Violence and Democracy

Indonesia's Paramilitary Puzzle

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Masteroppgave ved Institutt for Statsvitenskap

UNIVERSITETET I OSLO

April 2005

Acknowledgements

There are many who deserve attention for their involvement and interest in my project. First of all, I am grateful to my supervisor Olle Törnquist for his enthusiasm, encouragement, his genuine interest in my work, but most of all for his critical and valuable comments.

This thesis was made possible and enjoyable by friends in Indonesia and Norway. In particular, I am grateful to everybody at the Demos office in Jalan Borobodur (especially Sofian, Betty, Shirely, and Atun) for practical advice, inspiration, support, guidance, and friendship over the period which the material for this thesis was collected. I am grateful to Aji for taking me around Yogya on his trusted Honda and helping me out of tricky situations, and to Indah and her lovely family for offering me a second home in Jakarta.

I would also like to express gratitude to staff and students at the Center for Development and Environment (SUM), for offering me an inspiring working environment. Especially I recall good conversations and fruitful discussion with my fellow Indonesia-students Heidi and Gisle. Extended thanks go to Ben Murtagh at SOAS who has provided me with the best possible foundation for grasping the particulars of Indonesian grammar and language.

The Institute for political science at the University of Oslo, the Ministry of Defense, and the Indonesia program at SUM provided financial support for the field work. I am also grateful to the Nordic Institute for Asian Studies (NIAS) in Copenhagen for offering me a scholarship to use their library.

On that final note, I would like to thank my parents and sister for their constant encouragement and support, and Lars Inge for his love and endless faith in me.

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Abbreviations and Glossary

ABRI Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia, former name for the Indonesian armed forces (see **TNI**)
Aldera Alliansi Demokrasi Rakyat; Alliance of People's Democracy
AMKA Angkatan Muda Ka'bah, satgas PPP (see **satgas** and **PPP**)
Ansor Nahdlatul Ulama's youth organization (see **Nahdlatul Ulama**)
Azas Tunggal sole principle, see **pancasila**
Banser Barisan Serbaguna: civilian militia linked **Ansor**, Nahdlatul Ulama's youth organization.
Brigass Brigade Siatu Satu
Brimob Brigade Mobil; The Police Special Forces
Bupati regent, top official at sub-provincial level of government.
DPR Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat; National Parliament
DPRDI/II Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah I/II; Provincial and sub-provincial parliament.
Dwifungsi miltairy dual function
FKPPI Komunikasi Putra Putri Purniwaran ABRI; Communication forum for the children of retired military: a military backed youth organization
FPI Front Pembela Islam; Islam's defenders front
Gali Gabungan Anak-anak Liar; 'gangs of wild kids' –popular term for criminals in the 1980s
Golkar Golongan Karya, the New Order state party
GPK Gerakan Pemuda Ka'bah; Ka'bah Youth Movement
Gubernur Governor
IMF International Monetary Fund
Jago Literally fighting cock: a tough guy, local heavy
Kabupaten sub-provincial administrative unit.
KamraKeamanan Rakyat; peoples' security
Kostrad Korps Strategis Angkatan Darat; an elite army unit.
Laskar Member of religiously based militia.
Milisi sipil civilian militias, referring to politically affiliated paramilitary groups
Nahdlatul-Ulama (NU) Muslim mass organization predominantly based in rural Java.
New Order The Suharto Regime 1965-1998
Pam swakarsa Pasukan Pengamanan Swakarsa, voluntary security guards.
Pancasila State ideology based on five principles of belief in one good: humanitarianism; national unity; consultative democracy; social justice.
PDI Partai Demokrasi Indonesia; Indonesian Democratic party
PDI-P Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan; Indonesian democratic party of struggle
Pemuda youth
Pemuda-Pancasila (PP) militant extra legal youth organization
Peta Fatherland Defense Force, the revolutionary army

Pesantren	Islamic boarding school
PKB	Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa; National awakening party
PKI	Partai Indonesia Komunis; Indonesian Communist Party
PNI	Partai Nasional Indonesia; Indonesian Nationalist Party
PPP	Partai Persatuan Pembangunan; United development Party
Preman	Colloquial word for 'criminal' from Dutch 'free man'
Premanisme	gangsterism
Pribumi	indigenous Indonesian
Priyayi	Javanese nobles
Reformasi	'democratic reform'
Satgas parpol	Satuan Tugas Partai Politik; Party task force, paramilitary wings of political parties.
Satgas	member of satgas parpol
Siskamling	Sistem Keamanan Lingkungan; Civilian security initiatives at the local level
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia; name for the Indonesian armed forces, post-Suharto
Walikota	mayor

1. INTRODUCTION

"The election is not a place for 'criminals', wipe out the military culture"
"Pemilu bukan ajang premanisme, hapuskan budaya militer"

Thus read the banners held by protesters outside the Gaja Mada University a few weeks prior to the 2004 presidential elections. The protesters lamented that the continued use of militaristic symbols and violence by party affiliates and supporters of politicians, since the fall of Suharto's New Order ran contrary to the spirit of *reformasi* – democratic reform. The political realities in Indonesia bear witness to a dual situation of institutionalization of democratic practices on the one hand, accompanied by the flourishing of militia-like organizations and criminal gangs on the other hand. It is this unnerving puzzle of the function and realities of this dualism that this thesis sets out to discuss. This study thus sets out to discuss the structures and dynamics that make violence such a persistent phenomenon in 'democratic Indonesia'.

The implementation of democratic reform is conceived to defer the use of violence by the state as a means to dominate and manipulate subordinates. After all, violence had been the main tool for the state to control and govern the New Order state from 1965 until May 1998 when the streets filled with protestors and pro-democracy activists to oust Suharto from his presidential palace. Since the inception of grass root activism and opposition during those Maydays, the problems of democratization and transition have weighed down the hopes for a successful 'transition' to *demokrasi.* Beyond the promotion of democratic reform accompanied by decentralization reforms implemented at high speed since 1999, the promotions of *demokrasi* and *reformasi* seem to have been accompanied by the incorporation of criminals and corrupt elites at all levels of the state.

1.1 Empirical Justifications

The persistence of violence takes place against the backdrop of democratization reforms and decentralization reforms implemented at high speed since 1999.

Elections have been carried out at the central level and at the local level, judged to be a success by international observers (EUEOM 2004). It is significant that however noble expressions in support of democratic principles and ideals, most organizational vehicles for political and social expression in Indonesia carry with them at an arms length paramilitary units and militias ready to flex their muscles whenever needed. Ironically, these militia wings of the political parties bloomed amidst a political climate driven by the desire for the demilitarization of the state. "*Cabut dwifungsi ABRI*" – "kick the army out of politics" was the resounding demand of demonstrators, graffiti artists, and reform-minded politicians in 1998. Internally however, each of the large parties claiming reformist agendas built what were essentially private armies on the pretence of party security (King 1999: 10). The immediate creation of civilian militias might be understandable considering the special circumstances in which political parties and politicians found themselves in the immediate aftermath of Suharto's step down from power. However, the security mandate of *satgas* expanded as quickly as their numbers and it became evident that the 1999 election was to be contested via the same violent methods which had secured Golkar victory over the past since 1966. For half a decade now, these organizations have reorganized themselves, manifested their positions in society, and become a 'normal' and even 'accepted' parts of the scramble for power despite processes of 'democratization' and 'decentralization'. The concept of militias and paramilitaries is not new to Indonesia as such. party security groups, *satgas parpol* , have existed since the early 1980s. The New Order dynamics incorporated criminal structures and mafia networks at the local level. The question of relevance here is how dominant actors on the Indonesian playing field relate to and make use of democratic instruments of power, also those that use violence.

Often one meets the impressionistic picture drawn between the apparent chaos and violence of recent years and the stability of the New Order regime. Despite the bloody circumstances in which Suharto came to power in 1966, Suharto's Indonesia has come to acquire the image of a calm, well-ordered society in the 1980s and 1990s. In reality the New Order regime under Suharto had institutionalized violence as part of the state (Anderson 1999). Along these lines, a trend within scholarly

literature as well the Indonesian free press has been to argue that the existence of paramilitary groups and the persistence of a so-called culture of violence -*kebudayaan kekerasan*- is merely a carry-on from the New Order regime (Collins 2001). According to this line of argument, violence is explained in terms of authoritarian elements that have survived Suharto's fall and is now struggling to gain their share of the cake. From this angle, anti-democratic predatory elites who command their own private armies operate side by side with democratic and non-violent pro-democrats in both political and civil society, and thus they merely represent a counter-force that is expected to wither away as democracy takes a stronger foothold in the country. This study seeks to take issue with such positions, arguing that violence must be interpreted and viewed in relation to the real political changes since the demise of the New Order authoritarian rule.

There is in fact very little knowledge of the new emerging patterns of political practices and the continuation of violence. A recurring puzzle about democracy is how, in a post-conflict or in a post-dictatorship situation, different political actors have used the democratization process and discourse in order to maneuver in the political arena. This is a common phenomenon all over the world where gangsters, politicians, businessmen, and various forms of intelligence agents interact and compete for state power and resources while at the same time relating to the democratic realities, running for elections and operating within the existing structures of the political realities.

1.2 Research Focus

The theoretical puzzle relevant for the above-stated problem attack the dominant theories on democracy and democratization. The thesis aims at critical discussion on the formative processes of reworking the structures and dynamics within which violence-groups exist and the structures to which they relate. These changing realities are characterized by implementation of democratic instruments and freedoms such as freedom of organization and freedom of speech. Recent years have seen a number of transitions to liberal democracy and a burgeoning academic literature on this 'third wave' of democratization. Many of these transitions and associated

academic discourse have had a narrow focus on the minimalist institutional requirements of liberal democracy. In Indonesia, elections have been hailed as sign of a successful transition towards democracy and so Indonesia scores high on most indicators of democratization. The democratization paradigm, as it will be discussed in chapter two of this thesis, does not offer a satisfactory framework or variables that can explain why violence persists. The structures of power and contextual realities of actors do not fit into the framework of conventional transition studies. This means that one needs to find more fitting tools for grasping the realties of political life in Indonesia.

The emphasis of this thesis in on the structures and dynamics that makes violence persistent, seeking primarily to highlight significant changes with regards to the way politics is played out in Indonesia, and secondly to strengthen the supposition that local contextual analysis is precarious for understanding the real dynamics of local politics in developing countries. In order to make available working tools for analyzing and structuring the empirical material, variables form the "crafting of democracy paradigm" as exemplified by conventional transition theory, and the additional dominating trend rooted in "the neo-liberal agenda" of the World Bank and the IMF will be juxtaposed with relevant arguments/analytical tools form the discussion on violence. The institutional reforms necessitates the questions of (1) whether decentralization and decentralization in fact promote less violence, or a whether one is in fact seeing decentralization of violence, (2) whether decentralization and local elections lead to enhanced accountability, or in stead strengthens various forms of local despotic rule (3) whether the emphasis on civil society not just ignores the real potential for violence mobilization of social forces in what might be termed 'uncivil society'.

The theoretical foundation for analyzing violence in Indonesia will be rooted in historical and structural arguments that deal with two central themes relevant for analyzing violence, namely ***the role and implications of local elites in relation to the state, and the role and implications of those social forces mobilized into violence groups.*** The selection of these focus points lean on dominant theoreticians in the field of local Indonesian politics as exemplified by Nordholt, van Klinken, Sidel, and

Törnquist as well as a more historically rooted discussion on the symbiosis between crime and politics in Indonesia.

In order to be able to interpret violence in Indonesia a selective reading of historical narratives will be essential in order to trace the particular lines in history that serve to explain specific current dynamics. Secondly the thesis will analyze the way dominant actors relate to democratic institutions and the implications of decentralization reforms on how violence is mobilized and used, and thirdly the thesis will look at how violence groups are organized and mobilized in order to say something about the contexts within which thy flourish. The next chapter will further discuss the theoretical foundation and systematization of this thesis.

2. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Politics is about organized power, democratic politics about participation and power sharing. The thesis aims at critical research on the formative process of reworking state/society- relations around the incorporation of principles of alteration of power centers via democratic principles of governance. This requires a conceptual framework that can address the complex dynamics of power and especially the role of actors and strategies that politicize, realize and transform the sphere and nature of social organization and dominance within the political space of a democratic state. There is no one comprehensive theory on collective political violence in new democracies. Conceptually democracy and violence belong to two separated spheres. The existence of violence represents the ultimate negation of meaningful democratic politics. Theoretically, it is fruitful to attempt a bridging of the dominant variables and trends in the idealist discussion on democracy with the much grimmer variables and empirical observations on violence in Indonesia. This chapter will define and limit the theoretical terrain within which text material and empirical material will be analyzed and interpreted. Methodologically the chapter will systematize the arguments found in a broader debate on violence that counter the determinant assumptions (independent variables) found in the general debate on elite crafting of democracy and the liberalist and neo-institutionalist recipe for democratization as it has been implemented in Indonesia[1]. The following few paragraphs will highlight the core arguments and guidelines that have shaped the democratization process in Indonesia in order to juxtapose these specific theoretical arguments to the debate on violence in Indonesia. This is not a project on democratization in Indonesia, but one

[1] The theoretical discussion bases itself on a pro-contra analysis, although not in its strictest form. In philosophical traditions (see Næss 1971, Bergström and Boreus 2000) the pro-contra analysis aims at systematizing the arguments in a specific text or group of texts in order to make qualified verifications regarding the specific arguments of the text(s). One main argument or position consists of one or several arguments. Small arguments support the main argument, or hypothesis – taking a pro-position in support of the main hypothesis of the text(s). The same text or other texts, treating the same or a different theme/position may present specific counterarguments to the hypothesis, or arguments that in essence qualify as a "counter" argument in Næss' terms. In a less strict sense, this thesis qualify from a broader debate the specific variables within one debate on democracy, in order to juxtapose (contra) these to the variables in the debate in democracy. This is done in order to systematize and qualify a set of variables or dimensions that shapes the empirical debate violence within a framework of institutional democratization.

that looks at the interconnection between certain specific explanatory variables for violence in relation to the crafting of democracy in Indonesia.

2.1 The Democratization Paradigm

The theoretical focus on democratization has gone through various shifts regarding its focus and agenda. The overall expectations have been that democracy is a natural expectation and demand for oppressed peoples. Such were the demands of those who flocked the streets of every Indonesian urban center in 1998: the overthrow of the patriarch held within it an automatic demand for *demokrasi.* Historically Indonesian politics has gone along the global trends of decolonization, implementation of some sort of parliamentarian democracy in the 1950s, followed by a longer period of military-cum-civilian dictatorship overthrown in the makeshift period of the late 1990s. There is a great variety between the various theories on transitions from authoritarian to democratic rule in their emphasis on general or specific and contextual variables. In most cases, the transition studies lay out a set of general conditions and variables for how the process should and ought to be carried out. In this sense democratization may be defined in terms of the promotion and further development of democracy as an idea and as a method (Törnquist 1999: 219). The various theoretical positions on democratization vary between a focus on what goes on inside and what goes on outside the established political system. One of the most important questions concerning democratization is the preconditions. In addition to the minimalist institutional requirements of free and fair elections, freedom of speech and association, there is disagreements regarding the importance of capitalist market economy or socio-economic inequality (see Törnquist 1999, ch 12).

2.1.1 The Transition-Paradigm

The role of the middle classes in political transformation such as democratization has repeatedly been emphasized since the 1950s. The modernization school, as exemplified by Seymour Martin Lipset (1959) focused on socio-economic development arguing that economic development and widespread higher education are conducive to democratization, partly because they strengthen the moderate middle

class. In the 1960s, when a number of African countries received their independence scholars such as Huntington (1967), among others, stressed the importance of stable political institutions, organization, leadership in economic development and democratization to structure the uncontrollable masses. Also in Huntington's third wave discussion the importance of the expanding, moderate middle class growing out of economic development has continued to be emphasized.

But, the theoretical puzzle surfaced as development and an expanding middle class has not automatically lead to democratization in all developing countries. One example is Indonesia where, while economic development accelerated and the middle class grew in significance, the members of this middle class mostly supported the authoritarian regime (Törnquist 2000). It is clear that the mere existence of a large middle class does not automatically trigger democratization.

There exists a plethora of transition studies and theories that focus on conscious and committed actors in the construction and consolidation of democracy. Since the end of the Cold War the fall of authoritarian states around the world has resulted in a bourgeoning literature on transition theories explaining the fall of dictatorships and how democracy should be crafted (Scmitter and O'Donnell 1986, Huntington 1991, Linz and Stepan 1992 and 1996, Diamond 1994). These scholars rid themselves of more outdated modernization theories, and substituted them with the newer and more *en vogue* concepts of soft-and hard liners, institutional mechanisms of liberal democracy, and the conditions and possibilities of elites in crafting such institutions with varying emphasis on the importance of each variable. The dynamics changes from various actors, but generally, there has been a special emphasis on negotiations and pact-making within and between existing political and economic elites. In this approach, which Potter has named the 'transition approach' to the study of democratization; democracy is conceptualized as a set of government institutions and procedures, rather than rule by the people (Harriss et.al 2005: 20). Special emphasis is placed on negotiations and pacts within the political elite of party officials, politicians, office-holders and bureaucrats. Shmitter and O'Donnell aregues that the impulse for liberalization in authoritarian regimes comes from within the regime itself: from a conflict between hard liners who seek to maintain the

authoritarian regime and soft liners who seek to initiate a process of liberalization in an effort to legitimize the regime (1986: 15-21). The elites start to regard authoritarian regime as "dispensable", and thus see themselves more at ease with a breakdown of the authoritarian structures. Soft -and hard-liners interact with each other to try a change the rules of the game. This *pact-making* on democracy can be successful because the elite see their position as secure also within the new system.

In a situation where the authoritarian regime has demonstrated its incapacity to uphold capitalist development, the regime actors will be squeezed out to the side, while central elements of a moderate elite will retain power. In most cases liberalization of the authoritarian regime is accompanied by the resurrection of civil society (ibid: 26-27, 48-56) in which increased social mobilization creates pressure for democracy (see also Foweraker and Landman 1997). Despite this bottom up impulse for democratization, the authors tend to emphasize the important role played by the elites in the democratic transition as they from negotiated pacts which set out "the rules governing the exercise of power" (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986: 37). In addition much of the compromise was in keeping out any kind of radical forces from the negotiations, and also denying them a space in politics. The main criticism is thus, from scholars like Carothers (1999) that it intrinsically make inaccurate assumptions about the role and power of the elite and civil society.

In addition, the crafting of democracy perspective is leaning too much on the mere description of what has happened elsewhere, an element that leads one to ignore the role of ordinary people who also have prepared the way for democratization. As Törnquist contends, that in countries where authoritarian rule contributed to rapid social and economic development, the elite does not necessarily behave the way it is expected to according to the transition theorists. In this situation horse-trading between the various power-holders combined with top-down mobilization through patron-client bonds (and ethnic and religious loyalties) behind politicians battling to gain access to state resources is likely. Indonesia and Nigeria are perfect examples of this sort. "Democracy is visualized as a set of procedures negotiated by and between political leaders. Thus transition approach separates democracy from its essential

meaning as rule by the people and conceptualizes it principally as the establishment of a set of governing institutions" (Grugel 2002:61).

