intervention (Liputan6, 2001). Second, in 2002, the national armed forces officially withdrew from the People's Consultative Assembly and the House of Representatives. Third, in 2004, the national armed forces conceded their voting rights, reinforcing their neutrality in general elections (detiknews, 2004). These moves, considered as a whole, indicate an institutional shift in the military towards professional defense duties and away from political involvement. Based on a theoretical consideration, these developments illustrate a transitional movement toward Huntington's (2000) "objective civilian control", in which the military's role is confined to defence and security while civilians reclaim authority in governance. Applying Croissant and Kuehn's (2017) framework, the reforms represent progress in at least three domains: policy-making, where parliament was no longer subject to military representatives; public administration, with restrictions on active officers holding civilian posts; and political recruitment, through the removal of military voting rights. Nonetheless, challenges remained in ensuring that these institutional changes translated into consistent practices at both central and regional levels.

Civil-Military relations during the B.J. Habibie's government

During B.J. Habibie's presidency (1998–1999), reforms began to dismantle the military's entrenched privileges. The armed forces severed institutional ties with Golkar and initiated the gradual reduction of military members in government, marking symbolic moves toward civilian supremacy. Yet these measures remained uneven at the regional level, where the military retained influence. In Huntington's (2000) terms, Habibie's era represents a transitional model between subjective control inherited from the New Order and emerging objective control. Croissant and Kuehn's (2017) framework shows progress in policy-making and political recruitment, but weaker transformation in public administration and economic governance.

Habibie's brief presidency illustrated the dilemma of democratic transition: symbolic reforms paved the way for objective civilian control, but structural legacies hindered deeper change. Progress was evident in policy-making and political representation, but the military's continued influence in the bureaucracy and economy underscored the vulnerability of early reforms.

Tabel 2. Civil–Military Relations during the B.J. Habibie Administration.

Dimensions	Habibie Administration (1998-1999)
Civil–military model	Transitional: mix of subjective control (legacy of Orde Baru) and emerging objective control (Huntington, 2000)
Role of military in politics	Dwifungsi formally criticized; early efforts to reduce political role of national armed forces
Political representations	Gradual reduction of military members in government; military severed institutional ties with Golkar
Civilian bureaucracy	Initial attempts to limit active officers in civilian posts, though implementation uneven at regional levels.
Economic governance	Limited change; military's role in economy still persisted through legacy structures
Democratic oversight	Partial progress: reforms at central level, but weak enforcement in provinces; oversight institutions still adapting (Croissant&Kuehn,2017)

Source: processed by author

Civil-Military relations during the Abdurrahman Wahid's government

During Abdurrahman Wahid's presidency (1999–2001), reforms were accelerated to strengthen civilian supremacy. Key measures included appointing civilian defence ministers—Juwono Sudarsono (1999–2000) and Mahfud MD (2000–2001)—and the separation of the police from the armed forces, which ended decades of joint command under the Department of Defence and Security. These initiatives marked progress in professionalising the military and narrowing its political role. However, Gus Dur's reliance on direct presidential authority over the armed forces reflected elements of *subjective civilian control* (Huntington, 2000). In Croissant and Kuehn's (2017) terms, reforms advanced policy-making and internal security, though public administration and economic governance remained dominated by military influence.

Tabel 3. Civil–Military Relations during the Gus Dur Administration

Dimensions	Gus Dur Administration (1999-2001)
Civil-military model	Subjective civilian control: president's dominance over military authority (Huntington,2000)
Role of military in politics	Reduced through appointment of civilian defence ministers and separation of Polri from national armed forces
Political representation	Gradual continuation of military withdrawal from House of Representatives, initiated under reform policies
Civilian bureaucracy	Military influence persisted in regional administration despite reforms at central level
Economic governance	Limited reforms; military's economic role remained structurally embedded
Democratic oversight	Partial progress: improvements in policy-making and internal security, but weak institutional checks (Croissant & Kuehn, 2017)

Source: processed by author

Analytically, Abdurrahman Wahid's presidency illustrates the paradox of bold reformist steps combined with personalistic governance. Structural measures such as the separation of national armed forces and police advanced *objective civilian control*, yet the reliance on presidential authority and the persistence of military influence in bureaucracy and economy underscored the incomplete nature of reform. This period reveals both the potential of charismatic leadership in pushing institutional change and the fragility of democratic oversight during Indonesia's early transition.

