DEEPENING DEMOCRACY IN INDONESIA?
Direct Elections for Local Leaders (Pilkada)
BARE-CHESTED POLITICS IN CENTRAL SULAWESI
The Dynamics of Local Elections in a Post-conflict Region
Graham Brown and Rachael Diprose

INTRODUCTION

The 2005 pilkada (pilihan kepala daerah, or local head election) for the positions of bupati (regent) and wakil bupati (deputy regent) in the troubled Indonesian district of Poso were of vital importance for the future stability of the region and the reconciliation processes under way. Given the instrumental role of political and electoral mobilization as one of the features underpinning violence in the post-Soeharto period, there were many fears that the elections could see a return to violence. From a social scientific perspective, the elections were also important as they allow us a snapshot of the status and dynamics of the broad peace that has endured since 2001 despite many incidents of provocation.

Using a two-level conceptualization of peace at the elite and the grass-roots level, this paper examines how far the pilkada elections are indicative of a move towards a more “positive” peace at the elite and grass-roots level. Examining various formal and informal interventions in the campaigning for the election, we argue that at the elite level, a strong negative peace is in place to prevent a return to conflict, but with little positive engagement to address some of the underlying problems or construct a mutual vision for the future.
for all groups involved. At the grass-roots level, we argue that voting patterns suggest a similar lack of positive peace at this level and an even weaker form of negative peace.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cross-country evidence has shown that democracies are less likely to experience civil war than authoritarian states (Hegre et al. 2001). While democracies may be more likely to channel conflict in peaceful ways, democratizing countries — those in transition, such as Indonesia — are more prone to conflict, and social tensions in these nations are more likely to escalate into violence (Gurr 2000; Gurr 2001; Snyder 2000). In addition, Tilly (2003) argues that regime types themselves will affect the character and nature of collective violence, which is evident in the discussion of the New Order regime below.

Given the increased likelihood of violent conflict in states in transition, this research focuses on the period in Indonesia where “transition” is at the fore of contemporary popular discourse, using the case of Poso in Central Sulawesi. That is not to say that transition is the root cause of violence in democratizing countries, but rather that it may create a space for pre-existing grievances to surface. In times of political, social, and economic transition as experienced by Indonesia since 1998, the very processes and products of change and “development”, and the consequent injection or withdrawal of resources in communities, can challenge value systems, decision-making responsibilities, power relations, and patron–client relations. In turn, there is a greater likelihood of an intensification of the means, motives, and opportunities for local conflict (Barron et al. 2004; Bates 2000). However, violent local conflict does not always result, which is evident in the analysis below of the dynamics of the Poso pilkada.

Brass (1997), Diprose (2004), Tadjoeddin (2002), Varshney et al. (2004), and Wilkinson (2004), amongst others, identify the localized nature of violence and local dynamics as key factors explaining why violent conflicts occur in some regions and not others. Wilkinson (2004), for example, highlights local level electoral incentives for political elites to mobilize in seeking to explain violent outcomes in India, an important consideration in our understanding of the pilkada dynamics in Poso. Mustapha (2000) also identifies the role of elites in mobilizing for violence in nations such as Nigeria. Yet Wilkinson makes the important point that most studies which identify instrumentalist elite mobilization strategies as explanations of violent outcomes only focus on national actors, which does not explain why violence
occurs in some regions and not others at the local level. That is the focus of this study — why did the pilkada in Poso not result in violence?

In examining the elections within the post-conflict context, we propose a modified version of the “positive peace—negative peace” framework developed by Johan Galtung (1969, 1975). Galtung observed a difference between the simple absence of “personal” violence — which he termed “negative peace” — and the absence of “structural” violence — which he termed “positive peace”. In the conflict resolution context, “positive peace” has come to be understood as the existence of processes of engagement and reconciliation between contending parties, with the aim of eradicating underlying causes of conflict, or “structural violence” (see Aksaev 1999 for an example of this framework applied to ethnic conflict resolution). In employing this distinction in our analysis of the pilkada dynamics in Poso, we make two modifications to this framework. Firstly, we distinguish between elite level interactions and the “grass-roots” level, as depicted schematically in Table 16.1. Secondly, we distinguish between a “strong” and a “weak” form of negative peace. “Strong” negative peace pertains to situations in which strong informal or formal institutions are in place to avoid a return to conflict, but which do not constitute sufficient proactive engagement to lead to positive peace. “Weak” negative peace is where such institutions are not in place, or only weakly so.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ELITE LEVEL</strong></th>
<th><strong>Negative Peace</strong></th>
<th><strong>Positive Peace</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRASS-ROOTS LEVEL</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative Peace</strong></td>
<td>Neither elites nor grass roots engaged in positive peace-building; risk of return to conflict high, particularly in case of provocation</td>
<td>Elites engaged in positive peace-building; grass roots remain ostracized from each other. Likelihood of return to violence low to medium, depending on elites' ability to respond to provocation to prevent escalation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Peace</strong></td>
<td>“Organic” reconciliation at the grass-roots level not matched by elite integration; likelihood of return to violence low, even in the event of provocation</td>
<td>Both elites and grass roots engaged in positive peace-building; likelihood of return to violence negligible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 16.1**
Negative and Positive Peace at Two Levels
SOCIO-POLITICAL DYNAMICS IN POSO