This poses a challenge for studies on democratization to consider the democratic or non-democratic role of both the elite and actors in civil society. The theory leans on the assumption that democracy can be crafted, and is closely related to the assumptions that political elites and alliances can be encouraged and led by international actors "in support of good governance, including privatization and decentralization, and the strengthening of civil society" (Harriss et.al. 2005: 20).

The successful carrying out of local and national elections has in many countries triggered the international community to assume a successful transition to democratic politics (see Linz and Stepan 1992, Huntington 199, O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). The elections serve to motivate both political parties from before the authoritarian period and newly formed political parties to assume a prominent role in the democratic transition while the election itself is seen as a founding event. In the face of the political realities in the developing world the transition paradigm has received a lot of criticism. Grugel (2002) points out that many of these transitions and the associated academic discourse has had a too narrow focus on the minimalist institutional requirements of liberal democracy, most notably the conduct of free and fair elections. Beetham (2000) describes this as a tendency to elevate a means to an end, to mistake institutional instruments with their democratic purpose. In stead he proposes that democracy should be defined in terms of underlying principles, while the institutions that uphold democracy should be defined secondarily.

In the same way as democracy is being crafted through the implementation of various institutions, the transition paradigm also deals with violence institutionally. Linz and Stepan (1996: 108) have acknowledged the difficulty in assessing the importance of political violence in the struggle for democracy. For the Basque separatists it was assumed that institutional arrangements such as negotiations and approval of autonomy status, election of the Basque parliament, formation of a Basque government, and the transfer functions to the government (ibid: 105-108) decrease the levels of violence. It is clear however that institutional measures alone have not put an end to the conflict. The devolution of authority in the case of

Northern Ireland is a similar detraction in which the institutional measures are meant to serve to curb violence. This leads one to ask search for another paradigm that can eventually pave the way for different and new variables that may explain why political violence can continue in a democratic setting such as that of Spain and the UK.

2.1.2 The neo-Liberal Agenda

The policies implemented in transitional countries are very much defined by the stance and direction of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) at any particular point in time. The issue of democracy has been closely related to that of the state, as is illustrated in the shift from 'less government' to 'good governance' in which civil society and the local state have emerged as delineated domains for democratization to occur. In authoritarian countries it was the state that was the root of the problem. The collapse of the most extreme forms of statism with the fall of the communist states, gave an impetus to the development agenda to reduce the size of the state. Reducing the size of the state was the dominant policy during the 1980s and the early 1990s when countries in Africa, Asia, and the former USSR emerged from authoritarian rule. During these years the World Bank, The IMF, and the US government stressed measures to reduce the degree of state intervention in economic affairs (Fukuyama 2004: 20). The liberalist/neoliberalist agenda of the 'Washington Consensus' shaped very much of the democratization agenda by focusing on building down the state rather than strengthening the state. They key actors saw the state sector as the core obstacle to growth, and assumed that economic liberalization would put the political systems back on track. A vast number of institutional reforms have been introduced under the auspices of the international community in order to shape formal local institutions in accordance with normative principles of rule of law and free and fair elections, and other basic freedoms as crucial variables ensure further 'development'. The main problem was that reducing state capacity was misconstructed as an effort to cut back state capacity (ibid.), and so the efforts of economic liberalization were assumed to be failing because of failing governments.

In centre periphery relations the case has also been to bridge the democratic deficit between the center and the periphery by implementing decentralization reforms.

The World Bank and the IMF were forced to move beyond their strict economic focus, to take on a political role. The term 'good governance' involved establishing a strong legal framework for development, and mechanisms for producing 'transparency' and 'accountability' (Harriss et. al 2005: 23). The Bank does not talk explicitly about democracy and democratization, but does in most instances assume the existence of an electoral democracy. The liberalist agenda emphasizes such concepts as *participation* and civil society which are most frequently associated with NGOs and local voluntary organizations rather than concepts related to conventional democratic practice such as *political parties* or actors that form part of a '*political society*'. Accordingly, participation and accountability is best ensured through decentralization reforms. These concepts are in turn forwarded in relation to privatization of state enterprise and government, as well as decentralization of the state. In other words, although the World Bank has reformed critically around its previous efforts to minimize the state, it now focuses on reducing the scope of the state, weakening the central state and strengthening local government.

The main implementers and driving forces behind such changes is a non-political, non-stately founded 'civil society'. In academic research on Indonesia this expectation and potential of a civil society has triggered a trend in which much of the literature treating civil society organizations and structures in Indonesia has mainly focused on mapping out the work and organizational structure of NGO's and other political organizations in Indonesia.[2] These studies assume that civil society is autonomous from the state (both central and local) and that they incorporate some element of social and political reform in their agenda and activism (Rodan 1996: 20-24).

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[2] Apart from a few new studies that seek to analyze the potential of a civil society up against the new democratic institutions. such as

The critique against the liberalists and proponents of World Bank initiatives are manifold, but the most relevant for this thesis is the emphasis on the relative strength and potential in society, it views democratization and development independent of political competition and conflict between different social groups and classes (Harriss et.al. Mohan and Stokke 2000). The new conditions for economic development and 'good governance' are found in the peculiar construction of "an increasingly unconstitutional, de-institutionalized, and de-politicized democracy" (Harriss et al 2005).

2.2 Theorizing Violence

The above discussion has highlighted the role and implications of various variables and concepts dominant in the democratization paradigm; elites, decentralization of the state, good governance, and civil society. In this respect the following question is: *what are the pros and cons of the democratization paradigm as discussed above with regard to violence?* The concepts elaborated on above are highly relevant for theoretical discussion on aspects of democratization in developing countries, but leave a number of questions unanswered: *Why, in face of various degrees of democracy, is there still violence?* The following discussion will make available tools for contextual analysis with regards to violence by categorizing the theoretical positions into three broad themes: arguments based on political economy, on a historical/structural dimension, and one treating the function of the 'actually existing civil society' when it comes to violence groups. The themes presented here are constructed for analytical purpose and while they tend to overlap, perhaps more often than not, they will serve to frame the analysis. There is no necessary causal relationship between the variables for democracy and those explaining violence, but the juxtaposition illustrates the problematic nature of democratization theories and arguments that have been used for Indonesia and within which framework the empirical material will be discussed.

2.3 Arguments rooted in Political Economy Approach

The surprise and bewilderment among observers with the fall of the New Order, came as a result of the dominating trend analyzing the Indonesian state more in terms of an autonomous, highly centralized machine, than a bi-polar arena within which many interests were competing for power. From a conflict perspective elites are broadly divided between functionalists who view elites as a natural part of the social system and thus also integral to its functioning, and those leaning towards a more Marxist position seeing elites as largely parasitic. In the literature treating the events in post-Suharto Indonesia the image of a parasitic elite that deflates democratization by simulating both communal and non-communal conflict is common both in popular perceptions and academic literature. Snyder (2000) argues for example that the democratic space that opens up in multicultural societies easily is occupied by an anti-democratic elite that aims at manipulating ethnic sentiment in order to deflect popular demands for democracy. Furthermore, democratization is likely to deflate when these elites are unwilling or unable to adapt to democracy. Those explaining the democratic deficit in Indonesia in terms of political economy tend to focus on the predatory, anti-democratic traits and behavior of the elite. Robison's and Hadiz' (2004) focus is on the way entrenched interests and political alliances have proved able to reorganize their ascendancy in face of economic crisis and regime change. Conflict and violence erupt, either as a byproduct of a broader conflict in the process of building new alliances between old oligarchic elites or that it becomes an integral part of the way in which oligarchs are forced to operate in order to maintain their power (Robison and Hadiz 2004). These oligarchs are rooted in the New Order political economy initially deriving their wealth from speculative growth in investment and dept which also rendered the regime extremely vulnerable to global capital markets. In this perspective the oligarchs, whose interests during the 1990s were increasingly being limited by those very state structures that has enabled them to operate, no longer needed the authoritarian state as their key mediator. Accordingly, the upper echelons of the New Order elite who were integral to the crafting of democratic institutions (compromising to give up their political positions, but maintaining their economic and social assets), rather than promoting democracy

are merely reinventing themselves as political entrepreneurs, corporate moguls, and criminal bosses of new market economics and democratic politics (see Robison and Hadiz 2004: 185-223). With the implementation of democratic instruments, engagement in politics is only necessitated by the requirement to control, capture and dominate the political arena, rather than 'participate' in it. The oligarchic power base derives from their strength to control the political economy of the state. Real 'politicking' takes place outside the official democratic instruments. It is a façade democracy. In this regard, state-sponsored violence is no longer needed to protect the economic interests of the oligarchs: they are financially strong enough on their own. *Violence is subcontracted to their private moguls as a means to maintain their oligarchic position.*

Violence, whether by civilian organization or military auxiliaries is a natural by-product of power struggles between elites who pretend to be democratic, but in reality are using their powers to make decisions on political and financial matters outside the democratic institutions. Violence is a result of the complex politico-business oligarchy and the ongoing reorganization of its powers through successive crises, colonizing and expropriating new political and market institutions (ibid.). On a critical note, arguments rooted in political economy leave out a number of important explanatory factors. The discussions inspired by political economy tend to frame the discussion in terms of economic predatory interests of the elite, and tend to portray the actually existing democracy as a mere sham to which no social forces or historical implications matter. The following paragraphs offer attention to structuring arguments around broader themes that focus on what has shaped the Indonesian trajectory, what are the elite dynamics, and how should one interpret the social forces that mobilize and instrumentalize the means of violence within the democratic setting?

2.4 Historical/Structural Arguments

The next part will discuss various theories that look at the shaping of political structures, laying the foundation for the empirical study. In this respect a pattern of social control under local, often traditional elites was crystallized during the course of

colonial rule, and that these traditional elites and oligarchies which manifested themselves in the modern state have proven to be extremely enduring and surviving. Looking to the Africanist literature on the continuities of rural/local despotism, van Klinken (2002) in particular[3] has developed a comparable argument in relation to the current process of decentralization in Indonesia and argues that the obstacles to democracy are found not only in Jakarta with the central state actors, but also, or perhaps more so at the local level. As with other colonial power, the Dutch ruled through local elites, and incorporated them into their system of rule. This patterns of indirect rule practiced by the Dutch colonials, was prolonged by local big men (*orang besar*) particularly in rural areas who later have promoted their own role as citizens, while reinforcing the subject-role among their local clients. From this system of indirect rule in which the Dutch clearly institutionalized and separated the role of "traditional elites" from that of for example the Chinese business classes, in stead incorporating the indigenous elite into the political bureaucracy. According to this argument this system of indirect rule laid the foundation for the paternalistic claims of aristocratic families to political monopoly in post-Suharto Indonesia.

2.4.1 Democratic Institutions and Decentralization

The next question that will be treated in this thesis is: *How are dominant actors adapting to or making use of democratic institutions? and how should one interpret decentralization in relation to these changes?* in order to say something about how elites who also make use of violence relate to democracy. Carrying on from previous discussion on the oligarchies of the political economy position, it is clear that the continuities of local elites in relation to decentralization processes involve in one way

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[3] Mamdani (1996) talks of the post-colonial state as bifurcated in the sense that on the one hand there is the 'civilised' urban society that "grew out of a history of direct rule and now practices a form of democracy", while on the other hand the patrimonial networks remain and the bifurcated character survives at the local level. In the African state the bifurcated power of the colonial legacy mediated racial domination through tribally organized local authorities, reproducing racial identity in *citizens* at the centre, and ethnic identity in *subjects* at the local level. In this bifurcated state, a decentralized customary despot comprises local government.

or the other the handling of political institutions, access to elected positions, and control over patronage networks in order to gain control over valuable resources.

According to the transition paradigm discussed in the previous pages, for democracy "to become the only game in town" it is only a matter of getting the elites to "use" the institutions with the people controlling their access. Minimizing the state enterprise will make this process easier. A common critical argument when democracy 'does not work' is that because the same old elite that agreed to the crafting of democracy are still holding on to their economic and social assets (despite giving up their formal political positions) they are able to avoid or at least undermine most of the new instruments of democracy (Demos 2004: 34). If the elites in speaking are one the other hand making use of the democratic instruments, working through politics, democracy is working its way (ibid: 35). The successful carrying out of elections has led many observers to draw this conclusion that democracy is on its way. In a critical light however, according to Demos (2004) (supporting the central arguments of Nordholt, van Klinken, and Sidel) it seems that dominant actors actually tend to play the democratic game. In stead of bypassing the rules they "bend and abuse" them to their own advantage. Thus, according to Demos one should talk of elites that has *hijacked* and *monopolized* the instruments of democracy and made it into an "oligarchic democracy". This line of reasoning is supported by the argument that the legacy of indirect rule and the accumulation of primitive accumulation are impacting on how dominant actors/local elites relate to democratic institutions. *Capital is accumulated mostly through political and essentially coercive instruments of power that were introduced through colonial indirect rule* (DEMOS 2005: 35).

The main determinants of power structures at the local level are national-level state structures and local political economy. Local elites and strongmen are shaped by the opportunities and constraints for accumulation and monopolization of local economic and political power which are provided by both micro-and macro structures of the state (Sidel 2004). In a comparative analysis on democratization and bossism in the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia, Sidel (2004) argues that there are important divergent patterns in the way local elites in the three settings operate and function in relation to the institutional framework available to them. While the system of direct

elections and accompanied unrestricted powers of mayors, governors, and congressmen in the Philippines and MPs in Thailand "the system of elected offices found in Indonesia is much less hospitable to the concentration of power in the hands of a single boss or dynasty" (ibid.: 113). As long as the positions of *gubernur* and *walikota* (mayor) are elected members of their local assemblies in stead of directly elected by the residents, would-be bosses are kept in check by institutional measures. As a result Indonesia is witnessing the fragmentation of local elites who are fighting to gain access to seats in the local assemblies (DPRD). ***According to this argument dominant actors are by and large formally adhering to democracy and institutional constraints do not necessarily lead to more democracy, but can serve to frame a specific manner of elite constellation.***

The particular way democratic combined with long traditions for despotic rule at the local level is closely related to the questions of how one should interpret decentralization. *What theoretical arguments are found in the debates on violence that counter the hypothesis on decentralization?*

As discussed above the theoretical foundations for decentralization is that it will serve to bring power closer to the people and that the people will more easily gain access to the politics that concern them. It is also assumed that decentralization will lead to democratization and the rise of civil society (see Aspinall and Fealy 2003). In one of the few analyses on the center-periphery relations in the late New Order Indonesia, Malley said that "so long as regional government remains accountable upward and inward to the center rather than downward and outward to the indigenous population, local grievances are likely to go unaddressed and local unrest is likely to continue" (Malley 1999: 97). The argument here is that violence (read ethnic conflict) will secede when local government is de-linked from the center and linked to the community. However, without necessarily invalidating Malley's assumptions in its entirety, de-linking of local from central politics does not automatically mean better accountability and representation at the local level.

To understand local dynamics there is a vast and interesting literature on the links between crime and politics in Indonesia and elsewhere. As Bayart, Ellis and Hibou have said about the African state "*decentralization and regionalization*

recommended by enthusiasts of good governance and civil society can entail the consequences that political authorities will use criminal networks to maintain or revive power". In the context of patrimonial systems of rule, electoral politics will multiply the opportunity for this kind of mediation (Bayart et.al 1999).

In this historical perspective, the political trajectories of the colonial legacy of indirect rule are perpetuated in such a way that the bureaucracy acquires command in a specific territory, and in the networks of influence and clientelism that constitutes the post-colonial state. This creates structural predisposition for criminal activity and violence. In the broad debate on the genealogy of violence in Indonesia, the symbiosis of crime and politics has always been highlighted (see Rafael 1999, Nordholt and Till 1999, Lev 1999).

In a development perspective the symbiosis between crime and politics is driven forward by primitive accumulation of capital. In Indonesia the boundaries between state, society, and the market, and between formal and informal institutions and networks and between the center and periphery are more blurred than many expect (Nordholt 2004: 43-44). It is thus not only a question of whether the state is able to provide ample security against crime and violence, but also to what extent the state itself forms an essential part of the criminal structures. Whether the police or the military is able to provide ample security depends highly on willingness and ability of various groups of elites to adhere to the rules of the democratic game.

While liberal pluralists do not recognize the concept of 'state' and prefer to deal with 'government' and the institutions of the bureaucracy (Robison et. al 2004: 17), Weberians define the state as much by its monopoly on coercion as the way in which it is driven by the institutional interests of its officials (Skocpol 1985). In this respect the role and implication of the informal on the formal requires that the state be seen not only in relation to its institutional value, but as an organic system of power defined not only on its own, but also in terms of these various dynamics that define the parameters of politics.

Linking this perspective to the debate on crime and politics in Indonesia, the debate has been more focused on particular continuities than in structures making connection between the state and crime applicable. Again, this is because crime, in

the same way as violence was seen as a correlating factor to the authoritarian regime: there was a natural symbiosis between crime and politics because the regime and its politicians were criminals. This is not something to disagree upon, but is nevertheless not very fruitful when analyzing the current trends of violence that exist against a backdrop of democratic reform. ***In face of competition over elected positions, dominant actors continuously depend on forming relations with a criminal underworld.***

2.5 The Actually Existing Civil Society

The final point is that because paramiltairies and militias are organizations in their own right, attached to social/religious organizations and political parties with some sort of ideological or mobilizational role. Their mother organizations are often read as parts of a "civil society" (see Hefner 2000), while they still protect and depend on their paramilitary wings. Several essential factors are neglected in the assumptions of a "civil society". The dichotomy of civil society as an opposite of the state is problematic for a number of reasons. Not only does it serve to idealize civil society, but it also assumes a zero-sum relationship between state and society that in turn puts a seal on further exploration of the ambiguous relationship between the two. First the civil society that actually exists is a locus of a range of political and social orientations based on ethnicity, gender, religion, that are symptomatic of the specific intricate sets of power and domination in society (see for example Kumar 1993). This emphasis on the bad state versus the good civil society ignores that internal structures and practices of the autonomous organization can be both undemocratic and uncivil. The dichotomy also ignores the intricate relationship between dominant actors, stake holders, and their impact on society and way of interacting with society. In rapidly industrializing Asian countries, new challenges have changed both the economic landscape and cultural outlook. With democratic reforms accompanied by decentralization programs the relationship between state and society has been altered, but it does not mean that the liberalist idea of a civil society does not impact on social change, or if it does that it is the most dominant stake holder on the political, economic, and social arena.

The problem remains of how one should interpret other forces in society that are not necessarily fulfilling the criterion for what is "civil society". A useful prospect is to look at 'what's really there' in terms of "social forces" that represent "powerful mechanisms for associative behavior" (Migdal 2001: 107). Social forces thus encompass both informal (patron-client networks) and formal organizations (religious communities, business groups etc.). The capabilities of social forces to exercise power comes from their relative ability to make advantage of the available resources, ability to generate symbols to which people develop attachments, as well as the relative efficiency of the organization (as in hierarchies) (ibid). One crucial dimension is however, that no social organization, whether formal or informal operate in a vacuum. Leaders (patrons, village chiefs, clerics, politicians, businessmen, landlords etc) will mobilize followers and exercise power when and if other social forces are doing the same. The focus should thus be on the "environments" of domination and opposition where the various "social forces" engage over material and symbolic issues, "vying for supremacy through struggles and accommodations, clashes and coalitions (Ibid; 107-108). Some people will use social forces to dominate others (through various means of coercion or symbolic efforts, or democratic means to promote policy), or to avoid domination by others.