Civil-Military relations during the Megawati Soekarnoputri's government

During Megawati Soekarnoputri's presidency (2001–2004), civil–military relations were further reformed through the elimination of military seats in the House of Representatives and the prohibition of active officers from holding civilian offices, measures that strengthened civilian supremacy. However, her declaration of a military emergency in Aceh (2003) granted wide authority to the national armed forces, reflecting the persistence of military dominance in internal security. In Huntington's (2000) terms, the era leaned toward *objective civilian control* through structural reforms but revealed elements of *subjective control* under crisis. Similarly, Croissant and Kuehn's (2017) framework indicates progress in policy-making and political representation, though internal security remained contested.

Megawati's presidency demonstrates the tension between reformist institutional advances and pragmatic reliance on the military during internal crises. While structural measures consolidated *objective civilian control* by eliminating parliamentary seats and restricting military roles in government, the military emergency in Aceh revealed the enduring influence of the armed forces in internal security. This case underscores how democratic consolidation in transitional contexts remains uneven, with civilian supremacy strengthened in formal institutions but still vulnerable when confronted with acute security challenges.

Table 4. Civil-Military Relations during the Megawati Administration

Dimensions	Megawati Administrations (2001-2004)
Civil-Military model	Primarily objective civilian control with exceptions in crisis (Huntington,2000)
Role of military in politics	Restricted: elimination of military seats in House of Representatives; no active officers in cabinet or regional government
Political representations	Civilian dominance consolidated as military withdrew from formal political institutions
Civilian bureaucracy	Active-duty officers barred from ministerial and gubernatorial posts
Economic governance	Limited changes; legacy networks persisted but less politically salient
Democratic oversight	Improved through reforms, though internal security (Aceh) remained dominated by the military (Croissant&Kuehn,2017)

Source: processed by author

Civil-Military relations during the Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's government

During Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's presidency (2004–2014), civil–military relations entered a relatively stable phase characterised by stronger professionalism and consolidation of civilian leadership. Evidence of this trajectory is reflected in the appointment of civilian defence ministers—Juwono Sudarsono (2004–2009) and

Purnomo Yusgiantoro (2009–2014)—which reinforced the principle of civilian control in defence policymaking. At the same time, criticisms emerged when active officers continued to occupy selected civilian positions, most notably the appointment of a national armed forces officer as Acting Governor of South Sulawesi (Suryowati, 2018). These pragmatic exceptions highlighted how, despite institutional progress, reform was not entirely free from compromise. In Huntington’s (2000) framework, the SBY period largely *represents* objective civilian control, *though* occasional deviations reflected *elements of subjective control*. From Croissant and Kuehn’s (2017) perspective, progress was most visible in policy-making and political representation, while public administration and economic governance revealed lingering military influence. SBY’s era consolidated democratic oversight in formal structures yet left space for pragmatic exceptions that constrained full civilian supremacy.

Table 5. Civil-Military Relation during the SBY Administration

Dimensions	SBY Administration (2004-2014)
Civil-military model	Predominantly objective civilian control, with pragmatic exception (Huntington, 2000)
Role of military in politics	Limited; military no longer in formal politics, but retained in specific cases
Political representation	Civilian dominance consolidated; no military seats in House of Representatives
Civilian bureaucracy	Generally civilian-led, though active officers occasionally appointed
Economic governance	Informal military economic activities persisted
Democratic oversight	Stronger than previous eras, though uneven in curbing informal influence (Croissant&Kuehn, 2017)

Source: processed by author

Civil-Military relations during the Joko Widodo’s government

During Joko Widodo’s 2014–2024 presidency, civil–military relations were pragmatically managed to serve electoral and governance needs. His 2014 and 2019 campaigns relied on retired armed forces officers who mobilised their networks. (Wijaya, 2019; Fatgehipon, 2024). Once in office, he increasingly relied on the military by allowing active-duty officers to occupy civilian posts in ministries, state agencies, and state-owned enterprises (Djuyandi et al., 2025; Sukmawan & Pedrason, 2022). Civil society groups such as KontraS and Imparsial criticised these appointments as undermining post-Reformasi security sector reform (hukumonline, 2022). Empirical data underscores the scale of this development: 2,569 active officers held civilian positions in various ministries and institutions during Jokowi’s tenure (Dewi, 2024).