Since the fall of Soeharto and his authoritarian New Order regime, violent conflict has become more widespread in Indonesia. In the literature on Indonesia, it is now commonplace to link the transition of 1998 to the outburst of violent conflicts that occurred across the archipelago, although in many cases violent conflict had already broken out in these regions (Bertrand 2004; Tadjoeddin 2002; Varshney et al. 2004). For more than thirty years, potential inter-group tensions were systematically controlled in Indonesia via the security forces, government hegemony over the media, the use of legislation which regulated and controlled ethnic, religious, race, and inter-group relations (Suku, Agama, Ras, Antar-Golongan — SARA), and sometimes the violent use of force. Furthermore, legislation on Village Governance (Law No. 5/1979) homogenized village administrative structures, split the local power bases, forced these new units to compete for scarce development resources, and eroded the “traditional” or informal forms of governance (Guinness 1994). However, to replace informal systems, there was no robust legal justice system where conflicts could be systematically adjudicated by impartial third parties, perpetrators duly punished, or civil liberties maintained.

The processes of democratization and transition have stimulated dynamic local environments where tensions surface, and in some cases violence results. The end of the regime saw grievances surface and the effects of a weak conflict resolution system culminate in communal tensions without adequate mediation and intervention mechanisms available to help reduce the violent impacts of conflict. It also left different groups with a number of grievances, particularly in relation to differential access to the state (Bertrand 2004). Between 1999 and 2004, and reaching a peak in 2000–02, large-scale communal violence ensued in Central and West Kalimantan, Ambon and North Maluku, and Central Sulawesi amongst other places. Varshney et al. (2004) put the estimated death toll from collective violence at over 10,700 between 1990 and 2003, with the majority occurring in the later part of the period.

While Indonesia is approximately 85 per cent Muslim and 10 per cent Christian, traversing some 300 larger ethnic groups, in many (but not all) of the conflict areas which are usually limited to particular districts, the size of the ethno-religious groups is relatively balanced. Such is the case of the widespread communal violence in Poso, Central Sulawesi. Many of these conflicts involve competing claims of indigeneity and grievances of political, economic, and social marginalization of one or the other group involved. The conflicts in these areas have not been completely removed from national
politics and national elite interests, but at the same time have not been purely instrumentalized, with the long-standing grievances pervading poverty stricken communities surfacing during the conflicts.

The implementation of decentralization and regional autonomy in 2001 has allowed for diversity in the regions to flourish. Regional autonomy has allowed for significant powers and responsibilities to be devolved to district and municipal (kabupaten/kota) governments rather than the provincial governments (once representatives of the central government in the regions), which has also changed the nature of local politics. Prior to and during this transition there has been the increased assertion by minority ethnic groups of their interests and separate identities, which they claim of parallel importance to their national identity as Indonesian. There is no better situation in which to examine these dynamics than during the pilkada (district head elections) in Indonesia, where local interests, power struggles, competition for resource control, and grievances come to the fore.

The local population of Poso is ethnically heterogeneous, with migrants from all over Sulawesi (mainly Muslim), other islands, as well as the local Pamona people of whom the majority profess the Christian faith. The ethnic Pekurehua, Bada, and Besoa, who respectively inhabit the regions of North Lore, Central Lore, and South Lore, give their own colour to the diversity of Poso, with ancestral and traditional adat (local custom and tradition) values still existing in many villages. The Lore and Pamona regions have also become a destination for many IDPs (internally displaced persons) from the conflict that has taken place in the district. In the legislative branch of government, the 25-member district legislature (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah — DPRD) is dominated by Partai Damai Sejahtera (PDS), Golkar, Partai Patriot, and PBR.²

Over the past seven years, much of the communal violence in Central Sulawesi has been concentrated in the Poso district, where the aggregate Muslim and Christian groupings were almost equal in size prior to the outbreak of communal conflict in 1997, although more recent figures show a post-conflict population of 30 per cent Muslim and 65 per cent Christian in 2004 (BPS 1998; BPS 2005). The triggers of some of the major incidents of violence between 2000 and 2002, which resulted in the loss of some 2,000 lives and widespread property destruction, were youth clashes and seemingly small incidents between individuals.³ However, local grievances form the backdrop to the clashes between local groups organized around their Muslim and Christian identities, both claiming indigeneity in the region. Thus the tensions leading to the recent communal clashes, with groups mobilizing around religious identity, have been underpinned by socio-economic and
political grievances rather than religious ideology itself (e.g. Aragon 2000; Aragon 2001; Brown et al. 2005; Cote 2005).

