The State of Disorder
Non-State Violence in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia

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Declaration

I certify that this thesis is the product of my own research, fewer than the maximum word limit in length, and contains no material which has been accepted as part of the requirements of any other degree at any tertiary education institution, or any material previously published by another person except where due reference is made.

Abdil Mughis Mudhoffir

Abstract

This thesis examines the proliferation of non-state violence groups in post-authoritarian Indonesia. It argues that non-state violence characterises the workings of predatory forms of capitalism in the way understood by Marx as primitive accumulation. The persistence of non-state violence in different political settings is due to the significance of predatory capitalism, characterised by the use of extra-economic means in the accumulation of power and wealth. Within this context, non-state violence is not an obstruction, but instrumental for accumulation process, constituting the state of disorder. This argument criticises Weberian notions of the state in which it is defined as an entity that monopolises the legitimate use of violence. The existence of non-state violence is neither an indicator of the weak capacity of the state, thus enabling militias, gangsters or vigilante groups to take up certain state functions, as argued within institutionalist perspectives, nor the result of the fragmentation of power, as argued in the Migdalian state-in-society approach. As shown in the Indonesian case, non-state violence is endemic to predatory states as part of their purpose of facilitating capital accumulation.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

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Chapter 1:
Introduction

Across different political settings, the workings of the Indonesian state have been accompanied by non-state violence. Even in the present democratic context, violent groups like street gangs, vigilantes and ethnic and religious militias continue to proliferate in many regions of the country. They are non-state elements in that they are institutionally distinct from formal state agencies. Formal coercive institutions such as the military and police use legitimate physical force on the basis of laws and the constitution, which are derived from the ideal conception of the modern state. The puzzle is that informal and privatised violence organisations are able to exercise coercion almost without state punishment. This thesis hypothesises that this capacity is linked to the reproduction of dominant social relations of power within which non-state organisations of violence have significant functions.

These non-state violence organisations have established domains of control in both urban and rural localities in Indonesia. They provide protection to neighbourhoods while simultaneously practicing intimidation. More importantly, they have been active in political mobilisations during electoral contests and in many illicit economic activities. However, this is not unique to Indonesia; in many parts of the world, similar groups coexist with formal coercive institutions, such as in Thailand and the Philippines (Sidel 1997, 2015; Barker 2016), many African states (Pratten 2008a, 2008b; Pratten and Sen 2008; Kyed and Albrecht 2015; Comarof and Comarof 2006; Diphoorn and Kyed 2016), Italy (Gambetta 1993), Russia (Volkov 1999, 2000; Stephenson 2016; Holdstrom and Smith 2000), Iran (Golkar 2016, 2011; see also Chapter 7 of this thesis), Turkey (Tugal 2016a; Donmez 2008; see also Chapter 7 of this thesis) and Colombia (Aviles 2006a, 2006b, 2008, 2009). Meanwhile, the workings of the state in many other countries, such as Western Europe, Australia (see Blagg and Valuri 2004a, 2004b) and arguably Argentina (see Chapter 2), are not presently accompanied by the prominence of non-state violence.

How can the prevalence of non-state violence in social, political and economic arenas in many countries be explained? Is it a global phenomenon that is inherent within modern states, as argued by Sen and Pratten (2008; see also Hazen and Rodgers 2014), or is it a permanent feature of the urban landscape in many parts of the world, as pointed out by criminologists like

Hagedorn (2008; see also Kyed and Albrecht 2015)? But why is non-state violence much less prominent in some cases, if not virtually non-existent? What specific conditions make possible the persistence of non-state violence in different political settings? These questions have been widely discussed by scholars across different disciplines. Most of these scholars have employed two dominant approaches: the 'state weakness' idea derived from Weberian sociology and the 'fragmented state' thesis developed in a highly systematic and influential version by the political scientist Joel Migdal (2001, 2004, 2013).

Despite different standpoints of analysis, both approaches pay too much attention to the nature of the modern state in understanding the phenomenon of non-state violence. This thesis challenges those explanations by investigating not only the nature of the state, but also the nature of capital and capital accumulation. Drawing upon the critical political economy approach and the analysis of Indonesian non-state violence, as well as comparative insights from other countries, this thesis develops the following arguments:

1. The existence of non-state violence organisations is an outcome of the way the state organises coercive institutions in its evolution, along with particular kinds of capitalist development (Mudhoffir 2017, 495), rather than a product of a weak state or fragmentation of power that forces the state to compete with a mélange of social organisations to claim legitimate use of violence (Migdal 2001).

2. Non-state violence is endemic to predatory states as part of their aim of facilitating capital accumulation. The predatory nature of the state is formed by the endurance of 'primitive accumulation'—characterised by the predominant use of extra-economic means—even in present-day capitalism. The predatory nature of the state and capitalism create the setting within which non-state violence operates.