While these arrangements facilitated policy implementation and expanded the president’s political support base, they also blurred the boundary between civilian and military domains. In Huntington’s (2000) framework, Jokowi’s administration reflects a partial reversion to subjective civilian control, as civilian leaders accommodated military influence in exchange for stability and loyalty. From Croissant and Kuehn’s (2017) perspective, democratic oversight regressed in domains of public administration and personnel recruitment, while only limited civilian control remained in policy-making. Jokowi’s presidency illustrates how pragmatic reliance on the military for political and administrative purposes weakened the trajectory of Reformasi, consolidating short-term governance capacity at the expense of long-term civilian supremacy.

Table 6. Civil-Military Relations during the Joko Widodo Administration

Dimensions	Jokowi Administration (2014-2024)
Civil-military model	Partial Subjective control due to pragmatic reliance on military (Huntington, 2000)
Role of military in politics	Expanded through appointments of active officers in ministries, agencies, and SOEs
Political Representation	Retired officers mobilized electoral support in 2014 and 2019 (Wijaya, 2019; Fatgehipon, 2024)
Civilian bureaucracy	2569 active officers occupied civilian post (Dewi, 2024)
Economic governance	Military presence extended into SOEs and state institutions
Democratic oversight	Weakened: civil society criticised blurred civil-military boundaries (KontraS, Imparsial, hukum online, 2022)

Source: processed by author

Civil-Military relations at the beginning of Prabowo Subianto's Government

In his first year as president, Prabowo Subianto has overseen a notable resurgence of military influence in civilian governance. Civil society organisations such as Imparsial and KontraS, alongside analysts from the ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, warned that his policies risked reviving the spirit of dual function national armed forces (Flores, 2025; Samosir, 2025). These concerns intensified after the House of Representatives passed a revised national armed forces Law in March 2025, which raised the retirement age of officers and expanded the number of government agencies eligible for military appointments from 10 to 14 (Reuters, 2025; The Guardian, 2025). Evidence-based data show the scale of this expansion: the number of active officers in civilian posts surged from 2,569 under Jokowi to 4,472 by March 2025, including 524 in the Supreme Court, 656 in the State Intelligence Agency, and 2,534 within the Ministry of Defence (Forum Keadilan, 2025).

High-profile appointments illustrate how formal boundaries have been bent to accommodate active officers, such as Major General Novi Helmy Prasetya as president director of Bulog and Major General Teddy Indra Wijaya as Cabinet Secretary, the latter facilitated through a presidential decree (Indoleft, 2025; Reuters, 2025). Moreover, Prabowo has tasked the TNI with implementing flagship non-defence programmes, including the Free Nutritious Meal initiative, where 2,000 personnel were trained as unit heads and at least 38 monitored classroom delivery (Tempo, 2025; IndonesiaDefense, 2025). While RSIS (2025) notes that these policies reflect Prabowo's pragmatic style of state-building—centralising defence diplomacy and modernisation through the *Perisai Trisula Nusantara* programme—they simultaneously deepen military entrenchment in civilian functions. In Huntington's (2000) terms, Prabowo's era reflects a strong form of *subjective civilian control*, whereby the military's loyalty is secured at the expense of its professional neutrality. Croissant and Kuehn's (2017) framework confirms regressions in public administration, personnel recruitment, and economic governance, undermining the post-Reformasi trajectory. In sum, Prabowo's administration demonstrates how centralised leadership and pragmatic reliance on the TNI may enhance state capacity in the short term but weaken democratic oversight and civilian supremacy in the long term.

Table 7. Civil-Military Relation during the Prabowo Subianto Administration

Dimensions	Prabowo Administration (2024-2025)
Civil-military model	Strong subjective civilian control: expanded military access to civilian roles (Huntington,2000)
Role of military in politics	Broadened by revised national armed forces Law; active officers placed in ministries, judiciary, intelligence agencies
Political representation	No formal seats in DPR, but increased informal influence through appointments and policy roles
Civilian bureaucracy	4472 active officers in civilian posts, including Bulog and Cabinet Secretariat (Forum Keadilan,2025)
Economic governance	Military tasked with food logistics, land management, and non-defence programmes (Tempo,2025)
Democratic oversight	Weakened: civil society criticism of blurred boundaries, risk of democratic regression (KontraS, Imparsial, The Guardian,2025)

Source: processed by author

Civilian Control

Civil and military relations in Indonesia are certainly inseparable from the history of Indonesian politics, namely from the old order, new order and reform era. These three times are moments that determine civil and military relations in Indonesia. It can be said that after the new order there was a change in civil-military relations based on civilian control of the military. The purpose of civil control is so that the military can focus on its duties of maintaining national defense, and the military can be neutral by not interfering in practical political affairs. The existence of civil control also aims for the military to maintain its professionalism.