Historically, local peoples in Central Sulawesi have organized (and been organized) loosely around religious identity. Christianity was introduced by the Dutch missionaries to many of the indigenous animist communities, and there have been Muslim and Chinese migrant traders who also sought the alliance of other groups of local peoples. However, Lorraine Aragon (2001, p. 75) reports "the routine existence of small-scale warfare, but no persistent division" between the mainly animist highlanders and mainly Muslim lowlanders. Thus, while the conflicts often pitted Christians against Muslims, the dynamics of the tensions are more complex, reflecting dynamic political agendas that were not exclusively defined by religious cleavages.

These conflicts, while local, have linkages to the national sphere of politics, patronage, and change. Cote (2005, p. 4) argues that from 1970 until the 1990s, New Order development policies were often based on local patronage of the different groups in Central Sulawesi, including assertions against the GKST (Gereja Kristen Sulawesi Tengah — Central Sulawesi Christian Church) synod. Throughout the New Order regime, outbreaks of violence were not uncommon between Muslims and Christians as well as some between migrant and indigenous groups in Palu (the capital) and Poso, but these episodes were promptly repressed by the government (Human Rights Watch 2002). However, Cote contends that during the early 1990s, patronage from Jakarta shifted towards GKST, partially stimulating the Islamic claims to power during the violence between 1998 and 2004. In the final days of the New Order, Islam was increasingly privileged over other religions at the national, provincial, and sometimes local level, leading to resentment within the Christian communities (Aragon 2001, p. 54). The situation was compounded by migration dynamics where mostly Muslim migrants were increasingly viewed as demographic threats to the historically Christian domination of the highlands.

**RECENT CONFLICT HISTORY**

A brief overview of the chronology of the recent conflict in Poso is important for understanding how social relations and trust have broken down in the region, as have local institutions, including those which facilitate and provide justice and conflict resolution services. The impact of the conflict in the Poso Pesisir sub-district is just one example of how devastating the conflict has been for the citizens of the region. Poso Pesisir suffered the worst of the damage from the conflict, with over 6,000 buildings destroyed, including
58 places of worship. Many were killed, injured and some 10,000 people were displaced. Scattered through the violence and serving to fuel further phases in the conflict, were poorly resolved incidents in the conflict, and few arrests of perpetrators of the violence, as well as outside interest in sustaining the violence and national intervention mechanisms. During the interviews conducted for this research on the potential for conflict during the pilkada, frustration with unresolved incidents pertaining to the conflict continued to dominate public discourse and raised the potential for further conflict.

It is evident from the chronology in Table 16.2 and the discussion above, why many who were the interviewed on the pilkada dynamics feared that communal conflict would result. We have identified six inter-linked phases in the recent conflict history of Poso since the end of the New Order. These phases are underpinned by trigger incidents between youths, mass mobilization, and violence around religious identity in Poso, claims to indigeneity and resources in the region, district politics, shifting allegiances, broken-down informal power sharing agreements between Muslim and Christian leaders, local and supra-local elite interests, the prevailing national climate, as well as local and supra-local intervention mechanisms.

| TABLE 16.2 |
| Chronology of Communal Conflict and Violence in Poso since 1998 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1: December 1998 — Outbreak of Violence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 December 1998, during Christmas Eve and Ramadan</td>
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<tr>
<td>A brawl between a Protestant youth and Muslim youth broke out in Poso. The incident quickly took on religious overtones; religious leaders from both groups joined to ban alcohol during Ramadan. Some Muslims began their own vigilante seizures, leading to clashes between Protestant youths defending shops selling alcohol (HRW 2002: 14).</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 December 1998</td>
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<tr>
<td>On a wave of rumours of church burnings, the conflict escalated. On 27 December Christian district assembly member Herman Parimo from Tentena trucked in his militia, the Central Sulawesi Youth Movement (GPST), armed with machetes. Hundreds of Muslims from other parts of Central Sulawesi arrived by truck, clashing with Christians in Poso near the police barracks. After a week, the violence subsided, leaving 200 people (mostly Protestants) injured, approximately 400 Protestant and Catholic homes burned and scores of Protestant and Catholic stores destroyed. Parimo was rumoured by Muslim accounts to be dissatisfied that Protestant politician Patiro was not nominated for the position of bupati (district head); instead, a Muslim was nominated. He was later imprisoned along with seven</td>
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</table>
other Protestants, while no Muslims were prosecuted. This seemingly one-sided application of the law would fuel anger among Protestants in the future phases.

Phase 2: 16 April–3 May 2000 — Second Outbreak of Violence

16 April 2000
In response to the knifing of a Muslim youth, a mob of Muslims searched for the Protestant youth deemed responsible and began to destroy Protestant and Chinese homes, causing many to flee to the hills. Brimob, the riot control police unit (mobile brigade), was summoned by the Poso police to stop the burning of Protestant homes and churches. In the process of temporarily halting the burnings, Brimob shot and killed three Muslims, further incensing Muslims and leading to their recall back to Palu.