2.6 Summing up the Theoretical Arguments

The above discussion had elaborated on the limitations of two dominant strands of democratization theories, the one emphasizing pact making between soft-and hard liners within the regime in order to initiate a democratic transition, and the other the neo-liberal agenda of transition which focuses on the need to decentralize the state and strengthen civil society. These positions are rooted in general perspective on democratization do not sufficiently explain the political realities. An implicit factor in both these approaches is that violence is seen a by-product of the authoritarian regime, and inherently connected to the predatory state, and therefore a phenomenon that will be dismantled with successful democratization. The chapter sought to frame contextual tools/arguments that can explain the research question: *why violence*? The theoretical foundation for the thesis is thus the juxtaposition certain explanatory

causal variables in the democratization paradigm with selected arguments in the discussion on violence. One position which seeks to criticize the democratic reforms that have been implemented in Indonesia, especially the neo-liberal agenda of the World Bank, are those rooted in political economy. Despite expansive discussions on the role and function of the Indonesian oligarchs, this position is limited in explaining the persistence of violence primarily because it evades a number of arguments such as the how elites actually relate to democratic instruments of power, what historical trajectories beyond the mere oligarchcic potential if the New Order, and the actual dynamics which actually shapes the mobilization and formation of violence groups.

Arguments rooted in historical interpretations tracing structural changes and continuities offer tools arguably better suited the contextual realities. First, an understanding of violence necessitates outlining the trajectory of local elites and local despotism, arguing that the formation of despotic rule can only be interpreted within such a framework. Secondly, the chapter juxtaposes the assumption that adhering to the democratic game means that democracy is working. The contextual tools argued better suited to explain violence, is analyzing the system of primitive capital accumulation and how dominant actors are shaped by the opportunities and constraints resulting from the introduction of democratic institutions. Thirdly, in the context of heightened competition and local despotic rule, decentralization may imply a decentralization of violence and corruption. Finally, one cannot understand violence in Indonesia without analyzing the social forces representing the means of violence. after all violence is perpetrated by groups in civil society relating to legitimate political parties and social organizations. This thesis seeks to illuminate the structures that make violence still a relevant problem in the Indonesian context, despite the success of democratic reform. The above discussion has sought to draw out variables that may help explain the ‘paramilitary puzzle’.

3. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The thesis aims at a qualitative approach to the study of violence in Indonesia. The choice of methodology depends on the specific demands of the problems and questions the thesis aims at answering.

The research question necessitates a case study approach in that it sets its focus on "why" and "how" certain political structures and dynamics are shaped, aiming at specific contextual understanding of a broader problem (see Yin 1994, Kvale 1997). Furthermore, the case study allows for a variety of techniques in collecting the material. The case study is concerned with the overall structure and dynamic of violence within one particular country. There are three particular considerations integral for the success of a single-case study design: the case has to be critical with regards to existing theoretical frameworks, the case is unique, or revealing a particular phenomenon. The starting point for this case study is the implementation of democratic reform against the backdrop of a broad and dominant discussion on violence in Indonesia. The more critical discussion on the dominant democratization paradigms directing democratic reform in developing countries is a general one, while the discussion on violence is a contextual one. The case of Indonesia is revealing a particular phenomenon that is intriguing for students of democracy.

3.1 Sources

There is an abundant literature on democratization, local politics, and violence in Indonesia. The information is based on a triangulation of sources between secondary sources and primary sources, which in turn enhances data's reliability (Yin 1994). The use of secondary material and theoretical discussion lays the foundation for both analytical discussions, and the forms the basis for interpreting the environment and power relations within which violence exists. In order to carry out this kind of study it is necessary with a well-founded and extensive empirical and theoretical foundation based a vast range of historical, cultural, and social research. It is this literature that lays the basis for choice of research questions and the direction and content of the field-work.

The thesis is based on interviews conducted in Indonesia during three months from August-October 2004 in Central Java (Yogyakarta, Solo and nearby rural areas), Jakarta, and Bogor. The aim of the field-work was to evaluate the specific role and implications of dominant violence groups, the way politicians and other dominant actors related to them, and how and when violence is a tool or part of broader structure, or both.

The most important and demanding task was to grasp the precarious dynamics between the various arenas for political activity, such as the separation of activity within formal or informal or political or non-political arenas, as well as various arenas for power related to domination by various types of actors. This could not be done without continuous reference to secondary material, as observing such phenomenon without an extensive in depth study of all actors involved was impossible to carry out. Naturally when discussing on a sensitive topic such as violence, elite implications, and patron-client systems, it is difficult to collect the information needed from the actors involved.

Due to limited resources, it was impossible to carry out an extensive broad-based study on the nature and implication of violence-groups in Indonesia. A compromise was made, between interviewing as many of the real actors as possible (politicians, militia members, satgas-members), and support or extend the information collected from these with information from experts among NGO-activists and academics. The information collected directly from the actors was limited and at times difficult to verify, and so cross-checking information with expert informants ensured reliability of the information collected. At other times, conversations with experts helped both selecting the relevant actors for interviews as well as formulate relevant and constructive questions. In this respect, the experts often functioned as key-informants providing necessary practical and analytical information. All interviews were semi-structured, with a concrete theme and a set of context-specified questions. All interviews were carried out in an informal conversational manner. The politicians preferred to have their interviews at their office at the DPRD or the party office, while most other interviews took place at the informants' homes, in a warung (street café), or on the street corner. Especially with the actors (varying from high-

ranking politicians to low-level members), the interviews required a level of sensitivity and acquired naivety to create a level of trust. This allowed the respondent to provide a fresh commentary about the topic (see Yin 1994: 90-91). This type of interview required a great deal of preparation and probing in advance about the personal history and position of the interview-object etc. Key informants were mostly able to provide this kind of information prior to the interview.

In addition, a lot of valuable information was gathered from short conversations with *satgas* or *preman* in the hallway while waiting for an agreed meeting with a politician, at the election rally, or in the street. Such conversations/interviews would typically last from 10 to 30 minutes, centering on who they were and what they did, and their thoughts about politics. In review these informal semi-focused interviews provided the most valuable information for understanding and grasping the the function, realities and conditionalities for militia-and security group members. In certain settings, ordinary people would also express their opinion about militias, or talk about their own experiences and/or problems with militias (in their neighborhood, regarding their business etc). With regard to this last group of informants, the mastering of the vernacular was essential in order to gather information on the whole picture. Being able to speak to people in an informal setting in their own language created a special level of trust. The role as an outsider allowed for probing into issues in a manner that would normally not have been accepted behavior for a girl.

During interviews and conversations with various actors a number of variables were touched upon that concerned the specific role and function of the militias in speaking. When discussing with members of various militias or political parties, the discussion rarely centered on the topic of violence as such, but rather on the organizational structures of their political grouping, and their relative attachment to certain political parties of other community figures. Although they might be less willing to share information about their own patrons, they would often share this information about other groups. The discussions have allowed for the development of an analysis of the type of cultural and social attributes that accompanied membership or attachment to a certain group, and the way in which they view themselves as actors

in the political and economic arena. Although it is possible to evaluate the actual links between formal and informal (political) groups, there are concepts attached to the overall research question that are not directly observable. For example are perceptions of power structures and behavior open to diverse interpretations. As Harriss-White notes "power cannot be measured…but has to be observed mainly through the vicarious processes of conversing about it" (1999; 27). In this respect conversations with experts on the outside amongst NGO activists and academics proved a valuable source to validate information, broaden the perspective from the local to the national, and from the personal to the general.

3.2 Reliability and Validity

First, the concept of reliability demonstrates that the data collection procedures can be repeated, and with the same results (ibid.). The goal of reliability is to minimize the biases and errors in a study. The case study design of combining field work with empirical and theoretical readings, another researcher would be able to arrive at the same conclusions.

Assessing validity of the date is concerned with assessing the relevance of the data and information used for contextual analysis. The overall quality of the research design depends on whether the information is trustworthy, credible, and confirmable (Yin 1994: 33). Establishing correct operational measures, ensuring construct validity, can be problematic in case studies as the selection of variables may at times be interpreted as subjective, rather than objective. To achieve construct validity one should assess the performance of indicators in relation to causal hypotheses. The use of multiple sources combined with field work enhances construct validity in this study. This leads on to the problem of determining external validity, which deals with the problem of knowing whether the findings and conclusions are generalizable beyond the immediate case study (Yin 1994: 37). In this study, the case is Indonesia., although field work was only carried out in Central and West Java, with a main focus in urban areas. The study is based on a theoretical discussion, and it is this theoretical discussion that produce arguments which structure the discussions and drawing of

conclusions. The arguments and conclusions can be generalizable only in light of the theoretical discussion.

Internal validity refers to whether one can establish a causal relationship between variables. Theoretically, this thesis leans on historical and structural arguments to which the aim is to highlight historical continuities determining certain structures and dynamics explaining violence today. The concern over internal validity is this problem of making inferences as the study deals with unobservable historical events. The historical interpretation is based on selective readings of historical narratives and analytical texts, making it possible to distinguish selective trends based on this broad reading. Internal validity is ensured in the thesis by continually underlining the empirical and structural basis for drawing conclusions.

The technique used to ensure tenability of the selected arguments is related "process tracing" in case study research as a method for identifying and testing causal mechanisms (Bennet 1997). As historical arguments form an essential part of the selection of variables and relevant arguments to answer the research question. This kind of process tracking seek to find correlating variables, testing out what variables are more important than others in explaining the phenomenon of violence in the democratic era in Indonesia.

3.3 Structuring the Thesis

The thesis is divided into three chapters each discussing relevant arguments and perspectives that explain the persistence of violence since 1998. The thesis is structured around the arguments presented and discussed in the previous chapter, first focusing on the particularities of the Indonesian context, discussing the changing trends and structures defining of the local elites and the role of predatory politics, and secondly the particular set of which violence has been perpetrated by civilian violence groups as defined by their relationship to the state. The next chapter treats this theme in relations to changing realities in Indonesia after the introduction of democratic reform and decentralization, while the final chapter looks at changing realities for violence groups in the post-Suharto period. The conclusion seeks to combine these three dimensions.

4. THE PARTICULARITIES OF INDONESIA: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Tracking political changes and dynamics demand a selective narrative of the historical context in order to trace any particular trajectory. As this chapter will illustrate there are important continuities and discontinuities in the ways violence groups have been organized, mobilized and assimilated into political power struggles that are highly relevant for understanding the dynamics of local elites- and violence groups today. The arguments rooted in political economy do not provide ample picture of the particularities of the Indonesian trajectory and the accompanying realities for explaining the dynamics and structures of a system in which violence is commonplace. In stead, a selective reading history, pulling out the essential evidence in order to trace certain continuities and discontinuities. A periodization of Indonesian history is useful to be able to highlight important turning points. The chapter highlights the metamorphosis of certain features of state and social power and the continuities of others that makes violence organizations endemic by answering the questions: *What are the historical roots of state and elite dynamics creating despotic structures, and secondly how has popular violence been crystallized at specific times in history*? First, the focus is directed at the colonial period, looking at local elites and the contriving forces defining this group and then discussing the colonial relationship and dealings with crime. Secondly, the most violent events in Indonesian post-colonial history, the revolution and the 1965-66 massacres is discussed. The relationship between the New Order local elites and the state is briefly elaborated on before moving on to analyzing the link between the regime's security policies, crime, and civilian mobilization into violence groups. An appreciation of these distinctive features is essential for observers in order to outline the structures that uphold violence as a part of the political process and game, also in relation to democracy.

4.1 The Colonial State Project

Much of the changes introduced to the archipelago that was to become Indonesia must be viewed in light of the trajectory shaped by the colonial impasse. The colonial

state went through shifting periods with regards to expansion depending much on the global trends. The Dutch colonial regime was one characterized by violence. From 1871 to 1910, thirty two colonial wars were waged on the archipelago which was to become Indonesia (Nordholt 2002: 36). The twentieth centry has in the colonial literature been referred to the period of the Ethical Policy during which “not exploitation, but moral and material elevation of the native is the predominant theme” (ibid.). Despite this ‘higher cause’ of colonial rule, besides the hot spots such as Ache where the Cutch fought several bloody wars, the people of the archipelago was subjected to systematic violence and abuse by their colonial rulers (Ibid: 36-46). The following few paragraphs will first highlight the role and nature of local elites under colonial rule, to then move on to look how colonial rulers dealt with crime.

4.1.1 Local Elites

The first and most obvious particularity that deserves attention is the development and integration of elites into the modern Indonesian state. The peculiar patterns of segregation and incorporation of local elites into the state in which the intricate systems of patron-client relations were incorporated into the modern (modernizing) state date back to the Dutch colonial era. While, in pre-colonial society, in the absence of a strong state prior to the expansion of the colonial bureaucracy, the underlying pattern in all kinds of social organization was based on localized patron-client bonds. The most common way to become attached to a patron was by building up dept, creating a mutual dependency relation between the ruler and the ruled, providing security for both patron and client (van Klinken 2004: 83-84, Reid 1988: 20-28).

The system of indirect rule that came to define the way Dutch colonial powers ruled the archipelago after the demise of the Dutch East India Company institutionalized the patrimonialism as the system of rule and so a system of natural inequality was institutionalized at all levels. The colonial powers manifested their superiority through their moral codes for behavior and the building of institutions for which to govern the indigenous peoples. The hierarchical differences between people were given a legitimizing moral basis in terms of the institutionalizing and

manifestation of racial segregation between colonizers and colonized on the one hand, and the linking of these differences to the indigenous social hierarchies on the other (van Klinken 2004: 84). The type of state that evolved was thus both shaped by indigenous social forces at the same time as colonial perceptions of the indigenous society was appropriated by the local aristocratic elites (ibid. 2004: 85).

The colonial expansion of the modern bureaucracy necessarily enhanced the role of the state as a source of power and income. The nobles, belonging to the social segment known as *priyayi* in Java, functioned as the state representative in the regions aspiring to the highest administrative position of the *bupati*. The expansion of the bureaucratic state, particularly after the introduction of the Ethical Policy in 1901, meant that the Javanese *priyayis* took on administrative positions in other places in the archipelago, making state resources an increasingly valuable asset for indigenous rulers (ibid). On that note, the opportunities for maintaining the system of patrimonialism between indigenous rulers and their clients was reinforced by the delimitation of administrative boundaries tracing considerable continuity with the late 19th century district boundaries. Outside Java, these smallest units that traced those of the indigenous rulers, were the ones to became the official administrative unit in the colonial bureaucracy.

Through posts in the bureaucracy, the local elites could manifest their position and rule through their patron-client networks. In the colonial realities of delineated indigenousness, definitions of boundaries, and the labeling of one's own identity meant that ethnic identities were reinvented using pre-colonial and European bureaucratic material with indigenous rulers as the key link. As one observer points out points out: "the considerable enthusiasm with which local elites in the hundreds of small second level regional governments (*kabupaten*) have reacted to the Regional Autonomy Laws of 1999 demonstrates that these units retain mobilizational potential for them often of an ethnic kind" (van Klinken 2004: 88).

An important point concerning the nature of the state is that the patrimonial networks these local elites exercised under colonial rule is not a necessary alternative to a weak state when no other alternative existed, but a preferred model that since colonial rule has reinforced despotic rule by local elites in the regions. In the

provinces, these patronage networks still provide the main access route to state resources. The local aristocracies around the archipelago, which in essence were discouraged from taking part in any kind of commercial activities, were in stead encouraged to cultivate the cultural trappings of traditional rule. In order to transform the local aristocrats into proper civil servants in the colonial bureaucracy, the Dutch began to promote modern secular education. Interestingly prominence of the *priyayi* was also reflected in their leadership of the proto-nationalist movements in the early decades of the 20th century. Their dominance expanded to leadership of some local versions of the revolution in the late 1940s, and the Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI) in the 1950s and the 1960s.

4.1.2 Policing the Colonial State: The Genealogy of the Criminal

The colonial state project was one of introducing the rule of law, and connected to this rationalizing crime and punishment. Almost universally in the colonial world, any practical distinction between the task of conducting public affairs and the institutional and unbridled use of violence and coercion was virtually non-existent. The institutions for carrying out violence, and the means of punishments were introduced as a response to dissidence, rebellions, or simply to seize power. As long as crime concerned only the community, and not colonial interests or the interests of the state, putting down crime and criminality remained the responsibility of the community. In 1872 a colonial tobacco planter Amand contradicted the colonial picture of the Javanese peasant community as a “palladium of peace” by pointing out that cattle theft, extortion, opium smuggling, violence, and intimidation occurred daily (Nordholt 2002: 39). The man responsible for such violence was the *jago*. In the village, the *jago* was a man who had achieved high status by both his charismatic nature and his ways of intimidating and controlling the people around him. In pre-colonial society, the gang leader was often recognized as a local headman rather than being suppressed. The *jago* thus refers to a category of local strongmen to whom violence was a means to achieve high status and gain access to resources. As Amand wrote in his report: “no headman considers his village complete and in good order if it does not have at least one thief, often several, who are under the command of the

oldest and cleverest thief, who is called *jago*" (ibid). This figure of the *jago* draws the staple for the heroic status for the lawbreaker in the village whose figure developed into a sort of popular figurehead in opposition to colonial rule. The perpetrators of crime in the archipelago have been characterized as the symbol of societal opposition to injustices perpetrated by the predatory agents of the colonial state. The more contemporary Indonesian criminal type, *preman* is of the same type as the criminal jago of the colonial era, but with opportunity, the *preman* can also become a political leader. A preman is not an ordinary thief, but a person who exhorts an aura of independence concerned with cultivating the space of his own extortive activities. The Petrus affair of the 1980s when criminals were ganged up and killed by underground army officers as part of the regime's crack down on crime at the same time as in some ways getting control over unwanted elements of crime.

A standardized police force was not to be established until the turn of the twentieth century. Until then the villages and native urban quarters were policed by volunteer neighborhood watches, known as *ronda* who "routinely treated suspected thieves, burglars, and other undesirables with vigilante violence" (Anderson 2001: 10). In the plantation areas, it was most common for the administrators to go into alliance with the local criminal, assorted groups of plantation guards, and the personal bullies of the administrators. In pre-colonial Southeast Asia people's livelihoods were continuously threatened by both visible and invisible dangers (Nordholt 2002: 35).

4.2 Civilian Mobilization; From Revolution to Massacre

The following few paragraphs merit attention to the specific circumstance and nature of two violent periods in Indonesian history: the revolutionary battle for independence in the 1940s, and the massacres of communists in 1965-66. With the advantage of hindsight to other discussants on the themes, the reading of the material is done with reference to the current-day dynamics of violence-groups and political mobilization.

Since de Tocqueville, scholars have argued that the possibilities for collective action within the sphere of civil society are influenced more or less decisively by the

particular types of dominant regimes (see Skocpol and Goodwin 1989). These types of arguments typically focus on the implementation in a historical perspective of political institutions that serve to structure the overall parameters of everyday politics, as well as the short-term significance of internal regime tensions in cracking the armor of the state apparatus during moments of uncertainty. The parameters for everyday politics by the mid-1940s was defined very much along the lines of vague political associations mobilized along the lines of the Japanese military units standing up against a weakened colonial power returning after years of war.