Civilian control is necessary, especially in a democratic country. This is considered important because all government decisions cannot be determined unilaterally by the military, but must be based on the decisions of elected civilian officials. Huntington explains that civilian control must do something related to the relative power of civilians to the military which is a form of control, both subjective and objective. (Huntington, 2000). The explanation of civil control can be assured that indeed civil power over the military should be maximized. This means that military power in a democratic country needs to be minimized. Although civil power needs to be maximized, it will still give rise to conflicts of interest between other civil elements. Huntington groups civil control into three forms, namely civil control by government institutions; civil control by social classes; and constitutional civil control (Huntington, 2000).

According to Campbell, the involvement of the military with civilians in a democratic manner can be assessed by the existence of corporateness (Campbell, 2009). This word explains that the military has professional autonomy and is not an organizationally political organization (Kardi, 2014). However, the military still has the right to make decisions related to national security because the military is an important party for it. Another sign that can be seen from the existence of corporateness is the autonomy that the military has from civilians. In this case, it can be explained that an internal military bond was created. Thus, personal interests in it can be minimized with a career for the benefit of the military institution.

The existence of democratic control over the military creates a number of instruments formulated through a democratic process. The democratic process will be

in the presence of civilians who can change along with the democratic process. An example can be seen when the general election can form a new elite structure. It should be noted that the military institution is not an institution formed by a democratic process, but rather formed by the demands of national security in a country. The existence of political control over the military will be important for this. Without control, the transformation from a non-democratic regime to a democratic regime cannot be accompanied by changes in the military environment. This will replace a question that was originally who guards the guardian to how to control the guardian.

There are two policies that can be implemented by civilians, namely giving limits to the military regarding its role in internal government and domestic affairs; making changes to military doctrine that originally focused on Inward Looking to Outward Looking (Haris, 2019). The purpose of providing limitations on the role of the military is so that it can carry out its duties in accordance with its professional background. In addition, the purpose of making changes to the focus of the military is so that the military itself can protect the country's defense from external attacks. So that affairs within the country will be resolved by civilians, such as the police and other security forces.

Civil and military relations in Indonesia are still facing challenges in order to move towards a professional military. Civil and military relations in Indonesia can be seen in the relationship between the Ministry of Defense which reflects a civil institution and the Indonesian national armed forces which reflects a military institution. The national armed forces in Indonesia has a role that is actually the implementer of political policies in the field of defense. However, in reality, some defense policies are still controlled by the national armed forces commander. However, the difference is certainly felt by the community regarding the position of civil and military in Indonesia which was different during the new order. Military power that could dominate aspects of community life and government has now changed due to the existence of civil control. Therefore, civil control needs to be increased or maximized so that the military remains neutral and professional. In addition, we need to know that there is no best democratic model that is most appropriate to use in a country.

Conclusion

During the new order, the Indonesian government was led by President Soeharto. During this period, the role of the military was not limited to maintaining security and defense but was also supported to play a role in social, economic and political aspects. Although all power was shared with civilians, civilians had to adapt to a system in which power was in the hands of the military. The purpose of national armed forces participation in political activities was to regulate the dynamics of the new order government. The Soeharto government focused on economic development. The relations with Western countries established by Sukarno were restored, and much-needed foreign aid flowed into Indonesia. In social life, Suharto quickly banned all activities of the Indonesian Communist Party, beginning with the military's entry into Indonesian politics.

Post- new order era, Indonesia continued to undergo significant changes in the military sector, both internally and externally. Internal changes can be seen in the abolition of the dual function of the national armed forces. The military focused on its role in the defense sector, and civil government positions were no longer led by active military personnel. After the new order era, and with the military's role reduced, Indonesia can be categorized as a more democratic country

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