3. Within predatory states, political economic actors are able to instrumentalise and optimise on returns from disorder, uncertainty and lawlessness (Chabal and Daloz 1999, xviii) linked to non-state violence and other forms of predation. Instead of being an obstacle, elements of disorder have facilitated the accumulation of power and resources.

From here, the next questions are: Is predatory capitalism a transitional phase towards a preconceived terminus such as 'liberal democracy and market capitalism'? Are all capitalisms predatory? Is the predatory nature of capitalism and the state a feature of their evolution at an

early stage of development, or is it a continual feature of capitalist development that can be prolonged in the neoliberal era? What ensures the endurance and predominance of this predatory character in certain experiences?

As will be discussed in Chapter 2, predatory capitalism or primitive accumulation can generally be found in newer capitalist countries in the Global South. Historically, it is formed when the new bourgeoisie is less able to develop autonomy from the state and therefore heavily relies on access to public institutions to extract resources for expansion. At the same time, state agencies can also substitute for capitalists by employing various extra-economic means, including violence, to facilitate capital accumulation. This feature is evident in the early formation of capitalism in European countries despite their variations, but there is a different trajectory, with many sub-variations, in many experiences of the Global South. In the Global North, capitalism overwhelmingly relies on order that is established by the state to regulate markets, thereby ensuring business certainty. In contrast, in the Global South, such order and certainty have been less of a necessary condition for capitalist development, even in the age of neoliberalism. Hence, many countries in the Global South experience primitive accumulation as a foundation of capitalist reproduction instead of as a feature of the prehistoric stage of capitalism or a response to capitalist crises. Predation linked disorder has become an instrument instead of an obstruction for accumulation.

As mentioned above, the adaptability of capitalists to the state of disorder, uncertainty and lawlessness reproduces the predatory nature of the state. This adaptability normalises disorder because the dominant actors have been able to instrumentalise it to accumulate power and resources. Studies by Chabal and Daloz (1999, xix) on African politics point out that this disorder should not be construed 'merely as a state of dereliction', but as 'a condition which offers opportunities for those who know how to play that system'. However, contrary to Chabab and Daloz's (1999) assertion, this disorder should not be defined in Weberian terms as the result of dysfunctional public institutions due to the pervasive problems of corruption. The disorder is another form of 'order' found within a predatory capitalist context. It is the order of disorder. The existence and persistence of non-state violence is made possible by such circumstances and is not the result of the unfinished transformation of the state, as predominantly explained both from the Weberian account and the 'fragmented state' thesis.

For Weberian accounts, non-state violence demonstrates the failure of the state to enforce the law, which is considered a common phenomenon in developing countries or a feature that

appears recurrently in political ruptures, such as in the transition 'from authoritarianism to democracy, from military to civilian rule, from communist regime to market economy or from civil war to peace' (Sen and Pratten 2008, 16). This view has been corrected by many other studies, which argue that the existence of non-state violence is an indication that the practice of establishing order and authority has never been centralised and unified within a single political institution. For this reason, its existence cannot be considered an anomaly of modern state development; instead, it reveals the fragmented nature of the state. The boundary between the state and society, between public and private and between legality and illegality is blurred. Consequently, efforts to understand the state, according to this view, should be directed towards its actual practices, because various agencies that are not the elements of the state can act like the state. This explanation constitutes three key propositions of the 'fragmented state' thesis: (1) the fragmentation and plurality of power, authority, sovereignty and legitimate use of coercion; (2) the autonomous actors that can claim the use of legitimate violence; and (3) the ambiguity and ambivalence of the traditional boundaries between the state and society, between public and private and between legality and illegality.

Migdal (2001, 2004, 2013), one of the major scholars who influences this thesis, argues that the unified image of the state should be differentiated from its practices, which are characterised by fragmentation and plurality, as seen in various social and political institutions that can establish their own authority. This plurality is illustrated by militias, gangsters and vigilante groups that are autonomous actors and free from state capture. It also blurs the boundaries between state and society. Migdal's approach is also known as the state-in-society approach because it proposes focusing the investigation on the actual practices of the state at the societal level to understand the plurality of sources of authority.

Similarly, Kingsley and Telle (2016, 171) emphasise the 'performative aspects of governance and the state-making' to understand religious militias and non-state security groups. They suggest that 'state-making processes are often ambiguous because a variety of institutions compete to exercise authority' (Kingsley and Telle 2016, 172). Referring to Lund's (2006, 2008) conception of 'twilight institutions', Kingsley and Telle (2016, 172) also argue that legitimate violence is part of 'the language of the state', which can also be employed by non-state elements, thereby showing that it is 'not the preserve of government institutions alone'. For Lund (2006, 673), twilight institutions are those that are 'not the state but they exercise public authority'. This concept is similar to what Cribb (2009, 4) defines as parapolitics, which

are state-like entities that do not resemble states, but 'possess some of the important characteristics of states'. In addition to referring to the Migdalian state-in-society approach, many other scholars that advocate the fragmented state thesis frequently use the metaphor of twilight institutions to define non-state violence organisations (see Albrech and Keyd 2015; Kingsley and Telle 2016; Telle 2015; Barker 2016).