The rapid changes of the previous decades had created deep social tensions in the colony, but had not shaken colonial stability. Under the Japanese occupation from 1941-45, thousands of youths were organized into political, military and paramilitary movements, anticipating the day when the enemy would bring the war directly into the archipelago. These formed the basis for the very same movements that ran the Revolution from their autonomous positions. The most important for these auxiliary movements, The Fatherland Defense Force, *Peta*, would from 1945 onwards until the late 1970s, provide the bulk of officers for the army of the revolutionary Republic of Indonesia and the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI). The Japanese crystallized a powerful self-consciousness among these mobilized youths (Anderson 1972: 2), providing the much needed space for opposition. While pre-war nationalism was limited to the politically minded youth in the 1930s, the Japanese created the inclusive heightened mobilization force so integral to the character of the revolution. As one rated observer of the events has said: “Partly by accident and partly by intent, the Japanese accelerated a profound transformation of values that had begun in the late Dutch colonial time” (Anderson 2001:11).

There is no doubt that what has come to be known as the Indonesian revolution (*revolusi*) was a legitimate battle for independence against an occupying force after the demise of the Japanese Imperial Army in 1945 and the return of the Allied forces. The most striking feature of the revolution period was the level of heightened mobilization around primarily the nationalist cause, but wrapped up in religious, cultural, and military-style attires. Gangs of revolutionary youngsters competed for the heads of aristocrats while they attacked and killed on seemingly

random basis suspected marketers, traitors, or spies. Well-known gangsters became revolutionaries, prostitutes formed women's militias, and boys from *pesantren*-schools became *mujahedin* and formed in militias under leadership of politically active Muslim teachers. Children and teen-agers left the school benches to join associations like the *Indonesian Socialist Youth*, *Wild Tigers*, the *Dare-To-Die League*, *the Black Dragons* and so on (Anderson 2001: 13). The members were a mix of peasant kids and petty criminals. The battle for independence was very much a product of combining forces of anti-colonialism, mass organization and criminality. Apart from the urban young nationalists, the revolution was run from its autonomous positions by local leaders, often gangsters or *preman* who expanded their domain through their organizational networks. They seized arsenals of Japanese weapons or their competitors, or simply armed themselves with what was available; daggers, knifes and machetes from the village (Anderson 2001: 11-13). One could not differentiate between youth groups, militias, and the army. In many instances, they were one and the same thing. The roles became mixed up, as the gangster became a heroic fighter, and the child a warrior. With the alteration of state authority, the power of criminal figures rose and fell (Cribb 1991: 2). It was at this crucial juncture in history that was the founding years of the Indonesian state that these elements became aligned with an entirely new 'nation' - 'Indonesia'.

The prestige of this sustained explosion of patriotic popular violence is what still echoes into Indonesia's present. At that time as much as today, a popular demand for independence and democracy was mixed and ingrained with the various social forces at play, contradicting the themes of categorization and specific location for violence.

The period of democratic experiments that followed the bloody years of the revolution, structured many of the dominant themes and trends for ideological clustering and political conflict that ring familiar in the post-1998 era. That said, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyze the aborted attempts at democratization of the 1950s apart from a few crucial points. Viewed from a comparative regional perspective the Indonesian Left mobilized quite early and very strongly. In the context of the immediate post-revolution parliamentary democracy the Partai

Komunis Indonesia (PKI) grew especially powerful and its affiliated organizations numbered some 27 million members in the late 1950s (Hedman 2001: 94). The period was characterized by the institutionalization of political parties and the strengthening of an Indonesian national army and navy.

While the heroism of *revolusi* has selectively incorporated into the Indonesian collective memory, the 1965 massacres have been hidden and covered up as part of the New Order propaganda machinery. Intervention in current day Indonesian discourse is however, the opening up of the sealed off memories of the 1965-66 killings (in some places it lasted until 1967-69) as part of the increased focus on human rights abuses during the New Order. In nuanced ways the recurring violence in Indonesia has prompted many to show the events of 1965-66 as part of a national, regional, and transnational history of a longer colonial and postcolonial duree (see Vickars 1998, Zarbuchen 2002, Törnquist 2003, Stoler 2002, Cribb 2002), rather than only as the beginning of the type of regime that was to come.

The bloody defeat of the Indonesian Left, entailed remarkably massive violence and very sudden repression, which had a profound and lasting impact on Indonesian society (see Robinson 1995, Törnquist 2000). Very little is still known about the massacres, particularly with regard to the local dynamics. The internment, torture and mass killings of more between half – one million alleged members of what was, prior to 1965 a legal part of Indonesia's political landscape, the PKI and its affiliated unions and organizations, laid out the foundations on which the New Order regime was built. On the line of variations, anti PKI mobilization that took place in the urban areas prominently involved right-wing student groups affiliated with Muslim, Christian, and secular organizations (Hedman 2001:944,). In rural areas it was mostly traditional Muslim landowners or other types of class related groups that mobilized against the alleged supporters of the PKI.

The massacres turned on the mobilization of anti-PKI groups in society rather than on any discernible military counterinsurgency strategy, although the army took part in much of the killing as well. While large sectors of the armed forces were either unwilling or unable to uphold the state's monopoly on violence, separate and highly dispersed militias, thugs and militants carried out the killings from their local

positions. Nothing was perhaps more striking than the role played by these private youth groups, mostly affiliated with other political parties or religious organizations. These local groups were in no way accidental or a "spur of the moment" (Törnquist 2003: 7) as they have been, wrongfully so, characterized by critics inside the New Order regime, nor were they new inventions of the dispersed locally organized military units who thought it an efficient way to carry out mass killings of leftists (ibid.). The license to kill was handed out locally, and so the violence itself was both decentralized and privatized in a manner much relevant for the current debates on decentralization reform in Indonesia. In a manner of speaking the killings were fired up under and subcontracted to the actually existing civil society organizations at the time. By mobilizing through the various social organizations, in particular religious ones, which had become much more institutionalized and politically stable by the 1960s than during the revolution represented a broadening of the channels through which certain sections of the elite could draw their powers. The massacres represented the need of certain social forces controlled and mobilized by these elites, to weaken a large group in society that seemed to be building extensive mobilizational strength.

The effects of the massacres were devastating. In the same manner as during the revolution the period was characterized by extreme suspicion and fear. In Surabaya clogged canals had to be cleared for dead bodies, and by the end of the atrocities certain occupational groups such as teachers had been reduced drastically (Törnquist 2003: 5). As opposed to other types of genocides, the atrocities were not based on extremist mass oriented ideologies like fascism or Stalinism, nor were they the result of the actions of a strong and dominant state ridding itself of "unwanted elements". On a comparative note, the 1994 Rwandan genocide was carried out in a similar fashion by various types of lightly armed militias. It was, however, not the result of a weak and fragile state unable to control its people, as some analysts have proposed, but rather the result of a strong and far-reaching state able to organize and include broad sectors of society in the actual carrying out of the killings (Allen 1999, Mamdani 1996).

The attention for Indonesia should be put on how the massacres so markedly changed the forms of social organization within one generation (van Langenberg 1990: 62, Vickers 2002: 783). Not only did the massacres eliminate any form of radical political potential, they also promoted a certain kind of organizational landscape that is still dominant today. One need only look at the historical lineages of the largest Muslim association in Indonesia, the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) whose affiliated youth group, Banser was directly involved in the atrocities.[4] In a historical perspective until this point in time, violence had always been decentralized and privatized whether it was violence as a "necessary byproduct" of a just revolution or unlawful massacres of leftists who had done nothing wrong or broken any particular rules. The general state repressive measures and government attraction policies developed and deployed to defeat the organized Left, more easily discerned in the existing literature further contributed to the shaping of the current historical situation faced by would-be contenders for the ears and minds of civil –or not so civil- society.

The above pages have traced the continuities of violence from two very different periods in Indonesian history. The 65-66 massacres represented the institutionalization of militias and paramilitary groups as part of the state's control over the means of violence. Whereas the militias that fought the revolution had been dispersed and fragmented to a great variety of locally based groups, the massacres of leftists in 1965-66 was carried out by similar militias and paramilitary groups, locally organized, but in a context in which the army could command and control, and the new criminal boss moved towards the heart of the state.

4.3 The New Order State

The key to understanding political violence in the New Order is to see it as an integral part of New Order politics- and not as an unfortunate by-product. Indonesian politics and in particular elections served to distance the people from politics and as one long-time observer has said: "the New Order political processes were designed to

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[4] Basner is the sub-group to Ansor, the youth group directly under NU auspices. Banser is still very much active, in essence performing as the paramilitary wing of NU (Interview Rizal Panggabean, UGM, (2004).

make sure people do not do all the things they might otherwise do in a participatory democracy" (Schwartz, 1994: 272). The culture of violence- often referred to as *kebudayaan kekerasan* has been a useful distraction from meaningful participation.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the reasons for the demise of the New Order regime, but a few points deserve attention before the discussion moves on to discussing the more relevant variables of elite formation and social organization. Beyond the aborted experiment with parliamentarian democracy under Sukarno in the 1950s the nature of authoritarian rule that followed also reflected marked counter-revolutionary origins, especially after the 1965 military coup that propelled Suharto into the presidency. The authoritarian regime under Suharto remained a hybrid of sorts combining the strongly personalistic and patrimonial tendencies with an institutionalized role in government for the armed forces (ABRI) and an elaborate set of pseudo-parliamentary bodies based on regular, albeit highly restricted elections. The regime balanced both direct violence and the threat of violent repression with more or less selective patronage rewards (Robison and Hadiz 2004). These rewards constituted civilian or military positions, business access, or control over natural resources in combination with political posts through the party machinery of Golkar. The regime also sought to institutionalize its claims to 'democratic' legitimacy by holding regular mass rallies and people's celebrations in connection to the rituals of elections (see Pemberton 1994, Schwartz 1994). The carrying out of elections also served to manifest Suharto's presidential authority vis-à-vis the military. The legitimacy question remained a central concern for the Suharto and his companions. After all the Indonesian military has never been able to rule in the same strict manner as the military in for example Latin America. And so it was the constant need to legitimize the New Order regime that upheld the dual function of military and civilian control. One of the most central tensions within the New Order regime was thus the particular mix of institutional power bases and the personal networks. The hybrid nature of Suharto's New Order prefigured internal regime tensions along two key fault lines in the years leading up to its demise in 1998. First, the entrenchment of the armed forces officers in provincial administration, parliamentary bodies, and various state enterprises and business ventures inevitably gave rise to growing tensions

between the military as an institution and the president and his family (Hedman 2001: 942-943, Current data on the Indonesian military). Second, there was an increasing fragmentation from within the regime with several fractions taking a firmer stand. This does not mean that there were two opposing sides, one pro-Suharto and one supporting the demonstrators in the street. With this in mind the following few paragraphs move on to discussing the dynamics of elite rule during the New order, arguing that these processes have served to strengthen, systemize, and despotism amongst local rulers and that these patterns define state-elite relations in very distinct patterns today.

4.3.1 New Order Local Elites

To keep up the pretence and image of legitimacy, pseudo-parliaments were regularly elected every five years also at the local level. Although their effective powers and prerogatives were limited, the system served to strengthen local elites who maintained their well established hold over the lower echelons of the civilian administration in return for support from support for pribumi, the indigenous Indonesian business class. The flow of developmental funds from the central government during the oil boom period enabled them to run a lucrative business as owners of plantations and salt-water fishponds, cement factories, private banks, construction companies, hotels and tourist resorts (Sidel 2004). They were faithful to and highly dependent on, the central government, and became the main power brokers and controllers in the areas they so skillfully governed. In other words local officials under Suharto rule, co-edited their roles as administrators and businessmen, and thus represented the continuation of the long established tradition in which aristocratic families owned land and conducted large scale trade and business, in an economic climate within which these traditionally based elites held the dual role as government officials and business-men.

Unlike other Southeast Asian countries, the constellations of class in Indonesia have featured a domestic bourgeoisie dominated by a relatively small minority of stigmatized and largely segregated Chinese capitalists (McVey 1992).The Chinese who had dominated the domestic distribution and credit networks since colonial times

and had increasingly developed commercial ties within a larger Chinese diaspora, was one of the main beneficiaries of the economic regime of the New Order. This group of Chinese capitalists have achieved a sort of 'pariah' status in Indonesian political and economic realm, which in combination with official and unofficial anti-Chinese discrimination have served to create a number two enemy to the state, a much easier target for military and political personnel when political opposition needed channelling (Sidel 2004, Hedman 2001). The position of the Chinese at the local level were of the same calibre, being able to do business, highly ingrained into the economic policies of the regime and thus dependent on its protection, but still in a position where they were not represented in the bureaucracy.

One of the interesting and enduring particularities of the Indonesian context is the endurance of local despots. By the 1990s the local power brokers and civilian administrators became increasingly subordinated to military commanders. Local military commanders rotating within the archipelago retired in the regions and established mafia-like networks through marriage-alliances and business-partnerships with local elites. These networks existed as much based on coercion as on financial domination. In short, one can speak of "the formation of local mafias which often had their eye on such civilian positions as *bupati*, provincial secretary, or even *gubernur*" (Sidel 2004). By the mid-1990s, closing up on the fall of Suharto, the roles were so intertwined that one could not see a clear distinction between army officials, local administrators, and business owners of the type discussed above. They associated with social-political forces, often with criminals and gangsters, from the Suharto youth movement *Pancasila Muda* similar to those youth movements so dominant today which will be discussed in the final chapter of this study. These forces played a major role in suppressing social and political protests and strikebreaking as well as providing election related services to the Suharto regime. State institutions lacked the independency needed to generate funds of its own and so a substantial amount of the state income was generated by informal means. The Indonesian armed forces receive only 30 percent of their funds from the state, leaving the remaining 70 percent to be raised by independent means (Kingsbury 2004). Since the late 1980s, particularly in the provinces, military officials worked in tandem with criminal rackets and mafia,

most of the time providing room and business for these forces. Military commanders thus was (and still is) the key owners of a range of illegal business such as smuggling, resource extraction (logging in natural parks and mining), gambling, piracy, and robbery (ibid.). The greyer sources of financial support came from the running of security services and protection rackets for big companies and on smaller scales for individual shop owners and businessmen. In conclusion the above few paragraphs have briefly highlighted the particularity of local elite rule and dynamics during the New Order, with special emphasis on the way local despotic rule evolved as response to a strong state with small funds.

4.3.2 New Order Security and Crime

Most of the current-day civilian militias and paramilitary groups amidst the crowd of political parties and social organizations are rooted in the New Order period. Their self-enunciating and legitimized role as security proponents stem from the system of which the New Order state conformed traditional security measures and incorporated them into the state as part of officially sanctioned security apparatus. After the 1965 massacres, security became one of the central ideological programs for the New Order regime. The programs developed for policing and surveying the community pin point the particular way the regime dealt with criminals, crime, and security. Traditionally crucial decision regarding the community such taxes and property were made at regular meetings between village chiefs and community leaders at gathering points in the village, in Bali these are called *banjar,* while in Java they are called *hansip*. In The New Order government recognized the social importance of these traditional decision-making units, and so made it a vehicle for disseminating ideology and various development programs, at the same time as introducing laws to limit community involvement in village-decision making processes following up on colonial policies of officially separating between *adat* (traditional) and *dinas* (official) law (ICG 2003). In the same way as the Dutch had co-opted sasak noble houses in Lombok to serve as state representatives, Golkar was eager to co-opt local nobles, clerics and other community leaders into their mold. In Lombok by the 1971 election, many left their traditional alliances in Masyumi and Nadhlatul Ulama, to

side with Golkar, reportedly as a sign of gratitude to Suharto for his role in destroying the PKI[5]. The central government successfully decreased the community's potential for independent decision making (ibid.). As one observer has pointed out, the *banjar* in Bali became institutions for surveillance and supervision of residents, particularly those with communist backgrounds (Robinson1995: 274). In the 1980s the regime introduced "security" and "fighting crime" as a regime policy, and did through various measures attempt to tighten its hold on society.

The introduction of *siskamling*, most commonly translated as local policing measures, were introduced at village levels, mainly as an initiative to impose overt state control over local security practices by taking them out of the hands of organized private gangs (Barker 2001: 24). By combining traditional village measures with modern military measures, the regime successfully brought the military down to village levels and into the traditional community structure. The *siskamling* system worked by dividing local security guards into three types: *satpam* (satuan pengamanan), *Kamra* or *Hansip* (Keamanan rakyat) and *ronda.* The guards recruited by the local hamlet were coordinated by the sub-district military command (KORAMIL). Villages in Indonesia still feature the *siskamling* decorated with the pancasila ideological markers. The wooden hub (kentongan) used to notify the community has been used by neighborhood night-watches (ronda) in Java's towns and villages for centuries as a device to keep thieves away, to call for territorial defense, and to keep people alert to ward off threats to the community (Barker 2001: 20). The use of the *siskamling* system fit well with the strategies of the regime, and thus legitimized violence by civilians as a part of the official state security apparatus. It is this system of state-funded and backed vigilantism at the local level that formed the basis for mobilizing civilian violence groups such within the framework of the state. Importantly many of those who have become members of party affiliated

[5] By the 1971 election, many left their traditional alliances in Masyumi and Nadhlatul Ulama, to side with Golkar, reportedly as a sign of gratitude to Suharto for his role in destroying the PKI. It is worth noting that Lombok, as an island dominated by colonial nobles and corrupt merchants, several Muslim reformists joined the Lombok branch of the PKI after the murder of their leader Saleh Sungkar in 1952. as late as 1974, the military vandalized several sacred sites in efforts to dissuade Muslims from performing non-Islamic rituals. In Tanjung soldiers from Tanjung military command forced

militias such as those that will be discussed in the final chapter of this thesis, were initially employed by the local *hansip* through the *siskamling* system. "It was mostly *preman* who were engaged in *hansip*, getting paid by the job, which was as much about creating insecurity as creating security."[6] To the regime controlling crime, was as much about commanding criminals and making use of them, as about maintaining law and order. Thus irregular forces were trained by the state security apparatus to regularly apply terror and violence throughout the New Order years to repress opposition and deal with social problems (see Collins 2002).The *siskamling* system was thereby not only about subcontracting security, but about providing a legal framework from which state actors, such as the police or the army could draw mobilziational potential for covert operations. The New Order consciously created a system in which controlling the criminal ensured state actors access to illegal and extralegal rents. The phenomenon of subcontracting violence to 'unofficial' units of the state apparatus was the way the New Order suppressed and incorporated people into their mold. It was not only during electiosn or to suppress strikes and demonstrations civilian militias were used, paramilitary units were used in Kalimantan during the confrontation with Malaysia in the 1960s, and were recruited and trained by the army to combat separatist movements in East Timor and Aceh in the 1990s. The groups have developed practices that include the public display of dismembered corpses, beheadings, rape, and threats against the families of victims of such violence (Robinson 2002: 226-227).

In addition, during the 1990s violent clashes involving security forces youth groups such as the state sponsored *Pemuda Pancasila*, and youth groups tied to opposition parties were common all over Indonesia. Especially leaders of paramilitary youth organizations played the role of political enforcers under Suharto, operating in what one observer has called "society's dark underbelly" (Hadiz 2003: 127). They were frequently able to move mack and froth between respectable society

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villagers onto the village soccer field and made them profess their adherence to the prophet and the Koran, or they be held as kafirs, non-believers , which in effect meant communists. (ICG 2003).