End April–early May
After the Brimob left Poso, house burnings resumed and the violence escalated further. Ultimately, the violence was stopped by the mobilization of 600 soldiers sent from Makassar. The second phase of the conflict left at least seven killed, 38 injured, roughly 700 Protestant and Catholic homes destroyed and four churches burned. No one was prosecuted during the violence in Phase 2.


Beginning May 2000
Two successive phases of Muslim-dominated violence and the lack of even-handed and effective justice were followed shortly after by the third phase in which many more Muslims were killed by Christians to avenge previous bouts of violence. In this phase roughly a dozen Christian “ninjas” attacked Muslims in a targeted raid against those they attributed with much of the previous violence. Three Muslims were killed by the group and the church to which the group fled was burned down. Various episodes of violence broke out between Christians and Muslims, including an incident at a transmigration village near Kilo Sembilan (which was a site of migrant Muslim vs. indigenous Christian tensions because of transmigration). In this incident, many Muslim men from the village were killed (even after surrendering) and women subjected to sexual violence and held for several days with the children. Various other attacks on Muslims occurred throughout this period, ultimately leading to the deaths of between 300 and 800, mostly Muslims. The fighting was brought under control after the military sent 1,500 additional soldiers, ten tanks and a combat unit to the area in addition to Brimob forces from Java. Soldiers secured hotspots, built barracks for IDPs, and confiscated weapons.

August 2000
In August 2000, after the violence had subsided, top-down attempts at reconciliation were imposed through an agreement by the governors of Central, South, and North Sulawesi to safely return IDPs with government aid. With President Wahid’s participation, a peace

continued on next page
TABLE 16.2 — cont’d

ceremony was performed to reconcile both sides. However, these efforts did not emerge from the initiatives of the key local communities and their leaders, undermining the robustness of any peace attempts.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Phase 4: July 2001—December 2001</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>July 2001</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The lack of an earnest reconciliation effort contributed to ongoing low levels of violence, until members of the militant Muslim group Laskar Jihad arrived from outside the region. Fighting became increasingly well organized with more potent weapons involved, reportedly including automatic weapons. The entrance of Laskar Jihad led to more Christian deaths and many IDPs. In the beginning, the government did nothing to prevent Laskar Jihad from becoming involved in the violence, even meeting with provincial and district officials after they had arrived. Laskar Jihad coordinated with local Muslims to burn Christian villages to the ground one at a time. The violence was ended by a new infusion of police and military troops. This phase saw increased violence that pitted the police and military against Laskar Jihad and Muslim fighters. Two incidents in Mapane and Toyado occurred in which the security forces were accused of retaliatory human rights violations, rather than upholding the rule of law. During this phase, at least 141 were left dead, 90 injured and over 2,400 houses razed.</td>
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<th>Phase 5: The Malino Declaration, December 2001—end 2004</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>December 2001</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>In December 2001, then Coordinating Minister for Politics and Security Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono initiated the joint military-police Security Restoration Operation (Operasi Penulihan Keamanan), which had three stages of 1) ending the violence, 2) expelling outsiders, confiscating weapons, carrying out legal actions, and 3) rehabilitating damaged infrastructure and reconciling communities (HRW 2002, pp. 28–29). At the same time, the National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) with top security and Cabinet officials began initiating the Malino peace process on 19–20 December 2001. Representatives of both religious communities were chosen by leaders of each side, reflecting the geographic, ethnic, professional, and thematic complexity of the conflict. The agreement that emerged from the process consisted of ten key points which were intended to address mostly the proximate causes of the violence by deferring to legal procedures, recognizing pre-conflict rights and ownership, returning IDPs, and rehabilitating infrastructure. Following the declaration, a period of weapons confiscation and security deployments, in addition to the overall weariness of the violence, helped to maintain basic security. An emphasis on follow-up</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
led to the creation of the Pokja Malino, the working groups that would monitor and help implement various aspects of the Malino Declaration. Working groups were created at the provincial, district, and sub-district levels on areas such as security, law, mental and spiritual rehabilitation, economic rehabilitation, physical rehabilitation, IDP repatriation, and education and health. These were later reduced to the following thematic working groups: peace and reconciliation, economic rehabilitation, education, and spiritual welfare.

After the declaration, the greater presence of security forces and conflict fatigue changed the nature of violence, forcing it underground. Instead of pitched battles among communities, violence tactics shifted to targeted terror methods. Many outsiders left (following the dissolution of Laskar Jihad). However, mysterious bombings and shootings were ongoing. In October 2003, thirteen were killed in Poso and Morowali by masked gunmen and in March 2004 an attack on a church left a reverend dead (ICG 2004; Jakarta Post, 31 March 2004). The October attacks were followed quickly by the arrest of eighteen local men with ties to the regional Southeast Asia terror group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) through a local militia called Mujahidin KOMPAK.