The same tone can be found in Pratten and Sen (2008), who assert that 'emerging forms of privatisation of lawful violence are not automatically indicators of chaos'; rather, they are struggles that aim to establish new forms of domination built on other foundations (Sen and Pratten 2008, 4; see also Mbembe 2001). For them (Sen and Pratten 2008, 4), the fragmentation of authority, heightened by increasing privatisation in the globalised context, creates a blurred line between 'licit and illicit economy, law and lawlessness'. According to Sen and Pratten (2008, 5), vigilantes are 'able to represent the state precisely, appropriating the language of the state, because they move with impunity'.

Analysts of security and governance studies who attempt to move beyond the traditional understandings of policing, which are found in criminology and security studies that centre on the monopoly of the state and its institutions, also propose the fragmented state thesis (see Albrecht and Kyed 2015; Petrus 2015; Abrahamsen and Williams 2009, 2011; Buur and Jensen 2004; Jensen and Buur 2004; Albrecht and Buur 2009; Pratten and Sen 2008; Pratten 2010; Lund 2006; Buur 2005; Scarpello 2015). Violent groups, militias and gangsters are part of an array of actors that are involved in policing and order-making and coexist with state police officers. However, referring to Lund's (2008) twilight institutions, there is a plurality of policing not only in terms of actors, but also in the practices that compete with each other. According to Kyed and Albrecht (2015), analysis policing should account for practices and actors of policing that shift into broader networks. They argue that this shift is a reflection of global change through 'neoliberal policies of privatisation and state deregulation' that lead to 'a fragmentation of security governance' and the dispersal of power away from the state, particularly in the case of urban formations in the Global South. Similar to the Migdalian approach, the plural policing literature criticises existing studies that identify civilian policing actors as a sign of the state's failure—a key assumption that lies at the heart of the Weberian perspective. As further argued by Keyd and Albrecht (2015), authority, sovereignty and policing should be defined as a set of practices and claims—an assumption it shares with the Migdalian approach to the practices of the state.

However, as this thesis will show, both accounts focus too much on the nature of the state in understanding the phenomenon of non-state violence. More importantly, they advocate similar standpoints in analysing the nature of the state by placing primacy on institutions. For example, the concept of the fragmentation of power has been presented as another way to depict what the Weberian account defines as the weakness of state capacity. In a place where many societal actors can establish authority that challenges centralised power, the fragmented nature of the state can be found, which also indicates the phenomenon of the strong society within the weak state (Migdal 2001). For Migdal, the actual fragmented state is a deviation from an ideal version of the state. That is, this new interpretation identifies fragmentation not as a general characteristic of the modern state but, similar to the Weberian perspective, as a common feature of the early formation of the state. For example, Lund (2006, 673) expresses this by saying that 'the literature on the state in developing societies'—particularly in Africa—has a hard time 'specifying what is state and what is not'.

It makes sense, then, that many studies that use this approach focus their investigation on colonial times as the key period that created the fragmented state (see Comarof and Comarof 2008; Barker 2016). For them, the colonial regime never sought to establish 'a complete monopoly of legitimate violence' (Barker 2016, 184) because maintaining traditional authority was considered economically efficient. Thus, non-state violence is a symptom of post-colonialism whereby traditional authority coexists with the modern state. For example, Barker (2016, 183) argues that informal sovereignties have a certain degree of perennialism because 'colonialism has played a key role in shaping [their] contemporary manifestation'. For Barker (2016), this can be seen in cases in post-colonial Southeast Asia where there is continuity between colonial institutions, discourses and practices and those in the present day. Comarof and Comarof (2008, 2) also argue that 'the coincidence of democratisation and criminal violence has been most visible in, and most volubly remarked of, post-colonies'. They further point out that 'rising criminality in post-colonies is not simply a reflex, anti-social response to poverty or joblessness, scarcity or other effects of structural adjustment', but 'a dialectic of law and dis/order' (Comarof and Comarof 2008, 4–5).