[6] Interview Ari Dwipayana, UGM (2004) September.

and their underworld. In the post-Suharto, as will be discussed later, these actors have found new opportunities to enhance their wealth and political power.

In the last days of the New Order, when student demonstrations threatened to bring down Suharto in the aftermath of the shootings at Trisakti University on May 13, 1998, there is established a direct link between the riots and certain miltairy commanders. That said, despite this direct involvement, the uprising drew from a pool of rioters from various political streams and gangs ready to turn to the streets which are rooted in narrow trajectory of mobilization and nurturing of civilian violence groups. In as much as the modes of popular mobilization in 1998 demonstrated a great deal of variation in orientation and mobilization patterns, they more strikingly echoed many of the past legacies of armed revolution, mass participation in and for 'democracy', and anti-PKI pogroms of period since independence. It is against this backdrop of mobilization that Indonesia followed a distinct trajectory during the New Order.

4.4 Summing up Context

The chapter set out to answer a set of questions rooted in an assumption that variables rooted in historical interpretation are essential in explaining violence in Indonesia. *What are the historical roots of state and elite dynamics creating despotic structures, and secondly how has popular violence been crystallized at specific times in history*? The historical dimension is an integral part of the structural explanations for the persistence of collective violence in Indonesia in the reform era. The central point and in this chapter has been to highlight specific constellations that are relevant for the current structures of elite dynamics and the use and subcontracting of violence to civilian perpetrators. Local elites has been viewed in relation to the state in light of the colonial mobilization of indigenous rules into their bureaucracies. The evolving of state-elite relations formed basis of the way social forces have been mobilized through 'civilian militias' as part of a broader systematic scheme.

As has been illustrated the situations for mobilization of civilian forces for violence were different in the 1940s and the 1960s, mainly as a result of changing continuities of elite-state relations. The 65-66 massacres represented the

institutionalization of militias and paramilitary groups as part of the state's control over the means of violence. Whereas the militias that fought the revolution had been dispersed and fragmented to a great variety of locally based groups, the massacres of leftists in 1965-66 was carried out by similar militias and paramilitary groups, locally organized, but in a context in which the army could command and control, and the new criminal boss moved towards the heart of the state.

Predatory politics at the local level was reinforced by the strength of the business sector and accumulation of capital by state actors through illegal means. The dependency on funds flowing from the center to the local level continuously strengthened the financial potential for local elites. The New Order regime continually struggled between incorporating 'criminal' element and shutting them out, faltering a symbiosis between state and crime of which the they were highly dependent. This continual inter-dependency is what defines the parameters for political mobilization today, as will be discussed in depth in the next chapters.

The next chapter will turn to dynamics of democratization in Indonesia and look at the way dominant actors constellate in the new democratic framework, looking at constraints and opportunities of these constellations.

5. DOMINANT ACTORS: ADAPTING TO OR STRANGLING DEMOCRACY?

"…this society was bound to witness political games being played out by criminals, and criminal ventures carried out by politicians" (Pramoedya Ananta Toer, The Glass House 1992).

The title to this chapter draws attention to the recurring problem in the discussion on democratization in the developing world; are the elites –those dominant actors- behaving, or are predators strangling the feeble seedlings that have taken root since 1998? The year 2004 was the year for the first local elections and direct presidential elections in Indonesia as well as parallel elections for parliament. More than 16 000 seats in the legislatures at the national, provincial, and district levels were filled. These were hailed by international observers as demonstrative successes and evidence that Indonesia was indeed on its way towards democracy (EUEOM 2004). The previous theoretical discussion highlighted the need to dig deeper into the changes in elite dynamics in relation to democracy to be able to say something about the current realities of violence. The evolving of state-elite relations were traced and formed basis of the way social forces have been mobilized through 'civilian militias' as part of a broader systematic scheme. As has been illustrated the situations for mobilization of civilian forces for violence were different in the 1940s and the 1960s, mainly as a result of changing continuities of elite-state relations. This chapter focus attention to the current-day dominant actors whose quest for power necessitates a concurrent symbiosis with a political system that in essence is meant to defer authoritarianism.

As previously highlighted, arguments rooted in political economy tend to observe the mere continuation of a predatory kind of politics, which indeed is evident in both the commanding of militias and corruption, and that to uphold their powers they continuously work to undermine and avoid the democratic instruments that have been implemented. Thus, authors inspired by the likes of Robison and Hadiz (2004) tend to frame the discussion on democracy in the perception that the democratic

deficit stem from a mere bypassing of democratic instruments by predators rooted in the old system. The next few pages offer an account of elites and their ways of dealing with democracy and politics which in essence is at odds with such arguments, and is in stead concerned with looking at what it is that upholds the potential for mobilization into violence groups by observing elite behavior in the new system of governing. Are there no changes from the previous periods? Primarily this chapter is devoted to a discussion on the implications of democratic institutions on they way dominant actors mobilize, organize and form alliances in order to achieve or maintain their positions arguing that the introduction of democratic instruments has altered its ways, making predatory politics the dominant part of the actually existing democracy. After all, formal political institutions must in some ways shape the way elites achieve, maintain, and express their powers. Naked force has an important role too in the new political format. In addition, the final part of the chapter angles the thesis over to society, by discussing the ways predatory actors –the big men of Indonesian society, relate to their clients and surroundings emphasizing the importance of building a good image in order to preserve some sort of legitimacy.

5.1 Democratic Institutions

How do local elites organize and relate to the democratic institutions, and in light of the Indonesian historical trajectory, does this say something about how elites make use of and relate to violence groups? As previously highlighted the Demos survey shows, the majority of dominant actors actually battle for power via democratic institutions. The majority of the dominant actors pin pointed by the Demos experts claim that the vast majority of dominant actors 'use' or at least 'use and abuse' the purportedly democratic institutions (Demos 2005: 34). In addition, it is important for various stake holders and elites to have access to the judiciary, legislative and executive organs of the state through democratic means. With successful elections dominant actors do to a large extent adapt to the new political realities of democracy. the problem is, of course that those of the elite who have adapted to the new political paradigm, are still doing it for self aggrandizement. This is particularly true for the decentralized administrations at the local level. Although NGO activists and critics in

Indonesia said, rightfully so that "it is not a real democracy" they admitted to dominant actors in some way or another relate to democratic institutions[7].

5.1.1 Local Despotism?

While The New Order's despotism originated from the center, the interesting phenomenon here is whether the changes since 1998 have enhanced despotism at the local level. Pointing the arrows back to the discussion in the previous chapter on the genealogy of local elites, power vested in politicians at the local level has essentially been shaped within patrimonial hierarchies. Under the authoritarian system, the patronage extended from the center, via the bureaucracy and the army to the local level.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to determine the relative success of decentralization and the way it has been implemented apart from the impact it has had on the formation of new alliances between elites. That said, a few critical points that relate to the changing nature of elite rule in the light of the decentralization reforms need to be highlighted. The most important effects of decentralization reforms in Indonesia have been the 'blossoming' (*pemakaran*) of new provinces and districts, and the respective elected positions. After 1999 the number of provinces has been increased from 27 to 32 (Nordholt 2004: 38), and the number of districts has increased from roughly 340 to more than 450 (World Bank 2004), while the process is still in the moving. With *pemakaran* regents and people in other regions are pushing for increased autonomy and the right to self assertion through their own local governments. In countries with long histories of secessionist movements resolution to violent conflict has been implementing institutional measures to deal with the problem such as the devolution of authority in Spain and the UK (Linz and Stepan 1996: 99). The special autonomy laws in Indonesia were for one meant to defer secessionist demands in places such as West Papua and Aceh. Another reason for why Habibie accelerated the decentralization process, was not only pressure from the international community and secessionist movements, but to uphold his own

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[7] A view expressed by all NGO activists in interviews.

monopoly and control over state enterprise in the regions in face of final collapse. Golkar as an institution then supported regional autonomy as a means to maintain their power bases in the outer islands (Nordholt 2003: 12). Importantly, districts and municipalities are now autonomous units at the same time as there is no longer a hierarchical relationship between province and district (IRE 2002).

The scramble for defining territory and new district borders is reflective of the political ambitions of local elites. In Cirebon and Madura, the defining of borders has been continuously delayed due to infightings and disagreement between fractions of elites competing for political positions and control over flows of funds from the center, which will be further discussed below. After all, it is a rather logical choice for local elites to turn against state-centrism, in the face of opportunities to enhance their own powers.

In light of similar efforts in other regions, including countries in Africa where decentralization and regionalization reforms have been implemented, there have been fears that within a framework of patron-client politics, decentralization will only serve to strengthen despotic forms of local rule (Bayart et.al. 1999, Allen 1999, Mamdani 1996). The control of and use of coercive methods to achieve and/or maintain the control over resources is thereby integral for the local ruler. Furthermore, the issue of low-intensity conflicts are typical in the context of decentralized political authority with examples especially from West-and Central Africa (see Allen 1999).

There is certainly such fears among many observers and 'good actors' in the Indonesian setting (van Klinken 2004, Sidel 2004, Nordholt 2002).[8] Amongst the progressive urban civil society activists, there is continuous discussion whether the decentralization reforms are bringing about democracy at the local level.[9] The fears of scholars have been that the various elites constellations at the local level would essentially monopolize power by ways of combining legal and illegal methods (ibid.).

[8] This view was also repeatedly expressed by 'experts' in interviews (Storo Eko IRE, Rizal UGM, Ari Dwipayana UGM)
[9] Expert interviews: Hilmar Farid (Sep.2004), Asmara Nababan (Sep. 2004), Rizal Panggabean (sep.2004).

In other words, it is not evident that the weakening of the central state will lead to more local democracy (see Nordholt 2004, Sidel 2004, van Klinken 2002, Demos 2004). Under the conditions of entrenched patrimonialism like that ingrained in the provincial setting, decentralization can be accompanied by a system of local despotism in which violence becomes is an essential tool for the local despot in competition over election positions and state enterprise. The range of interests now contesting for power at the local level are much more varied than they were under Suharto. They include ambitious political entrepreneurs, aspiring business groups, state bureaucrats, as well as a wide range of political gangsters, thugs, and civilian militias (Hadiz 2003: 124). This has led many have assume that with the nature of local rule, function of money politics, and continuation of patron-client relations, decentralization would lead to the evolving of a kind of 'local bossism' in Indonesia.

The trajectories of politics in both Thailand and the Philippines have displayed system of local bosses who rule through mafia networks, employ violence strategies to maintain their positions as well as working through democratic instruments such as local parliaments and elections. Sidel's analysis on bossism in the Philippines suggest that it was the distinctive pattern of colonial era state formation which laid the foundation for local bossism in the Philippines. The emergence of local bosses was facilitated by the onset of primitive accumulation and the expanding role of the colonial state in the economy. After independence, the republic reconstructed the intuitional measures of American colonial rule with direct elections. The pattern of clan-based politics was transferred from the colonial auspices to the independence period, and so family based clans have been able to hold office and build up a monopolistic position in the local economy over the course of many years (Sidel 2004: 92). Both local and national elections are dominated by these local politicians and local clans who have enjoyed long tenures in power as well as financial supremacy in their local regions[10]. A system of direct election in the Philippines has, in combination with controlling local resources, served to consolidate local fiefdoms among local elites. In combination with a system of stringent vote buying and

violence high re-election rates for incumbent legislators and local officials has meant a higher degree of monopolization of power (Sidel 2004: 89-94). The degree of volatility, high re-election rates, and a system of direct elections mean that use of power has been put into system in the Philippines in a way not yet seen in Indonesia.

In Indonesia, electoral politics introduced to the local levels in 1999, meant transfer of power to those who managed to mobilize votes in order to get hold of elected offices, but a the Indonesian situation has been different. Until today, governors, mayors, and regents have been indirectly elected through the elected members of the local assemblies, the DPRD, whose legislative powers have broadened significantly with decentralization. This means that there are institutional obstacles in place that limits the opportunities of would-be elective of monopolizing and concentrating all power with the few.

Finally, concentration and monopolization of power at the local level is also limited to a significant degree by highly institutionalized and centralized party system. It is an important instrument to limit 'would-be' bosses that all political parties have to be represented in at least two thirds of the provinces and two thirds of the regencies and cities in those provinces[11]. Although there are a vast range of new parties since 1999, these institutional limitations have served to defer the formation of locally based parties that can function as platform for a potential local despots. That said many of the NGOs, at least until recently and certain international advisors were proponents of introducing direct elections for the positions of mayors (*walikota*), governors (*gubernur*), and regents(*bupati*) arguing that the present system of proportional representation obscures the real objective of democracy, namely bringing power to the people. The limitation of opportunities for monopolization of power do also impact on the extent to which the means of violence are monopolized by local despots. Importantly the particular trajectory of Philippine state formation and long history of direct elections, represent a very different trajectory than that of Indonesia. In Indoensia, from colonial times it has not been possible to monopolize

[10] see Sidel 1999, 2004, Anderson 1988, Lacaba 1995 for further discussion on bossism in the Philippines.

power at the local level in a manner similar to that of the Philippines. Both during colonial times and during the New Order, rotation of administrators and military officials has hindered this kind concentration of power outside the state.

So far so good. Elites play by the rules, and institutional obstacles hinder the formation of an Indonesian variety of local bossism. Politics remains predatory and money politics is systematized at all levels on the political ladder. It is likely that these institutional obstacles mean not only that monopolization of power by local elites is more difficult, but also that there is a fragmentation of elites and the formation of a vague and dispersed pattern of coalitions with various types of actors. The following paragraphs merit attention to the formation of oligarchies/coalitions established by actors in order to be able to uphold their predatory politics, arguing that these institutions form part of a state within which criminal networks can work through without compromising their adherence to the democratic game.

5.1.2 State, Coalitions, and Mafia

Predatory politics is essentially defined by the continuous scramble for personal aggrandizement by elites. Indonesian politics is essentially driven by the constant drive and machinations of *politik uang* (money politics) tainting the prospects for a justice driven, policy oriented political competition between ideologically based strands in society. Indonesian society is driven forward by a symbiosis between primitive and advanced forms of capital accumulation by ways of non-economic, mostly political and coercive instruments of power (Demos 2005: 35). The coercive instruments are privatized as opposed to state sponsored as they were under Suharto stemming from the collaboration between the politics and crime, which dates back to the colonial period and before.

Interestingly, many of the actors do not necessarily view gaining ascendancy at the sub-provincial level of politics as a natural step towards provincial or national politics because they are increasingly finding theat regional autonomy provides

[11] Furthermore new parties have to have at least one thousand members or one thousandth of the population in each regency/city in addition to meet the requirements of registration with Ministry of Justice (ICG 2004)

lucrative opportunities for rent-seeking activities at the sub-provincial level itself. Despite this, what is crucial with regard to the changing continuities of local elite relations is that, despite the fact that regions have autonomy with regards to a number of arrangements, the central government still controls the main sources of revenue of the regions. As Nordholt has contended "what we are actually witnessing in Indonesia is a decentralization of administrative power that is heavily subsidized by the central government" (2003:12). About 80 percent of the income tax, import and export duties, value added tax, in addition to the majority of government enterprises and foreign aid, is still controlled by the central government. At the same time, provincial rulers such as governors, city mayors, and regents have come to enjoy broader powers to enact legislation on matters such as new taxes and regulations under the laws on decentralization in 1999 (ibid.). It is not surprising though that many of the elected *bupatis* and *walikotas* have themselves been levying taxes and charges on business and the public. In North Sumatra for example local politicians have been looking to introduce levies in the anticipation of reduced transfers from the center. In this area local politicians scramble to get control over revenue from the plantation sector and to obtain the right to introduce new levies (Hadiz 2003: 123-124). This is however, an issue for constant struggle, and in the mean time they are meddling with money trying to bend the rules once in office[12].

The business class in Indonesia has remained foreign to politics and has thus been unable to assert national leadership as an independent political actor. Compared to other countries in the region where businessmen dominate electoral politics and have been a prominent independent force (Sidel 2003: 10-11), the Indonesian business class has proven much less assertive. This provides an ample example for the limitations of the middle class in exposing democratic attributes, as the business class, as a whole has never attained a progressive attitude towards regime transition in Indonesia. This reveals peculiar and interesting patterns concerning the way the financial and politico-bureaucratic elite have built their coalitions in the post-Suharto years. There are two types of business-political coalitions that are integral to the

[12] This point was also stated by Sutoro (IRE) and Rizal Panggabean in interviews.

precarious dynamics of elite-politics in Indonesia. Firstly there are the businessmen outside the system who couple up with, and play a supporting role of those members of the politico-bureaucratic elite who are themselves occupying state office (through their elected or appointed positions). Secondly, there are the businessmen who are themselves career bureaucrats or politicians, and who get their business interests directly from the state. The Indonesian business class does thereby not represent a coherent independent political force vis-à-vis the state, but is –by and large due to its diverse and factionalized nature- heavily ingrained into the state apparatus. "You cannot be a politician without having access to money. And you cannot have access to money without at least being friends with a politician."[13] What is important with regards to the way elites mobilize and build alliances, is furthermore highly dependent on the way individual businessman have emerged as prominent members and backers of political parties at the national level, and among powerful coalitions and mafia-networks in regional and district level politics (ibid.: 25). In order to enhance one's own business interests it is necessary to enter the political arena, either as a politician or through establishing contacts with a politician. Therefore, financial barons are increasingly getting attached to the instruments of a broadened democratic political system through the building of coalitions with parties and local parliaments to get control over, or at least access to, the levers of state regulation and patronage at the local level. An intresting point made by one observer of political changes in North Sumatra which demonstrates the growing attractiveness for local business in wielding control over the state apparatus is that six successful candidates for *bupati* and *walikota* in the 2003 elections had backgrounds as local entrepreneurs such as contractors (Hadiz 2003: 126).

It is an interesting and important point concerning changes in Indonesia since 1999 that, according to Demos (2005: 35), alliances with state actors, such as politicians, political parties, legislative bodies, and officials within public

[13] Rizal Panggabean expert UGM (Sept 2004), All politicians interviewed (PDI-P, Golkar, and PPP) answered that they, and their companions depend on their close connections to business. They also emphasized that there were many who were primarily businessmen got involved in politics as a means to enhance their powers.

administration are as important as forming alliances with business people. This means that dominant actors are increasingly relying on elected positions to get their way. Thus, despite privatization and deregulation during the years of IMF influence, the realm of state ownership, state regulation, and state intervention in the Indonesian economy remains enormous.

Access to the state through parliaments is needed order to gain control over resources, contracts, and spoils. The size of the state, and its over-arching role in controlling capital, has led to dominant actors primarily use political combined with economic means to get control over these resources. The increased competition between rent-seeking individuals resulting from the introduction of elections has lead to an expansion of investments paid just to get into elected positions. The type of corruption deriving from this kind of short term rent seeking is of a more sinister kind and greedy type of corruption evolving from this kind of short term rent-seeking than the one deriving from more long term rent-seeking, defines local level politics in Indonesia today. In this way the interaction between the practice of power, economic accumulation, and illicit activities takes place in relation to the state through the use of democratization instruments of power.