Phase 6: 2005 to elections, ongoing tensions and relocation of IDPs

Throughout 2005, efforts were made to rebuild some of the burnt-down areas, and evidence of this can be seen at the famous kilo sembilan site. There have been significant meetings between Christian and Muslim leaders, particularly prior to the district head elections in June 2005. These meetings took place at the community level, rather than as a part of an elite peace accord. However, bombs and other attacks continued sporadically in Poso, but this was increasingly related not to communal tensions but to corruption in the funds for IDPs. Thus, for instance, the beheading of the village chief of Pinedapa in October 2004 has been related to his refusal to sign for IDP funds that his village had not received. Similarly, the bombs outside two major NGOs in Poso in April 2005 occurred after the NGOs’ attempts to organize a public accusation of civil servants and legislators involved in corruption. Whilst these attacks have not provoked further violence or displacement — an indication of increasing confidence in the peacebuilding process — there remains substantial disquiet in the district, not least over the frequent failure to bring those responsible for such attacks to justice.¹ Of concern, however, was the large bomb in May 2005 which went off in the Christian market of Tentena, in the Lore area far from where previous incidents of violence had taken place in or near the district capital. Local leaders were able to calm fears and contain reprisals and vengeance seeking.

Note: ¹ Interviews with community leaders, Poso, May 2005.
THE PILKADA ELECTION

The conflict dynamics explored in the previous section suggest a “strong” negative peace, in which certain conflict-avoidance institutions are in place, but there is little proactive engagement in search of a positive peace. On the one hand, conflict has not returned to the region despite regular, often gruesome, provocations. On the other hand, however, tensions continue to simmer. The greatest opportunity for such a positive peace to emerge — the Malino accords and, particularly, the subsequent formation of the “Pokja Malino” working groups — are almost universally viewed as a disappointing failure by all sides in the conflict.5

In examining the pilkada elections in this context, we look first at the campaign period, particularly identifying different formal and informal “interventions” from the elite level to ensure a peaceful campaign. We interpret this as evidence of the type of peace existent at the elite level. We then turn to the voting patterns themselves, taking this as evidence of the type of peace at the grass-roots level. Before discussing the campaign, however, we briefly introduce the candidates, slates, and parties contesting the election.

Altogether, five slates of candidates stood for the bupati/deputy bupati elections in Poso, as detailed in Table 16.3 — the numberings given are the official ballot paper numbers, which were attributed randomly by the Election Commission (KPU, Komisi Pemilihan Umum). As we shall explore further below, each pairing comprised a Muslim and a Christian; in three out of the five pairings, the Christian candidate was for the bupati with a Muslim as his deputy; in the other two, vice versa.

Broadly speaking, the candidate slates can be broken down into three groups within the framework elaborated above. Firstly, there were two slates with strong religious links, nos. 2 and 3. Although these pairings had a Muslim and a Christian candidate, they were nominated by parties with very strong religious affiliations, and in each case the candidate for the bupati position was from the religious community of the nominating party or coalition. Ingkiriwang/Muthalib were nominated by the Partai Damai Sejahtera (PDS, Prosperous Peace Party), which is a Christian party, while Muin/Walenta were nominated by a coalition of Islamic parties. Muin Pusadan had been the (appointed) bupati when the conflict originally broke out, and many reports implicate him in the religious mobilization that led to the violence (e.g. Human Rights Watch 2002). Widespread support for these two slates would suggest that at the grass-roots level, a weak negative peace continues to prevail, with voters still relying on their “own” parties to protect their interests.
# TABLE 16.3
Candidates for the Poso Pilkada Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bupati Candidate</th>
<th>Background</th>
<th>Deputy Bupati Candidate</th>
<th>Background</th>
<th>Nominating Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Dede K Atmawijaya</td>
<td>Army officer, Muslim, Sundanese</td>
<td>Lis Sigilipu</td>
<td>Reverend, Christian, Pamona</td>
<td>Koalisi Poso Bersatu: PDI-P; Partai Democrat; Pelopor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Piet Ingkiriwang</td>
<td>Retired police officer, Christian, Pamona</td>
<td>Muthalib Rimi</td>
<td>Businessman, Muslim, Bugis</td>
<td>Partai Damai Sejahtera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Muin Pusadan</td>
<td>Former bupati, Muslim, Bungku</td>
<td>Osbert Walenta</td>
<td>Retired civil servant, Christian, Pamona</td>
<td>Koalisi Sintuwu Maroso: Partai Keadilan dan Persatuan Indonesia; Partai Amanat Nasional; Partai Bintang Reformasi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Frans Sowolino</td>
<td>Businessman, Christian, Pamona</td>
<td>Kahar Latjare</td>
<td>Politician, Muslim, Bugis</td>
<td>Partai Patriot Pancasila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Edi Bungkundapu</td>
<td>Bureaucrat, Christian, Pamona</td>
<td>Awad Alamri</td>
<td>Bureaucrat, Muslim, Arab</td>
<td>Partai Golkar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Seputar Rakyat, 5:2; interviews with community leaders, Poso, May 2005.
The second group of slates, nos. 4 and 5, were much more secular, with no strong religious institutional links either on the part of the individuals themselves or the parties backing them. These two slates — Sowolino/Latjare and Bungkundapu/Alamri — were respectively nominated by Partai Patriot Pancasila and Golkar. Given that Partai Patriot Pancasila was itself formed as an offshoot of the Golkar youth organization, these two slates were very much representative of the old “New Order” politics, particularly the Bungkundapu/Alamri pairing, where both contenders were from the bureaucracy, Bungkundapu being the secretary of the DPRD. This is important because in other regions affected by conflict, such as North Maluku and West Kalimantan, former New Order elites did very well in the pilkada elections (Smith, Chapter 14, and Subianto, Chapter 15, this volume). Voter support for these candidates would be indicative of a stronger, but still negative, grass-roots peace; none of these parties or candidates were overtly religiously-biased, but their New Order linkages would suggest that support was based on some nostalgia for the kind of coercive negative peace that prevailed under Soeharto, as epitomized by the SARA regulations.