This dependency on the central state by local elites, reflect to certain extents neo-patrimonial tendencies. Historically the local elites have based themselves on external resources because their own local societies are relatively impoverished. The institutional measures of concentrating wealth in the central state, while decentralizing administrative authority creates a peculiar dynamics of sorts dragging on increased competition at the local level, but depending on forging alliances with central level actors as well. Importantly, the circulation of bureaucrats that was so characteristic of New Order centralized control, never halted in face of decentralization (see Sidel 2003, 2004; Nordholt 2004).

The following example illustrates well the characteristics of center-local dependency after decentralization reforms. The implementation of democratic reform has opened space for new and active actors to play the field in Jakarta. Where Suharto had previously been the boss in a centralized criminal state, there has been an expansion in political assets over which variants of elites can compete. In examining

the development at the local level, the link from the center to their local regions is increasingly becoming a tool to mobilize patronage.

The circulation of elites during the Suharto years served to hinder the development of alliances based on ethnic affiliations. In a longer perspective the elites in traditional guise such as the Yogyakarta sultanate serve, as they did under Suharto, legitimacy for their *daerah*-identity. Today, with certain limitations, the combination of local control with continued dependency on the center has meant that many elites return from Jakarta to their area of origin in the hope that at least they can do "something of what they used to do there."[14] The excess of new players at the center has meant that coalition building is becoming increasingly more decentralized than it was under Suharto.

For example in the election to of a new governor for South Sumatra in August 2003, Syahrial Oesman, was launched as a *putra daerah* candidate to challenge the incumbent Rosihan Arsyad, a former naval officer. Rosihan was the official candidate for the PDI-P. The party held 26 out of 75 seats, but had formed an alliance with Golkar for 15 seats which in essence gave Rosihan 41 votes. Oesman was nominated in part because of his ethnic identity, his strong ties to Golkar, his chairmanship to the *Forum Komunikasi Putra Putri Purniwaran ABRI* (FKPPA- Communication forum for the children of retired military officers) in Bangka, and that he was supported by the military faction. More importantly, however, was it that Oesman was a close associate of Taufiq Kiemas Megawati's husband and central player in the so-called Palembang mafia, Kiemas own network in South Sumatra. In addition, several local businessmen supported his campaign (Collins and Sirozi 2004). Initially Oesman won the election with one vote, but the result was contested after several irregularities were revealed. In response, Oesman and his supporters mobilized more than 5000 supporters, many whom were brought in busses from Oesman's and Kiemas' home region to give their support. In a familiar pattern the demonstrators consisted also of *Pemuda Pancasila* thugs and other local *preman* groups who been paid to attend to demonstrate their strength (TempoInteraktif 2003). Furthermore, after the scramble

which to which it is rumored that Rosihan was given the choice to choose between the gun or leaving his position[15] the position of PDI-P branch leader in South Sumatra vacant, until Kiemas' younger brother Nazruddin Kiemas was elected the new leader. The Palembang group/mafia depended highly on getting one of its own into office in order to get hold of valuable building –and logging contracts. There is no contradiction between the being heavily ingrained with the sate enterprise and being key-players in powerful cliques and mafia in *kabubaten* and *kotamadaya*-level politics. Evidently power brokerage in the post-Suharto period has become much more elusive at the local level, due to the strengthened authority of local parliaments in combination with the continued strength of Jakarta.

One such part taker has not been discussed yet which is the military elite whose tradition for business enterprise and political involvement has already been mentioned. When it comes to the coalitions between military-politico-business coalitions there are important changes with regards to the fusion of political domains as well. Nevertheless, sections of the military (TNI) still remain a major force in politics, notwithstanding often-instated intensions to revamp its dual function. The symbiotic relationship between the TNI and the state may have become less official than it was during the New Order; however, it remains one of the most particular features of elite dynamics in Indonesia. Placing the military under civilian control and split the functions of the police and the armed forces has been one of the central reforms in the democratization process. Most NGOs are concerned with the continued role of the military in politics, however they also emphasize that their role has changed from acting as an institutions in itself, to the upholding their dominance over financial gains at the local level[16]. After all, the political interests of the TNI have never been vested in the legislative as such. Its impact derived from its ability to impact on the development and implementation of policies (Kingsbury 2004).

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[14] Hilmar Farid (2004), Interview, Jakarta.
[15] Rizal Panggabean, UGM (2004) Interview.

[16]Interviews (2004) in Jakarta with Teresa Birks (ICTJ), October, Sutoro Eko (IRE), September, Mufti Makaram (KontraS), September

Nevertheless, there are signs that the old pacts of dominance by the military elite are fracturing. Within a new situation they are forced to forge alliances with political parties and parliaments that compete to assert control over crucial state resources, and their dominance (notably outside conflict zones such as West Papua and Aceh), are thus not deriving primarily from their military positions, but from their relative ability to get involved in business (ibid.). This implies that the military is also playing a heavy hand in predatory money politics at the local level, which in essence is nothing new, but that should be interpreted in relation to a political reality in which the local elite is becoming increasingly fragmented in face of heightened competition over elected positions. What it means is that in order to uphold their control over state resources and private businesses, they rely on building their coalitions and networks, on upholding mafia enterprises, while competing for elected positions, or in any case on funding politicians in order to propel their own kind into parliaments. The support of civilian militias such as *Laskar Jihad* (a religiously based militia who have been heavily involved in the conflict in Maluku) the *Pemuda Pancasila,* and the KPPA, who willingly lend their muscles for party rallies, demonstrations, and intimidation of political opponents. As will be discussed in depth in the next chapter, civilian militias such as the *Pemuda Pancasila* and FKPPA amongst others play an increasingly prominent role as parts of these coalitions and networks, mutually dependent on each other.[17]

This system is different from that under Suharto in two defined and particular, but diverging ways: The opened political space deriving from implementation of democratic rights such as freedom of organization and freedom of speech have meant increased competition from other groups/cliques/oligarchs/political parties and social forces in society over the spoils of state membership. Secondly, the demise of the unipolar system of political domination by military/Golkar proficiencies has opened space for a new diverging pattern of domination in a multipolar system of power. The old pacts of dominance have fractured in the business in general can no longer just

[17] Conclusions drawn on interviews and conversations with experts (Mufti Makarim, KontraS, Sandyawan, Tim relawan Kemanusiaan) and actors: Pemuda Pancasila members interview, Jakarta October.

get access to state patronage through the politico-bureaucratic power within the predatory departments of the state, to provide protection and monopoly, but rather access to and control over the instruments of democracy such as political parties and local and national parliaments.

5.2 The Predators

Another issue that has not been discussed this far is the way dominant actors deal with society. As was stated in the first part of this thesis, in order to fully grasp the dynamics of violence and those predatory dynamics that makes controlling the means of violence necessary, there is a demand to include 'society' as part of the discussion. After all dominant actors in Indonesia do not only meddle with institutions, they depend highly on their clients not only to mobilize votes, but also to mobilize genuine support. The potential for mobilization within the spheres of political conduct are also dependent on certain symbolic attributes for power. Politics in Indonesia is about "big men" –*orang besar*- who depend on building up networks and entourages to ensure and enhance their reach into society.[18] Controlling and mobilizing clientelistic networks is integral for this kind of mediating. *Orang besar* – are respected (at times feared) not only as a result of their wealth, position, or even criminal influence but also from their expression of 'prowess'. The potential for mobilizing and attaining clients is rooted in historical as well as more modern affinities. The varying degrees to which actors become dominant, or assert the special aura of prowess is dependent on a variety of associations. The role and position of the thief in the colonial Javanese village has already been discussed. Lower ranking leaders in politically affiliated militias (mostly *preman*) as well as among Golkar leaders display the tattoo as an emblem of prowess.[19] The display of gold by the

[18] Pak Ari Dwipayana UGM, has carried out several in depth studies on the symbolic powers and attributes of various dominant actors in Indonesia, especially Yogyakarta. Interview (2004) September. Furthermore, the term orang besar is used by ordinary Indonesians to characterize dominant actors (own observation). The wording has long historical connotations (see Wolters 1982).

[19] Ari (ibid.). The tattoo bears a special symbolic attribute in Indonesian society, stemming from the Petrus killings of the 1980s in which the tattoo was read as the 'label' of the criminal, the symbol displayed by preman. See Barker (1998) fro an in depth discussion of the symbolic attributes of the tattoo and the tattoo as a defining label for individuals and groups in Indonesian society.

Golkar leaders at their office in Yogyakarta appropriate certain characteristics of their masculine domination towards their surroundings.[20]

With the unraveling of the New Order, the characters who have their roots in the New Order gangster circles, have found new opportunities to enhance their wealth and social status. Oloan Panggabean, a Sumatran goon, is a typical example of an '*orang besar*' first starting his career as commander of the paramilitary youth group IPK (*Ikatan Pemuda Karya*), and offshoot of the *Pemuda pancasila*. Many locals refer to him as the real 'night time mayor' of Medan (Hadiz 2003: 128) while it is common knowledge that he controls the smuggling -and gambling business stretching form Riao to Singapore, with strong international links[21]. Under the auspices of Olo, as he is famously known, the IPK soon became the most powerful militia in Medan (ibid.) playing out street fights with competing groups and playing the security card.

Olo has built up a popular image of himself through clever use of media, good alliances and charity involvement. It is a point to note that while civilian militias (youth groups) fight it out in the street Olo and his 'enemies' remain cordial friends in the political arena. Moreover his social standing is improved by charitable work. During the unrest in Aceh in 2001, refugees flocked from Aceh to Medan. When it was safe for them to return they needed transport. The local police commander called Olo to fix it, and so the next day busses were packed and ready to bring the refugees back to Aceh. As a proper God Father he has mobilized vast efforts, money and personnel for the reconstruction work in Ache after the Tsunami hit on December 26th 2004. The individual 'prowess' is this demonstrated through taking community responsibility as well as ability and willingness to solve problems that otherwise would have demanded a lot of bureaucracy through political channels. In spite of his role in crime (and violence) he is a local hero. Olo's wealth derives from illegal business; however the legitimate actions he has taken in the local community plays a greater role in legitimizing his right to power and social position. "People do not see the real links between the street violence and Olo, they only see what he gives back to

[20] Own observations during interviews with Golkar leaders, Yogyakarta, October 2004.
[21] Ari (ibid) and Rizal Panggabean UGM interview, September

the people. You cannot see smuggling, and so it is not a problem."[22] Most accumulate merit as did Olo by contributing freely both to their communities and to individuals in need of loans or employment. In this way, they act as patrons maintaining their popularity, while often getting in return success at the polls, and insuring a legitimate position in society.

The protection rackets around these "*orang besar*" provide the necessary aura of 'prowess' for the 'orang besar'. There is hardly a politician or businessman who does not keep a tale of security guards or thugs in his vicinity. As one scholar of 'mafia' has noted: "a reputation for credible protection and protection itself tend to be one and the same thing. The more robust the reputation…, the less the need to have recourse to the resources which support that reputation" (Gambetta cited in Sidel 1999b: 89). As has been discussed, under the New Order it was common knowledge that the power of the youth organizations (civilian militias) was rooted in their associates with local military commands. Today, this power is more dispersed, and controlling thugs is a necessity for most political actors. That said, clearly the mafiosos of the New Order are well placed to threaten and deploy violence as an important means to secure control local state apparatus. With the changing role of the military, militias and thugs are especially needed. This will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Money politics are not only features of North Sumatran local politics. In Yogyakarta, the local elites emphasize their 'high cultural position'. For the Sultan of Yogyakarta the cultural attributes makes up the formal power basis, while their political affiliations are what allows him and his family to actually perform politics. Whereas those with power in colonial society were blessed with 'traditional' or 'cultural' attributes of political prowess that enabled them to enrich themselves through the colonial bureaucracy, other sources of power is demanded. The Sultan of Yogyakarta has strengthened his position by entering into politics, representing the Golkar party machine. His wife and son are also Golkar representatives in the DPRD. In addition, they control vast economic enterprise in Yogyakarta such as Malioboro

[22] Interview student and activist from Medan (2004).

Mall and Hotel Garuda in the city center. In addition controlling industries placed on the Sultan's land is also an asset for empowering the Sultan through his machinations of political goods. Despite the display of these traits, also the traditionally rooted elites of Yogyakarta depend on mobilizing violence at particular times of crisis. Through his Golkar patronage the Sultan has access to privatized means of violence. During the run-up to the elections for bupati in Sleman in 2003, bomb threats and accusations of bribery, intimidation, and kidnapping colored the campaign.[23]

5.3 Concluding Remarks

It is important to recognize that naked force has an important role in the new political format too. There is a peculiar combination of dominant actors adapting to democracy, while at the same time strangling the seedlings by squeezing the juice out of potential peaceful meddling.

While political economists have focused on a rather simplistic picture of the political realities in the post-Suharto period, the previous pages have directed attention to how democratic reform and the introduction of democratic instruments have shaped and partly altered the way dominant actors relate to the state. This chapter has discussed the implications of decentralization reforms and the introduction of democratic instruments such as elections and the ways dominant actors form networks and coalitions in the post-Suharto era. First, because dominant actors have hijacked and monopolized democratic institutions as a means to get access to the state, one cannot only see the mere carrying out of peaceful local elections as a sign of successful democratization. There have been fears amongst observers that the implementation of local elections for the positions of *bupati*, *gubernur,* and *walikota* would lead to local elites being able to monopolize and concentrate power at the local level. In light of the historical discussion, the Indonesian trajectory has produced different results. At the local level control over elected positions has become the most attractive way to access state resources. Introduction of competitive elections has meant a broadening of the political arena

[23] Ari Dwipayana, UGM, (2004) Interview. September.

and an increase in competitors. The newly salient political actors have tended to be small and medium-level entrepreneurs who are dependent on state projects and contracts to uphold their powers, professional politicians who are part of local and/or national networks (mafia) with links to the New Order parties, or activists from various social organizations. One common trait is the necessity to have close connections with business. Such excessive competition requires enormous investments which in essence lead to short-term rent-seeking. In turn, controlling means of violence is a way for dominant actors, not to bypass democratic institutions or strike deals outside the legitimate institutions, but to flex muscle and build up an entourage as big men of politics as part dependency on controlling cash and/or intimidate opponents. As opposed to previous periods and a bossism situation, the elite is much more fragmented and the coalitions much more elusive than under previous regimes which is reflected very much in the ways violence is mobilized and used, a point which will be discussed thoroughly in the following chapter. The final part of the chapter highlighted how dominant actors who use violence also adhere to the democratic game.

6. VIOLENCE AND DEMOCRACY

The juxtaposition of these two words of seemingly opposite meanings highlights the curious dynamics of which political parties and dominant social groups relate to politics. While the last chapter concentrated on the peculiar dynamics of dominant actors and democratic politics, this chapter merit attention to the social forces that mobilize, organize, and criminalize politics in Indonesia. One of the particularities of the Indonesian trajectory already discussed is the historical symbiosis between crime and politics.

This chapter seeks to illuminate the peculiar manifestation and dynamic of "civilian militias" that emerged against the backdrop of a particular regime transition from authoritarian rule in Indonesia. Paramilitary units are first and foremost proponents and vehicles for predatory politics played out by elites. The much-lamented persistence of violence over the past seven years can largely be explained as a product of structural forces and dynamics beyond the control of "good" actors, but should also be seen from dual perspective with focus on the specific formation of civilian militias, the organizational unit that carries out much of the violence. The chapter will first elaborate on the structural varieties of politically affiliated militias, their tasks, operatives, and most importantly the link with various types of dominant actors.

In view of the previous theoretical discussion, the following questions merit especially careful considerations: *When do politicians make use of militias and what are their tasks? What other informal practices have characterized the treatment of this phenomenon by government officials and/or state security personnel? When do political parties express affiliation to militias, and when do activities remain covert?* First, the chapter elaborates on the various types of extralegal violence that occur against the backdrop of transition. Secondly, it deals with the symbiosis between crime and politics, and finally the problems of legitimizing links to militias. That is, while the groups examined here have organizational roots in the New Order their significance lay precisely in their ability to institutionalize their capacities as part of politics in the democratic era.

6.1 Extralegal Violence

To explore the questions raised about violence by civilian militias in relation to political reform and democratization, the various forms need to be related to the continuum of Indonesian extralegal violence. Such violence can range from spontaneous and informal, such as mob lynching to systematic murders by justice-seeking individuals, to more organized forms of violence linked to powerful individuals in the community, such as local strongmen of various forms. The continuum of this sort is based on the degree of spontaneity, organization, and elite-involvement in security efforts and the nature of specific constellations.

In Indonesia, the most spontaneous of several forms of extralegal violence is the crowd lynching, involving civilians in the community or village, and taking justice into their own hands under the sway of an immediate crowd reaction to a suspected thief or lawbreaker. Usually the lynching erupts suddenly at the instigation by an appointed scout or informal leader, and often involves brutal violence such as hacking the victim to death or severe beatings. This type of violence is nothing new to Indonesia.

Less spontaneous than the relatively anonymous mob-lynchings that have taken place which is more closely linked to power-brokers in the community are the *ninjas* that have been particularly connected to the killings of sorcerers in East Java since 1998 (Cribb 2000: 191-202) and security operations in Lombok (ICG). The ninjas, named after Japanese cartoon figures dressed in black operated in groups targeting specific perceived criminals and alleged sorcerers, and in a peak-period in 1998-1999 even Islamic scholars in East Java (see Cribb 2000, Herriman 2004). These ninjas stand in sharp contrast to the spontaneous village mobs, as they operate underground dressed up as mystical figures, often targeting their victims at home at night. The sense of fear and dread inflicted upon the community in connection to these specific incidents are very much reminiscent of the way the New Order state sought to inspire paralyzing terror among their enemies and victims.

Since 1998, attention has been directed towards more organized forms of vigilante efforts in certain areas of Indonesia. The insecurity sense by many Indonesians after the fall of the New Order regime was deeply rooted in the common

perception that, after all, the military, with its local command and organizational structures had upheld a level of general security and predictability. The demand for protection and personal security surged in response to the perceived rise in crime and violence (Colombijn 2002). In a political climate of uncertainty and an economic climate of crisis, communities took to organize their own vigilante movements, based on the same structures as had evolved with the *siskamling*- system under Suharto, but (mostly) without the local military command.

The term *pam swakarsa* refers to the so-called voluntary security guards that have surged during the past seven years. Many of the pam swakarsa have developed into civilian militias with their own uniforms and organizational structures and have been known to use extremely brutal violence in their dealings with alleged criminals. While the authorities encouraged the formation of such civilian guards in the 1980s, the term gained notoriety when the *pam swakarsa* were called in to safeguard the special session of the DPR in Jakarta in 1998 (see Dijk 2001, Ryter 2002, Telle 2004, ICG 2003). Within this discourse, the boundary for what is criminal and what is not is randomly moved and stretched depending on circumstance, environment, expectations, and importantly personnel.

They share these attributes with the party security groups, *satgas parpol* which are paramilitary wings of the political parties. The *pam swakarsa* are with shifting degrees often closely attached to stately authorities. The difference between the types of vigilantism and political militias, with which this thesis is concerned, lies in the fact that latter is directly connected to some sort of political or ideological grouping such as a political party or a social/religious organization. Vigilantism on the other hand comes primarily as the initiative of private civil interests and therefore usually involves a greater degree of spontaneity and smaller organizational space. This is not to imply that vigilante groups are completely spontaneous, because many are highly organized, and usually involve the active participation of at least local elites, and they may even enjoy the support of the national government.

Whereas satgas are an official part of the party structures, the politically affiliated civilian militias are organized outside the party structures, albeit receiving funding from the party itself.[24] They have some sort of ideological, religious, or populist expression beyond fighting crime and providing security. In general, they are concerned with issues that are wider than purely local ones, and do operate on a larger geographical scale, often with more coordination and planning than do local vigilante initiatives. That said, in reality there is considerable overlap between the two categories of *pam swakarsa* and *satgas*/politically affiliated civilian militias, especially in urban areas. It is also common for political militias and similar organizations to involve in combating crime and try to impose some sort of moral code on society. In the same manner vigilantism more often than not involve elite influence, participation, or even instigation.[25]

One element enhancing the independence of the civilian militias is the fact that most of them have arisen out of a peculiar symbiosis between state and non-state interests. Some groups have evolved within state agencies like Suharto's state party Golkar or ABRI and worked in some form of cooperation with state forces to stamp out opposition forces. That said most of the militias dominant today have developed outside the state, but in relation to various social and political forces competing for power and access to state resources such as elected positions. The relative influence of these non-state actors may arise in the light of the inability of the state to prevent powerful social groups from enhancing their position through the means of violence; even though state actors often also welcome this kind of "help" in certain matters. A common feature of all the organizations are that they employ mass mobilization, demonstrations, and other forms of pressure while also serving as kinds of multi-purpose units providing security –or insecurity- for leaders and enemies living off the stems of illegal activities such as gambling, prostitution, money collection etc. (Asgart 2004: 643-669).

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[24] Gather from interviews with satgas PDI-P and PPP, and Brigass. Confirmed by Sofian Asgart, interview September.

[25] for similar cases and discussion on vigilantism as a phenomenon see Abrahams 1998, Rosenbaum 1976, Harnischfeger 2003, Akinyele 2001.

According to one estimate there are around thirty such organized militias with an estimated membership of 700 000 people, the majority of whom belong to the modernist Islamic side (Nordholt 2002: 51), although one can speculate whether the number is much higher. There are two forms of militias that are becoming more prominent in the post-Suharto era. The first are the various groups attached to political movements, whose degree of ideological cohesiveness is often exaggerated and who recruit young people from various social backgrounds, but most often, they are from the underclass or less privileged groups (Ryter 2002, King 1999). The second emerging from social organization is prophetic neo-fundamentalist Islamic movements which are means of social advancement or at any rate of economic survival for their leaders and which offer them access to public space and even a range of international contacts.[26] The members of these religiously based organizations refer to themselves as *laskar* (King 1999: 30-40). It goes without saying that these organizations are well placed to participate in activities considered criminal by law while they are self-enunciating ideological grounds for promoting their activities as legitimate. Thus the primary means of mobilizing collective and individual strategies is through vague nationalist ideologies (mostly the *pancasila*), various interpretations of religion (Islam), ethnicity (in local conflicts), and a vague adherence to party ideologies such as *demokrasi* and *reformasi*. The latter is typical for PDI-P affiliated militias.[27] To the extent that the mobilizational efforts are shallow, case oriented, or dispersive in terms of political goals for reform, they do nevertheless represent streams of interests of historical affinities. [28]

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[26] Interviews and conversations with three GPK members (September), one ex-Laskar Jihad member, and one FPI-member who all said they received funding from Saudi missionaries. That particular information was not confirmed, but is likely as it is common with Saudi Arabian support for funding mosques and *pesantren*.

[27] Based on interviews/conversations with five satgas PDI-P, two Brigass members, and interview with expert Sofian Asgart (2004) who has studied civilian militias in depth; see also Sofian 2003.

[28]At It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the trends of militia organization in conflict areas as militias also here form as parts of larger combating forces in the local conflict, consisting mostly of young men who gather quickly to defend their community against external threats to their village or town (interview Hilmar Farid 2004). Elites on either side of the conflict have direct control over such means of violence through its ability to mobilize and arm such local efforts. In communal conflicts, the militias are mobilized mostly along the lines of their ethnic, religious, or regional affiliations (Nordholt 2002: 33-61) rather than the more fragmented nature of politically affiliated militias in Java as discussed. Direct state involvement in such militia initiatives vary greatly from area to area. In East Timor in 1999, the militias that were formed and armed by the military were sent there to "secure the area" while in Maluku it is more common that local police from either side of the conflict, allocate access to the means of violence to these local groups (interviews Hilmar Farid 2004, Sandyawan 2004).

For the purpose of analytical clarity, this thesis deal only with the categories of the paramilitary groups that are in some ways attached to political parties, although the analytical categories and many of the conclusions apply to the more organized forms of *pam swakarsa* as well. These can be categorized crudely as follows although both the members themselves and ordinary Indonesians tend to switch.

Although paramilitary mobilization trace a long lineage in Indonesian history, the re-emergence of a vast number of civilian militias signals an especially sinister turn with the implementation of multi-party democracy. Leaving aside for the moment the contested relations between the militias and dominant actors, the following few paragraphs focus attention on the significance of militias in the post-Suharto period. While the symbolic power of such real potential for violence demands scrutiny, the pages below seek to recover the traces of a peculiar manifestation of violence-groups forming in the shadow of legitimate political and social organizations. Inasmuch the very existence of paramilitary units seems to defy the principles of democratization, they have paradoxically evolved as part of a broad, albeit, fragmented organizational landscape, attached to parties, organizations, and individual dominant actors. It is with safe saying that the greatest threat of violence arises from the existence of these paramilitary groups linked to the military, political parties, and Islamic organizations.

6.1.1 The Cases of GPK and Brigass

Gerakan Pemuda Ka'bah (GPK, Kabah youth movement) was founded in Jakarta in 1982 as the youth wing to the Muslim party *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* (PPP), and formed an additional youth wing to the official PPP satgas, called *Angkatan Muda Ka'bah* (AMKA). The perceived need for self-defense groups for political parties stem from the violent street fights between party affiliates from the staged elections in 1997 and 1982. In both elections Golkar affiliated youths and thugs were mobilized by Ali Moertopo on Suharto's behalf (King 1999: 30), to attack and intimidate groups associated with other parties. The generic formula for election

staged violence was indeed the very reason for why various youth groups were allowed to exist (ibid.). Following the *asas tunggal* law of 1984,[29] the PPP was forced to adapt the generic label of *satgas* also for the *laskar* units. GPK's activities remained rather insignificant until its branch was founded in Yogyakarta in 1999 as a "spontaneous outburst of enthusiasm from PPP youth in the area" according to themselves (Sofian 2004: 657). That said, its real mobilization potential was as much rooted in a demand from central actors in the Yogyakarta party branches of the PPP and PDI-P to flex muscles ahead of the 1999 election (King 1999). Resuming the label *laskar* for their members, the GPK drew support both from poor *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) in Central Java, and from amongst unemployed youth in Yogyakarta.[30] Since 1999 then, GPK has developed into a loosely knit mobilizational unit in its own right, officially outside the party structures of the PPP and therefore ensured a level of leverage and independence from official, legitimate party politics.[31]

According to one of its central leaders the GPK core activities was initially to promote Islam through the "holy actions of Muslims and the religion of Islam, and to promote Islamic values and livelihood in the name of democracy," while it officially also had to work to support the political goals of the PPP. [32] As a civilian militia GPK has gotten most attention for its 'purity campaigns' against night clubs, gambling halls, prostitutes, and homosexuals in Yogyakarta. Those associated with GPK claim that they have moved away from the official party-line because they felt the corrupt politicians were only after money and fame, and do not care about the real principles of Islam and democracy.[33] The PPP do on their hand claim that they have pressured GPK out of their official structure because they have become too independent and do not agree that the principles of Islam can be implemented with the use of violence.[34]

[29] sole foundation law which stipulated that all parties adopt the pancasila as their ideological foundation. Religious symbols were forbidden as a marker of political affiliation
[30] Sofian Asgart interview, 2004.
[31] Interviews with AMKA commander (2004), and two GPK activists, Yogyakarta, September.
[32] Interview GPK commander, Yogyakarta (2004), September.
[33] Ibid;
[34] Views expressed by PPP local leader, interview (2004) September.

Even more significant is it that GPK function as protection rackets and neighborhood watchdogs downtown Yogyakarta, in addition to being heavily involved in underworld activities such as gambling and prostitution.[35] In similar veins as those youth organizations mobilized during the New Order, the GPK claimed the 'right to secure' the area near Taman Sari after carrying a series of night-time raids intimidating shop owners and inhabitants in the kampung; "they drove through my kampung on motorcycles, throwing Molotov Cocktails into shops. They beat the ones who tried to stop them. Now we pay them to leave us alone."[36]

In the specific case of PPP and GPK in Yogyakarta, a direct link can be established between the actions of GPK, the police, and central politicians. The event is nothing particular about Yogyakarta, but typical when it comes to the involvement and the role of political parties in violence, and a link to the state via the security apparatus. One of the karaoke bars of a well-known Chinese businessman in Yogyakarta was destroyed by so-called "purity-groups' –GPK affiliated thugs who demanded the owner to stop selling alcohol. They emptied bottles, broke windows, and destroyed the furniture in the bar. The thugs were wearing masks, but did according to the bare owner smell heavily of alcohol themselves. Interestingly, later that evening the PPP deputy chair to the legislature called saying to the businessman that he would need their help. He offered him his own security forces to protect all his businesses. The bar-owner politely refused the offer, claiming protection from the police. Later the owner was contacted by the Yogyakarta head of police who advised him to accept the politician's offer of protection against thugs as they would be unable to provide sufficient protection against the "extreme actions of *preman*"[37].

A similar type of organization can be traced with regards to the PDI-P affiliated organization of Brigass [38] who has its stronghold in Bogor and Jakarta.

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[35] Sofian Asgart interview 2004, Rizal Panggabean interview (2004), September

[36] Interview with local shop owner and his son (anonymous), Yogyakarta, October. Such events are common also in other major cities in Indonesia; especially the by likes of Pemuda Pancasila and Ikatan Pemuda Karya, New Order originated youth groups, who have recurred onto the stage. Reportedly the two organizations have divided Medan between them (Rizal Panggabean interview).

[37] Rizal Panggabean, interview (2004), September.

[38] the long name of Brigass demonstrate its sole political foundation: Barisan rakyat Indonesia Penjaga Demokrasi siap antar Mega menjadi RI satu- Indonesian guardiand of democracy, ready to struggle for Mega's presidency.

Brigass was established with the only political aim to bring Megawati to presidency after her losing out to Abduraham Wahid in the 1999 elections. The founding members expressed that they felt the elections had been useless and a sham as 'the people's will did not secure her victory' (Sofian 2003: 649). With Megawati taking over the presidency after the legal and constitutionally bound impeachment of Wahid in 2001, Brigass lost its ideological momentum. It has however, continued to be a highly relevant part of the public landscape, becoming increasingly better organized and coordinated (ibid.).

However, the ideological mission expressed outwards remains the same as one observer has quoted the Brigass leader Pius Lustrilanang to have said; "The main idea is to protect democracy. We know that the democratic system still needs consolidation, protection, because it still faces dangers. Without a solid force to protect it, democracy will be in jeopardy. This is what we are protecting" (Sofian 2003: 650). Despite such embroidered comments, there was a significant change in the position of Brigass when Megawati became president in 2001. From being a mobile organization established to propel Megawati into the presidency, it has adapted survival tactics to hold on to its members, its support, and its position in society. Since its founding in 1999, the particular arena of operation has been broadened and so its structures have been institutionalized. There are about eight sub-structures of Brigass, each representing different types of businesses (*perusahan*) such as security (*keamanan)* , stability (*stabilitas*), and *kaki lima* (vendors ect).[39] Brigass represents a changing in the organizational landscape of preman organizations by their quasi-independent role in relation to their mother party PDI-P. Since the 1999 elections, the PDI-P satgas provided the main muscle power for the party, as well as a clientelistic network for its members. Since Brigass came onto the arena of semi-official and unofficial politically affiliated militias in Bogor, a conflict has developed between the PDI-P *satgas*, who among other things earn their wages by charging toll money from the traffic in and out of central Bogor and Brigass over

[39] Brigass Commander (2004) interview, October.

access to these funds. Brigass has achieved a more prominent elitist position than its affiliates, the satgas PDI-P in Bogor and Jakarta. This access to business does also, paradoxically, broaden its mandate to apply coercive methods whenever needed. Many would say that Brigass function as Taufiq Kiemas' previously mentioned as head of the so-called Palembang mafia, own private security apparatus[40]. The Brigass highest commander Lustrilanang close connection and friendship to Taufiq Kiemas, businessman and PDI-P official, has been up for discussion in the Indonesian press on several occasions.

All of these militias are heavily ingrained in Indonesian society. If you know what to look for they are one every street corner going about their business of money collection, commanding the traffic, or before the election handing out flyers for their party. They are crowding the reception rooms of their political patrons; rolling their cigarettes, discussing the business, and lamenting information over bills passed or building contracts handed out. In essence they form organizations in their own respect offering their strength to political parties. They are highly structured and well organized. The reformasi cliché has sounded that *belum ada perubahan pola pikir* – the patterns of thought have not yet changed. It is a useful phrase for the political actors, at once suggesting that violence is the fashion of the day. For the commander of AMKA in Yogyakarta, his fondness for the *gaya militer*- military style- is the only political model ever directly experienced. Therefore it is also the most common excuse made by the carriers of party colored uniforms. *Politik premanisme* was possibly Suharto's greatest contribution to the state, is the only political model ever experienced by Indonesia's younger generation.

The relevant characteristics of civilian militias of the likes of Brigass and GPK are their positioning between the formal and the informal. They operate on the borderline of the official and unofficial, the legitimate and illegitimate, providing muscle power to their goons while mobilizing around their ideological and religious expressions. As has been discussed, during the New Order it was common knowledge

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[40] Sofian Asgart (2004) interview, Rizal Panggabean (2004) interview.

that the power of the youth organizations (civilian militias) was rooted in their associates with local military commands. Today, this power is more dispersed, and controlling thugs is a necessity for most political actors. That said, clearly the New Order mafiosos are still well placed to threaten and deploy violence as an important means to secure control local state apparatus. With the changing role of the military, militias and thugs are especially needed. Because militias such as Brigass and GPK in a similar vein as IPK and Pemuda Pancasila, preside over lucrative enterprises such as gambling and smuggling networks they are able to influence policy bids. Some argue that the leadership is also potentially able to influence policy decisions in local parliaments, especially the allocation of contracts(Hadiz 2003: 128).[41]

One of the central arguments for this thesis, as expressed in chapter two, is that those social forces that mobilize into such violence groups as Brigass and GPK form part of a legitimate democratic expression, while at the same time fuelling predatory politics. The following few paragraphs pay attention to precisely these social mobilization forces are rooted in a combination of modern affinities and historically embedded continuities.

6.1.2 Crime, Politics, and Semi-Legitimacy

The historical role and position of the Javanese thief and the correlation between the New Order security policy and its policy on targeting criminal reveal the peculiar nature of the accepted and unaccepted in Indonesian society and politics. Extralegal violence as it is organized in Indonesia is highly influenced by these historical proficiencies. The labeling of preman illustrate well how violence and crime moves between the accepted and the unaccepted. The preman label may best be described as a label befitting gangsters, disenfranchised and unemployed youth, and certain members of the informal labor sector or the local bully (Ryter 1998, King 1999). Most would be able to pick out the preman from the street, from characteristics of street boys or boys just hanging out in the mall. Mostly the membership of civilian militias such as Brigass and GPK, as well as the more officially rooted party security

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[41] Rizal Panggabean, UGM (2004) Interview.

groups, satgas is made up of *preman*. It is not a label only ascribed to the petty street criminal, but is also frequently used for positioned politicians who have a background in illegitimate business. In this respect, the labeling serves to communicate a vague categorization of people who in some way or other is or has been involved in crime, connect to a criminal underworld, or has been found not to always adhere to legitimate methods. It is within this last respect one talks about "*preman politics*" or "*politik premanisme.*"

One of the issues to surface from the expansion of the PDI-P after 1998 was the relationship between PDI-P and the preman world. As much as the PDI-P drew support from across the entire spectrum, its face was that of unemployed urban youth. It is within this stratum that the preman world is also located for "as much as preman represent the underworld, they also stand for the underclass" (Ryter 1998: 23). As a social force and mobilizational tactics, the inclusion of preman into the political ranks of the parties has been met with endless criticism from reformist observers. The satgas commanders have responded to such criticism by saying that they do not demand all members to be university educated (Kompas 2004, 26 Feb.). That said, the recruitment of *satgas* is mostly from among ex-convicts and groups in the underworld (ibid.).

In terms of symbolic attributes, there are both elements of globalization – the GPK and FPI claiming they are part of an international religious movement[42], and localization–PDI-P *satgas* reminiscing about the Sukarno period viewing their symbolic role in the same light[43]. Its most popular connotations are however to the various guerrilla units of the liberation struggles. To GPK members, as well as the other religiously based militias, the term *laskar* has a rich historical heritage embedded in notions of populism and a form for accepted radicalism. Today many various *laskar* are linked to conservative Islamic parties, and at times have

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[42] Although the members of religiously based militias such as the GPK and FPI express views in public about their affiliation to certain Middle Eastern religious groups, they form part of an ideologically and organizationally fragmented local network rather than an international movement for Pan-Islam (Ari Dwipayana UGM interview and William Clarence-Smith 2003).

demonstrated strong links to the military, such as the *Laskar Jihad* mobilized to fight in the Maluku conflict, or *Front Pembela Islam* (FPI), an militia loosely organized but with local branches all over Indonesia.[44] Undoubtedly, many *laskar* units imagine themselves to be the Hezbollah or Diponogara Division of the 1940s.[45] That said, while in the 1999 election, their purpose could be twisted into something reminiscent of a liberation groups in 2004 their existence reflect the new political paradigm of the reformasi era. Among the young recruits, there exists a romantic picture of their role as warriors for democracy, or as defenders for their religion.

From one angle both satgas and laskar are seen as criminal gangs who have offered their strength to political parties in exchange for receiving a quasi-legitimate position and protection (Nordholt 2002: 51), while on the other hand these "criminal gangs" are as much mobilized and protected by the political party and/or their *orang besar*. This might be a question of "what comes first, the hen or the egg", it nevertheless plays a significant role in understanding the dynamics between "*kriminalitas*" and "*politik*". From the perspective of the power holders, the various strongmen and politicians, the increased market for competition requires the symbolic demonstration of power via mass followings on the one hand, but also the strategic access to coercive means of power to be able to keep control over their assets. When thugs from "purity movements" such as the GPK and FPI attack karaoke bars or gambling dens, the "environment" within which social forces are mobilized is defined by two elements: firstly, the ideological expression required to mobilize and recruit members and supporters, and secondly the delimitation of an area from which an orang besar can extract resources to uphold one's own position.

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[43] The wall in the PDI-P head office in Yogyakarta is decorated by a photo of Sukarno, while the much smaller photo pf Megawati hanss in the corner out of view. In conversation the PDI-P satgas said they viewed themselves as carrying on Sukarno's battle fro freedom, and in similar veins compared themselves to revolutionary pemuda.

[44] Inteview Sofian Asgart (2004).