Support for the remaining slate — no. 1, Atmawijaya/Sigilipu — could be taken as stronger evidence of the emergence of a more positive peace at the grass-roots level. This slate appears to have been more based on the individual, cross-religious appeal of both candidates rather than any strong political or party affiliation. The candidate for bupati, Dede Atmawijaya, was a high-ranking police officer in Poso who was widely credited with having protected Muslims from Christian attacks during the violence, but was also seen by both sides as fair and neutral. A Sundanese Muslim without strong religious convictions, he is known locally for his shirtless karaoke carousing and his active involvement in youth forums and other reconciliation activities. His running partner, Lis Sigilipu, is a senior member of the Central Sulawesi Church synod, and was a delegate at the original Malino discussions and claimed wide respect among Muslims. Although Sigilipu herself was a long-time Golkar activist, the parties backing this slate — Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s Partai Demokrat, Megawati Snkarnoputri’s PDI-P and the smaller Partai Pelopor — were broadly linked to the post-New Order elite at the national level.

The campaign period saw a range of formal and informal interventions by state, political, and civil elites, which allow us to judge the extent and nature of the peace predominating between the different communities at the elite level. Clearly, one of the most important actors here was the local branch of the Election Commission (KPUD), charged with implementing and overseeing the election. In the 2004 parliamentary elections, the Poso District
KPUD was given special recognition by the national headquarters for its success in implementing violence-free elections, particularly given predictions about elections-based violence in the hotspots throughout the archipelago. KPUD officials were determined to maintain the track record, but were all the while concerned about conducting the local elections where local issues were at the forefront of the campaign and local grievances would potentially trigger new episodes of violence.

However, the KPUD was active at every stage of the process and conscious of responding quickly to complaints, as well as engaging with candidates and coordinating with security forces and local leaders to ameliorate potential triggers that could undermine the election process. When interviewed shortly before the official campaign period began, the chairman of the Poso KPUD was clearly of the view that the most important task facing the organization was not just to implement a fair election, but to be widely seen as doing such: “The excesses of the KPU were very worrying before, especially the central [i.e. national-level] KPU.” The KPUD of Poso thus undertook a number of programmes to ensure that such activities as the verification of candidates’ nominations were conducted with full transparency: “At every level of the process, we disseminate to the press, changes at any level: from the beginning, result and the end will all be distributed to the media.” Political observers confirmed that the KPUD was broadly effective in reaching the grass-roots and conducting an open and fair election.

As already mentioned, one of the most important interventions in ensuring a peaceful election was the pairing of Muslim and Christian candidates on each slate. Our informants differ on how this came about. One of the candidates who we interviewed asserted that it had been in response to grassroots demands, but the KPUD chairman claimed the proposal for such pairings had come from the KPUD itself, although acknowledging that “all of society wanted such combinations.” Other informants suggested that motivation for such pairing came from basic political considerations on the part of the political parties and the recognition that even a Christian candidate would find it hard to win in the predominantly Christian areas without any Muslim backing. Whatever the origins, the cross-religious pairings were widely interpreted as a necessary, although not necessarily sufficient, condition for ensuring that contentious and potentially violent religious mobilization did not emerge during the campaign period.

Another important aspect of the candidates themselves was the strong political and personal links between many candidates of different slates, although not as strong as was observed in other areas of Indonesia such as Bandar Lampung. The Golkar candidate for _bupati_, Edy Bungkundapu, for
instance, was related to the husband of Lis Sigilipu; Sigilipu herself was the cousin of Piter Ingkiriwang. Although perhaps representing a degree of “elite capture” of local politics (cf. Hadiz 2003), all with their own big business backings originating from within and outside the region, this personal interlinking of candidates was also presented as an important factor in keeping the campaign and election peaceful — as one candidate told us, “we let society understand that we are related, so there aren’t quarrels”.

Even the head of the local Election Commission had strong political links; his father and sister were both Golkar members of, respectively, the DPR and DPRD.

Each of the candidates attempted to present themselves in the best possible light in terms of their past performance in both the conflict and local politics. However, one respondent contended that the leader of the winning slate, Piter Ingkiriwang, who had only engaged in local politics in the six months preceding the elections, was able to win the election due to his “newness”, seemingly “clean slate” in terms of corruption, claims to indigeneity, and lack of previous political involvement.

Beyond the election machinery and the candidates themselves, civil society and community leaders also developed interventions to ensure the peaceful conduct of the election, and to at least publicly support the implementation of violence-free elections. Most important here was probably the series of meetings and forums set up by Ustaz Adnan Aarsal, an influential Islamic cleric, and Rinaldy Damanik, a Christian pastor who had been imprisoned after a dubious trial in 2003 for possession of weapons, but later released after a campaign led by a number of Islamic clerics. Highly influential within their own communities — Damanik has since been elected president of the Central Sulawesi synod — the Adnan-Damanik meetings were intended to set up a cross-religious forum to discuss issues of concern to both communities and to develop an agenda for the future of Poso.

This was also backed by a public embrace of the two leaders, who had previously had somewhat frosty relations. Arguably the strongest evidence of an emerging “positive” peace in Poso, the forum established by the leaders never came to fruition. We have been unable to ascertain quite why this was the case, but two opposite points are worth noting. Firstly, the date on which the public announcement of the forum was meant to be held coincided with the Tentena bomb; it may be that the parties involved decided that this was an inappropriate time to launch the forum. Secondly, there may have been irresolvable disagreement on the core issue of the status of Kota Poso, the main city in Poso district. Despite the Christian majority in Poso district, Kota Poso is mainly Muslim, and Adnan was a strong advocate for its separation as a district in its own right; given its position as the main
economic hub of Poso district, however, the Christian community was strongly opposed to this proposal.16

At the elite level, then, the election campaign saw the institutionalization or development of a wide range of strong institutions aimed at preventing a return to religious mobilization during the election. Yet there was little evidence of more positive engagement for the future; even the candidate pairing strategy was seen primarily as a conflict prevention mechanism rather than the harbinger of greater cross-religious cooperation and integration. Such moves towards positive peace that did come emanated largely from civil society, such as the Adnan-Damanik meetings and the activities of Yayasan Tanah Merdeka — the NGO whose offices were bombed shortly before the election.

To evaluate the grass-roots' perspective, we turn to the election results themselves (see Table 16.4). The elections were won convincingly by the pairing of Piet Ingkiriwang and Muthalib Rimi on the PDS-nominated slate. Although they did not win an absolute majority of the vote, their share of the vote — 42.6 per cent — was twenty points higher than the second-placed candidates and they came first in every sub-district except Poso Kota and Poso Pesisir (two areas where there is a higher concentration of Muslim residents), where they came third.

Despite the various interventions to prevent or reduce ethnic and religious tensions during the election, candidates nominated by religion-based parties — which we took to be representative of a “weak” negative peace — garnered more than half the votes cast. Indeed, in every sub-district, such candidates came first. The PDS-backed Ingkiriwang-Rimi slate won in all the Christian majority sub-districts; the Muin-Walenta slate backed by the coalition of Islamic parties won in the two Muslim majority sub-districts of Poso Kota and Poso Pesisir. There was, however, a noticeable difference in the margin of victory. In many of the Christian areas, Ingkiriwang won an absolute majority of the votes, taking more-or-less exactly half the votes overall. By contrast, while Muin-Walenta won both the Muslim-majority sub-districts, it was only as the largest minority, with less than 30 per cent overall in the two sub-districts. In addition, Ingkiriwang-Rimi did much better in the Muslim areas than Muin-Walenta did in the Christian areas.

The bloc of former New Order parties and their nominees — slates nos. 4 and 5 — which we took to be representative of a stronger but still negative grass-roots peace, won just over a third of the vote in combination. Surprisingly, however, each of the slates’ share of the vote differed markedly in the Muslim and Christian areas — the Partai Patriot-backed Sowolino/Latjare slate performed much better in the Christian-majority sub-districts, coming in
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Source: Seputar Rakyat, 5:2.
second to the Ingkirinwang slate in all but one; in contrast, the Golkar-backed Bungkundapu/Alamri performed much better in the Muslim sub-districts, coming second to the Islamic coalition in both. This religious bias in the votes for both of these slates suggests that our original assumptions about the secular nature of these slates may have been misconceived, but these slates were clearly less overtly religious. Indeed, it is worth noting that the Golkar slate, which came second in the Muslim areas, was led by a Christian nominee for regent, who outperformed the alternative Muslim candidate, Dede Atmawijaya.

Finally, the Atmawijaya/Sigilipu pairing, which we took to be most representative of an agenda for positive peace, came in fifth overall, garnering barely a tenth of the vote. In one sub-district — Pamona Timur — they won less than 2 per cent of the vote, the lowest of any of the candidates in any of the sub-districts. In contrast to all the other slates, however, there was considerably less variation in their results between Christian and Muslim areas, suggesting indeed that they were broadly perceived as non-biased by both sides.