[45] In three of the interviews with youth activists who claimed to have been members of *laskar jihad* , *Gerakan Pemuda Kab'ah,* and another less known loosely knit assembly in Gun Jack's (a Yogyakarta wealthy Muslim businessman) surroundings they initially talked about the role of Islam in the Indonesia's historical pretext, and emphasized the need for continuing the independence struggle. They also emphasized their strong sympathies with the Syrian Hezbollah, and claimed they performed the same role in Indonesia (to impress the interviewer, but also to demonstrate their own self-assurance and legitimacy in a broader historical and international context).

As discussed previously dominant actors depend on their elected positions to achieve and maintain their power bases. While during the New Order the organizational landscape was strictly limited to a set of 'legalized' organizations, the current trend in violence groups is its fragmented nature. The fragmented organizational landscape provides a broad range of opportunities. With new power centers and increased competition between 'men of prowess', there are new and different opportunities opening to manipulating patronage relations and climb high in the ranks of the government.[46] As a result of this potential for social mobility and the cultural valuation of high social status, the desire for honor and power is one of the strongest motivating forces for many Indonesians.[47] Being a commander in a militia is a position achieved for virtues such as bravery, loyalties, and charisma. The preman type can inhibit all these qualities that can make one into a man of prowess.

The military attributes and the ranking of individual members in the civilian militias represent a hierarchical system in which reaching high status and positioning is connected to a number of accredits. Interesting, but not surprisingly many of the high ranking political leaders or leaders in NU started out as activists and commanders in their affiliated youth groups. This pattern has persisted today, but now also in relation to the militias outside the official party structure. Although all political parties have legitimate youth groups, being a commander of militias often provides one with a better patronage network directly linked to individual actors than do youth groups of the political parties.[48]

It is worth noting that a number of the civilian militias that dominate the underground illegal activities, currently occupy local political offices, and that some have migrated from Golkar to other parties, including PPP and PDI-P (Robison and Hadiz 2004: 247). Although Brigass is only affiliated to the PDI-P, Brigass has much more leverage and is much more the tool of individual actors in the PDI-P, and thus

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[46] Rizal Panggabean interview (2004).
[47] Similar observations were made by Rizal Panggabean interview and Ari Dwipayana interview.
[48] Zuhdi Muhdlor (2004), Leader of Ansor Yogyakarta branch. Interview Yogyakarta, Septmeber.

represent a more procuring patronage network than do the official paramilitary wing (satgas) of PDI-P in Bogor.[49]

On that note, the ability to incorporate thugs/preman into the party surroundings depends on the capacity to provide them with work and money. Changing patronage networks occur when the party or the individual politician looses the funds to support their Satgas. On that note, according to a Golkar satgas commander, who himself escaped the Petrus killings in the 1980s, it is integral that the militias are able to hold on to organizational structures and employment opportunities in order for the organization to continue to operate also in situations when the party elite does not need them. "To the party elite we are only chess-men to be sacrificed when needed. Then they play us against each other. The irony is that there are those who don't realize that in this game the men can start killing each other" (Kompas 2004: Feb.26). What seems to have happened since the fall of Suharto, for better or for worse, the symbiosis between crime and politics has again been decentralized, and the patronage over criminal rackets and militias been taken over by local power brokers, politicians and other dominant actors. This decentralization and "civilization" of coercive state apparatuses encouraged first under the Dutch, then under Suharto remains an enduring and powerful legacy in Indonesia. These legacies do in due turn serve to blur the lines between state-society, military-paramilitary, civil-military, and between legal-illegal with a variety of peculiar coercive formations, such as the thugs operating at the behest of entrenched local political actors and oligarchs. Moreover the patterns for organizing and managing law enforcement tend to prefigure a recurring cycle of intensified subcontracting and privatization of violence not only during periods of great stress, but also during times when power contestation between various local elites peak such as prior to a local election or during competition over contracts, and the mere need for flexed muscles in a meeting.[50]

[49] Sofian Asgart (2004) interview.
[50] Interview Sandyawan, Jakarta 2004.

Beyond the noted historical affinity between the phenomenon of political parties and politically affiliated militias and paramilitaries, the nature and direction of mobilization campaigns since 1998 reveal a peculiar, yet familiar dialectic of sorts. On the one hand, mobilization in the name of civil society and democracy focuses considerable energies on promoting elections, running for elections, and political representation. On the other hand, mobilization by civilian militias and party security groups (*satgas*) releases powerful forces for threat of violence within the same arena in which political expression takes place. Thus juxtaposed, the inviolate sacredness of the electoral ballot and the submission to national citizenship celebrated in official political discourse both nationally and internationally appears in sharp contrast to the violent profanation of militarism and the ideological sovereignty of the *satgas* and *milisi sipil* that paradoxically form part of the institutional democratic expression. In combination then, the dynamic of the various social forces helps to clinch the subsequent institutionalization of multiparty elections, the concomitant entrenchment of oligarchic dominance and effective marginalization of organized civil society in post-Suharto Indonesia.

6.2 Legitimacy and the Subcontracting of Violence

The process of regime transition lent additional impetus to political mobilization in Indonesia. As discussed above, the transition process did not only involve the implementation of democratic institutions and procedures, but also, arguably, an intensification in violence committed by civilian actors. These civilian actors form part of a broad organizational landscape that operate in relation to dominant actors in a symbiotic relationship. The transition regime intrinsically encouraged revitalization of both civil and the not so civil society at the local level. The most virulent manifestations of militia-violence appear to occur when and where contestation over access to power and resources in a local area peaks. The backing is both to demonstrate symbolic support in forms of a mass following, to have sources available in case of specific threats from i.e. the press, the courts, other bosses/politicians fighting over the same material or symbolic sources of power.

One major factor for the use of party-linked militias lies in the need for various actors to deny that they are breaking established norms of behavior. Each party member interviewed would, naturally so, deny the implications with underground activity and specific incidents of violence. The political parties and their leaders are bound by internal and external norms that place limits on their range of options. In the electoral framework, the demand for legitimacy both on personal morale and the party's political promises define much of how they relate and communicate with the public. Only civil militias and other covert means provide plausible deniability of the politician or the party's involvement in illegal activity or violence. The public expect adherence to a rule of law and a certain set or norms. This kind of legitimacy did also play a role for Golkar members under Suharto, but as long as the amount of votes did not matter that much, the use and dependency on civilian militias was much less covert. A previous member of *Pemuda Pancasila* said in a conversation that although it has always been the case that the PP carried out the dirty work for the party officials in election campaigns before, the link had always been clear. "Today Golkar members would not even acknowledge the PP's existence as structure within the Golkar official structures. Of course, everyone knows the link, but now the politicians are more concerned with not being criticized by the press. But nothing has changed that much. PP still does the same dirty work"[51]

As this case also illustrate the rising demands for human rights and legal norms for political actors also play a role. The criticism from international NGOs, democracy advisors, and the Indonesian free press as regards to the role of *satgas*/politically affiliated civilian militias including *pam swakarsa,* and the relative need for them, has made party leaders become increasingly uncomfortable with acknowledging the militias' real ascendancy. In this respect, party officials and NU-leaders are very concerned with conveying the message that satgas are meant for "internal security measures only" and that "military attire is only like a scout's

[51] Interview with groups of Pemuda Pancasila members (2004) Jakarta, October.

uniform".[52] Parties willing to use extralegal violence thus have reasons to appear uninvolved in order to keep up the façade as democratic actors. The charade does not usually last very long, but it is difficult to prove party complicity in the specific actions of paramilitaries and militias. Such proof usually comes at a very high cost for local human rights activists and journalists who are themselves often the target of thugs.

It is in this need for legitimacy as well as a certain social standing that most groups also carry out educational efforts and welfare programs among the poor. All militia commanders and party officials highlight the social programs of their organizations and that they are popular in their local communities.[53] There is no doubt that these efforts also strengthen their strong holds in local communities, provide the commanders with a valuable social standing, as well as a good basis for mobilization. There is no evidence that their dependency on militias and control over the means of violence is on the way out however.

Although dominant actors continually operate in relation to the state, the competition over elected positions and the spoils deriving from such positions demand control over means of violence. The fragmented nature of elites, as was previously illustrated has contributed to the upholding of violence groups mobilized in relation to political parties or religious organizations. The dominant actors are obliged to reach outside the normative liberal framework ideally concurred by democratization to find tools or helpers necessary to perform all the tasks at hand. While in an authoritarian situation, it was the state itself that subcontracted important political and social tasks that fell outside their legitimate behavioral zone. In a post-authoritarian situation characterized by competition and fragmentation dominant actors through their private interest groups which in Indonesia are rooted in political parties and/or social religious groups such as the NU, subcontract and mobilize these patterns themselves, escalating and dispersing the use of violence at the local level. In

[52] Similar views were expressed by Golkar leaders, interview Yogyakarta 2004, Zuhdi Muhdlor, Ansor leader interview 2004, and Pak Djuwarto, PDI-P Chairman interview 2004.

[53] The social activities of the militias was highlighted by all senior actors interviewed.

a situation where predatory money politics dominate subcontracting assumes malevolent forms such as the formation, mobilization and upholding of paramilitary auxiliaries as seen in Indonesia.

6.3 Concluding Remarks

The civilian militias exist against a backdrop of transition, playing into the field of competition between Indonesian big men of politics. In the current political climate in Indonesia politicians and parties are struggling to find their own foothold and building new networks. In a very similar vein their organizational networks consisting of *preman* provide muscle and support for particular streams within the political arena. Under the new circumstances of multiparty democracy, these tendencies are naturally changing and tentatively fiddling new strings of power. The chapter has highlighted the procuring situation with a variety of organized civilian militias representing social forces with certain, albeit narrow, ideological grounds, who are attached to political parties or individual rent-seeking power brokers. The main conclusion oof this chapter is the significance of their affiliation to political parties, while at the same time changing alliances to where the funding is. The chapter has highlighted that violence should be interpreted in light of the function and realities of violence groups as social forces with qualifying organizational structures. Furthermore the chapter has highlighted the moving ground for *preman* in relation to these politically affiliated militias, arguing that these militias, by their ways of running lucrative businesses and being close allies with politicians, are important parts of the coalitions and networks discussed in chapter five.

7. FINAL CONCLUDING REMARKS

The overthrow of Suharto in May 1998 ushered a period of political openness not seen in Indonesia for decades. Perhaps nothing better epitomizes the years since the onset of reformasi than the mix of prospect coupled with increased disappointment amongst pro-democracy activists. The visual dominance of military-styled uniformed young politically affiliated militias and unofficial 'security guards' could not contrast more starkly with those ideals of democracy proposed by these activists. It was this puzzle of 'violence and democracy' that triggered the topic for this thesis. The research question set out in the introductory chapter was thus: How should one interpret violence in a situation of democratic politics?

The starting point for the thesis was the problematic limitations of the general democratization paradigm captured by a neo-liberal agenda and a scholarly emphasis on pact-making between soft –and hard liners assuming democratization involves a transition from A to B, from an authoritarian situation to a democratic situation. Theoretically, the thesis has argued that arguments rooted in political economy that seek to explain the democratic deficit from the perspective of New Order oligarchs does not sufficiently fulfill the limitations of conventional transition studies and the neo-liberal agenda of the World Bank. Rather, in order to analyze violence one must turn to more historical and structurally based arguments that see current-day events in light of structures and dynamics that have evolved out of a particular historical situation. The thesis distinguishes the two variables local elites and civilian violence groups from the historically founded theoretical discussion on violence in Indonesia. The two angles based on a broad and deep-rooted discussion on the genealogies of elite relations and violence which effectfully capture the nuances of political organization and elite-manipulation that make violence a stringent phenomenon in the post-Suharto democratic era. The empirical material has been focused around two broad dimensions; the role and implications of local elites and the nature those main perpetrators of violence, privatized civilian militias operating in the close vicinity of political parties and religious organizations. The first part of the analytical discussion treated the particularities of the Indonesian context by through a periodization

highlighting the turning points in history arguing that their ascendancy is dependent on the nature of the state. The following two chapter discussed first the changing realities for local elites in relation to the implementation of democratic instruments and decentralization reforms, and secondly the nature and environment for civilian miltias, arguing that they form part of a patronage network which has a particular function in the new system. The main argument is then that through monopolizing and hijacking democratic institutions for self aggrandizement makes violence indispensable. The following few pages discuss these conclusion in more depth.

7.1 Argumentative Conclusions

The discussion on relevant theoretical variables and delimitations forwarded the question of how dominant actors relate to and make use of democratic institutions based on the Demos survey results arguing that democratic instruments have been hijacked and monopolized by dominant actors in order to get access to and control over state resources. With the decentralization reforms, local parliament have become key mediators in distributing and controlling rents, while the central state continues to control important revenues and natural resources. During the New Order, dominant actors operated through the state co-editing their roles as administrators in the bureaucracy and state enterprise, relying heavily on the military. In the post-Suharto period, controlling local parliaments has been the most attractive means to get access to state power.

Democratization has, naturally so meant a broadening of the arena for actors seeking to gain control over rents, which has implied increased competition between actors in getting control over elected positions, investing huge just in order to pay off coalition partners and associates. Short-term rent seeking is thus necessary to ensure quick pay-offs for the investments made to get into position. Under the new auspices the centralized patronage system of Suharto has collapsed and a much more fluid and competitive system of patronage has established itself. The fears amongst critics of the conventional democratization paradigm in the immediate years after the demise of the New Order, was that an Indonesian variety of local bossism would manifest itself. In stead, arguably as a result of both historical and institutional limitations this kind

‘local authoritarianism’ has not evolved. The Indonesian trajectory has hindered the formation of particularly strong clans or bosses able to monopolize power and control local economy by the means of violence and institutional measures. In stead, there are evidence of a kind of fragmentation of the elites who depend on controlling local parliaments in order to achieve power. Furthermore, this study has revealed that this kind of fragmented system of elite domination affects the way violence is mobilized and used.

Linking to the problems of decentralization, an important concerned raised in the theoretical discussion was whether decentralization can entail the consequences that political authorities will use criminal networks to maintain or revive power. Based on the information collected the study has argued that a distinction between a ‘real’ and an informal ‘shadow sate’ does not capture the real dynamics of the predatory state. It is by working through the state controlling elected positions and parliaments, that predatory money politics is machinated. Decisions may be dependent on where the money flows and the excess of thugs to support them, but the most peculiar phenomenon of the Indonesian political realities, is especially the way informal politicking, such as corruption and violence, is an integral part of formal politics. Due to short-term rent seeking local politicians are highly dependent on access to an apparatus of violence. With the elimination of central state patronage these means of violence have been privatized. Politicians running for positions are thus helped not only by money, but also by the mobilization of civilian militias and thugs to intimidate legislators and supporters of the rival candidate.

The theoretical discussion in chapter two presented a third argument/variable necessary to understand this particular symbiosis between crime and politics so evident in today’s Indonesia. In order to say something about this relationship it was necessary to trace the logic of how the state has one the one hand mobilized and legitimized criminal forces, while on the other hand designing system to control it. Under Suharto the traditional policing measures were incorporated into the state’s official security apparatus, recruiting civilians, especially preman to create as much security as insecurity. The system was not only about subcontracting simple security tasks to local watchmen, but about providing a legal and accepted framework from

which the state could draw mobilizational potential for covert operations. The now so common system of subcontracting violence to private militias by elites thus originated as a New Order official security policy which has found new leverage in the democratic era. In contrast however, the fragmented and elusive pattern of elite mobilization has shaped the mobilization and potential for violence groups as well. With their different camouflage uniforms and regalia they function as private armies that can be mobilized at the behest of the rich, powerful and ruthless. The fact that many of them emphasize their independence from their original associative political party or religious groups, signifies their flexibility. The situation of a large number of fragmented civilian militias mobilized around vague ideals of Islam, or democracy or rooted in some historical association of independence fighters, trigger comparisons to previous periods. Chapter four of the thesis highlighted the system of mobilization of civilians to carry out extreme violence at two turning points in history: the revolution and the 1965 massacres. Evidently, in conclusion, it is fruitful to highlight these similarities. The most interesting result of this process tracing has been to see the changing nature of mobilization between the two periods. During the revolution violence was mobilized locally and privatized. The same can be said about the mobilization of civilian militias during the 1965 massacres, only that this was the starting point of a institutionalization of violence under the patronage of one big boss.

On that note, the fourth central argument framing the analysis of violence groups and the environment within which they exist was to see them as social forces operating on the behest of dominant actors, but with an important historical trajectory representing the capacities for using extreme violence. Under the protectorate of powerful goons and politicians they extend their reach into society by intimidating shop owners and ordinary people.

It has often been assumed in the theoretical framings on democratization, transition, and decentralization that the authoritarian state is the main perpetrator of violence by being able to monopolize the means of violence. As the discussion on the particularities of the Indonesian context has illustrated, the Indonesia state could claim such a monopoly on violence only to the extent to which it could incorporate *preman* and figures of criminality into its own ranks. The thesis has traced the

changing continuities in the relationship between militias/*preman* and the state. The thesis has incorporated a functional analysis of the role of the 'criminal type' – preman within the political party, as commanders and members of militias, and the reasons for their relative social mobility on the political arena. While previously gangsters operated on the behest of their military patrons, the current competitive system of party mobilization seem to also attract gangsters. Furthermore, as long as the militias are lucrative for the party, and the party a lucrative companion for the militia, within the existing party system and structure the militia may provide stepping board for a further political career.

Importantly, playing politics legitimately, although it is a real sham is essential for Indonesian elites. The privatization and subcontracting of violence does evidently illustrate this. With criticism form the Indonesian press and the international community there are trends that political parties are getting rid of their satgas units, in stead relying on their affiliated militias mobilized outside the official party structure. In Indonesia, keeping up face and pride is essential for big men of prowess, and so keeping violence in the dark is also rather traditional trait.

On that final note, the privatization of violence and the subcontracting of specific tasks such as intimidation, security (and insecurity), protection racketeering, demonstration of mass support is symbolic of the nature of the predatory politics which continues to dominate local politics in Indonesia. The machination of money politics ingrained with a competitive system of electioneering to gain state access, makeup the particular elite structures and dynamics for mobilizing (and creating) and incorporating criminal elements into the arena for democratic politics and power.

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7.2 Final Remarks

Finally, under the new situation of democratic politics the violence groups like those discussed in this thesis, perform the same tasks as did the state-sanctioned youth groups and military under the New Order. That is not to say that the situation has not changed at all. The main problem for all those good actors mobilized to change the political situation, increasing representation and accountability on behalf of those elected is exactly that the democratic instruments of power have been monopolized

and hijacked by predatory elites (see Demos 2004). As this study has revealed the battle to control elected positions among groups and networks of predatory elites is one of the key variables that upholds the existence and dependence on civilian violence groups in the post-Suharto era.

For future concern, the existence and mobilization potential of civilian violence groups, represent the greatest threat of violence in Indonesian society. As one observer said about the Philippines; "post colonial Philippine society and politics…trace the tortuous trajectory on a slippery slope between officially sanctioned emergencies and the normality of the abnormal" (Hedman 2000: 143). In many ways, the Indonesian realities are similar. Militias do, whether as demonstrative uniformed civilian militias or as mysterious ninjas, demonstrate how blood-letting reflects the normality of society and thus also the normality of the abnormal.

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