Despite several tense moments during the elections, with protests staged at the KPUD office and threats of mass mobilization, civil society did not engage in collective violence during the election period. The results of the election, however, suggest an overwhelmingly negative peace at the grassroots level, with more than half the population voting for religious party-backed slates representative of a “weak” negative peace, and another third voting for the “strong” negative candidates from the old New Order elites, again with some apparent religious bias. Only around one in ten voters opted for the slate most associated with a positive peace agenda at the elite level.

CONCLUSIONS

In explaining the emergence and decline of inter-communal conflict in Poso, there is a relatively clear and coherent narrative that can be — and often is — told which revolves around the manipulation of local political elites and the response of the broader population. In this narrative, one of the origins of the conflict can be found in the contests between religiously divided elites for control over key positions of power and their successful mobilization of militia groups, and subsequently the broader population, to stake these claims. Of course such discourse partially, but not wholly, explains the genesis of more recent episodes of communal violence in Poso. However, it somewhat disguises other problems pertaining to poor access to and provision of justice services in the region, and the long history of communal tensions and local
grievances. The recent period of broad peace, however, despite numerous often gruesome provocations, can then be explained by the efforts of the population not to respond — they are, in the all-too-oft quoted cliché, “tired of violence”.

This narrative appeals to somewhat romantic, reified notions of “the people versus the elites”. In this account, the “elites” are primarily responsible for the violence; the “people” are primarily responsible for the current peace. It has resonances with similar accounts of the violence elsewhere in Indonesia. In Ambon, for instance, some analysts counterpoint the activities of national and local elites against the decline in traditional “pela-gandong” communal institutions; this decline is itself usually linked to the administrative reorganizations of the New Order period (e.g. Aditjondro 2001; Aditjondro 2002). It is also resonant with a widespread dissatisfaction with “top-down” peace-making, evident both in interviews in the district and in the shift towards participatory peace-building processes by donor agencies working in Indonesia, including the UNDP’s “Peace and Development Assessment”, which was carried out in a number of troubled provinces, including Central Sulawesi.

This narrative undoubtedly carries more than an element of truth, but the analysis of the Poso pilkada election in this paper, a critical moment when a return to violence was widely feared, suggests some important nuances. Put simply, it is by no means clear that “the people” are the single primary agents preventing a return to violence in the district. While it is clear that the failure of the justice system to pursue an even-handed and thorough approach to conflict-resolution continues to cause tension, responses to incidents of provocation and the development of institutions of mediation have largely been a product of local elite-based interaction, rather than “grass-roots” initiatives. Short of giving a strong political mandate to elites engaged in ongoing peace-building activities, voting patterns instead suggest a continuing “bunker mentality” in which religious parties are seen as the best option for the protection of group interests.

Notes

1 Sen and Hill demonstrate that under the New Order, any text that might inflame SARA tensions was banned, limiting the news reporting of ethno-religious tensions and controlling the public interpretation of all socio-political conflicts, as well as excluding and restricting languages used in the media in various ways. See Sen and Hill (2000, p. 12).

2 Interview with chairman of DPRD commission D, 11 March 2005.
Interviews with Muslim and Christian leaders in Poso, May 2005.
5 Dampak Konflik Horisontal di Kabupaten Poso, BPS.
6 Interviews with community leaders, May 2005. See also Brown et al. (2005).
7 Interview, pilkada candidate, May 2005.
8 “Kemudian ekses KPU memang sangat mengganggu kemarin, ekses KPU Pusat”, interview Yasin Mangun, Palu, 19 May 2005.
9 “Setiap tahapan, setiap proses, kita lansir [diangkat di media] terus, setiap perubahan tahapan: memulai, hasil, dan akhir semua dilansir media”, interview, Yasin.
10 Interview, Poso-based journalist, 17 May 2006.
11 “Semua ke masyarakat yang ingin kombinas”, interview, Yasin.
12 Interviews with community leaders, Bandar Lampung, May 2005. In Bandar Lampung, where there were also five slates, virtually all the candidates had a close familial relationship, with the notable exception of the PKS slate.
13 “Kita beri pemahaman kepada masyarakat bahwa kita bersaudara, jangan berkelah”; interview with candidate, May 2005.
14 Interview, KPU representative, May 2005.
15 Interview, Poso activist, May 2006.
16 Interview, Adnan Arsal, Poso, May 2005.
17 The issue of a separate district of Kota Poso is also connected with the ongoing political manoeuvrings associated with the formation of a new province of East Sulawesi (Sulawesi Timur), but space does not permit a discussion of this.
18 “Pela-gandong” are traditional cross-village alliances.

References


electoral campaigns and give their assessment as to how far these
data from across the archipelago for the first direct elections
have contributed to a "deepening democracy" for local leaders and
heads of regional leaderships. The first round of
direct elections for the national and local legislatures and the
president in 2004. The latest development in this democratic
process is the implementation of a system for the direct election
of regional leaders, which began in 2005, the first round of
Indonesia has been in an era of transition away from an
authoritarian regime, and on a "quest for democracy." This quest
since the fall of long-reigning President Soeharto in 1998.