However, in post-colonial societies like Argentina, organised informal coercive institutions are largely absent. Conversely, Thailand and Turkey, which never experienced colonialism, use non-state actors that employ legitimate violence and establish informal order. Rather than being a product of colonialism, their existence is a result of the historical formation of the state in

organising its coercive institutions in accordance with the evolution of capitalism, which requires extra-economic means, including violence, to accumulate power and material resources. As explained in Chapter 2, there have been different trajectories in Latin America. The case of Argentina shows that the legacy of leftist Peronism remains significant (see Peralta-Ramos 1992; Brennan and Rougier 2009), and the use of formal coercive institutions was more prominent than privatised violence groups in suppressing political opposition. This was the case even if there was a subsequent experience of non-state violence by the Argentine Anticommunist Alliance (AAA), which was established in the early 1970s by right-wing elements of the broader Peronist movement to repress the growing leftist opposition. Yet they were short-lived because they were active especially during Isabel Peron's administration (1973–1976). During the Dirty War period, in the United States (US) sponsored leftist massacre from 1976 to 1983, the military regime that had ousted Peron mobilised mainly the military forces to execute the leftist guerrillas. This was meant to open the way for economic liberalisation in the country. However, unlike in Indonesia, where the left was totally banned, elements of leftist Peronism in Argentina still had room to organise popular dissent, including from urban poor youths (Kabat 2014; Petras 2002; Dinerstein 2001, 2003). The poor—especially unemployed workers—and the leftist Peronists organised the *piquetero* movement against the neoliberalisation of the country since 1994 and undertook strategies such as road blockages and street confrontations. In Colombia, there was a different trajectory. As in Indonesia, the state reinforced paramilitaries to repress leftists and facilitate the integration of Colombia's economy with global markets, thereby sustaining their significance in the sociopolitical arena (Aviles 2006a, 2009). These cases suggest that rather than the fragmentary nature of the state, the focus of analysis should be on the link between violence and state and capitalist development.

By suggesting that non-state violence is a common feature of post-colonial societies, the fragmented state account assumes that informal sovereignties appear in the absence of the formal order as a result of the incompleteness of formal authority, thereby affirming the failure to shift away from the 'weak state' hypothesis. However, the emergence of informal sovereignties is not solely related to the historical formation of the state, power and authority; as this thesis argues, it is also intricately related to particular forms of capitalist development.

As explained earlier, the persistence of non-state violence is endemic within predatory capitalisms that accompany the evolution of the state, particularly in organising coercive

institutions to accumulate power and material resources. These arguments are developed in this thesis by analysing the case of Indonesian vigilante groups, street gangs, and ethnic and religious militias in different regions of the country, but mainly in Jakarta and its surrounding areas; Solo, Central Java; North Sumatra; and West, East and Central Kalimantan. This thesis also refers to cases in countries in Southeast Asia, the Middle East and South America to substantiate the claim that non-state violence has been pervasive primarily within the context of predatory capitalism.

1.1 Nature of the Indonesian State: Fragmentary or Predatory?

Similar to studies on vigilantism, plural policing and informal sovereignties in many parts of the world, analysis of non-state violence in Indonesia has encouraged scholars to reinterpret the nature of the modern state without taking into consideration the role of the capitalist class and the evolution of capitalism (see Wilson 2015, 2012; Aspinall and van Klinken 2011; Barker and van Klinken 2009; van Klinken and Barker 2009; Telle 2013, 2015; Bakker 2015, 2016; Ryter 2009; Cribb 2011; Lindsey 2001; Masaaki and Rozaki 2006). These studies predominantly attempt to dismiss the Weberian account by proposing the fragmented state hypothesis. In Indonesia, the same concern comes to the forefront particularly in response to the contradiction brought about by democratisation, which is accompanied by the relative absence of the rule of law. This does not mean that there is no law enforcement, but that the law and other legal institutions mostly favour the dominant class. Further, other sections of society—especially members of the underclass—could instead take part in enforcing the law to establish informal control over certain territories through various violent organisations. From a legal perspective, Indonesia's democratisation goes hand in hand with the rising stream of lawlessness, disorder and uncertainty instead of bringing order and justice. Why is this the case?

This thesis argues that this condition is a reflection of Indonesia's predatory state and the persistence of primitive accumulation. Chapter 3 explains the historical evolution of the state and capital that created conditions for the reproduction of predatorism and the use of various non-state violence organisations across different political regimes. Even in the democratic context, ethnic and religious violent groups proliferate, thereby facilitating the accumulation of power and material resources. Their existence does not indicate a transitional stage from authoritarianism to democracy within the neoliberal context whereby the state has been weakened, including in establishing a monopoly over the legitimate use of coercive forces. In

addition, the persistence of various non-state violence providers does not signify the fragmented nature of the Indonesian state, where various social and political actors compete with each other to establish their authority; rather, it is a symptom of the predatory nature of the Indonesian state, which remains this way despite democratisation. Street gangs are a political instrument of the business and state elites. They have helped to reproduce the communist spectre to legitimise the repression of civil society movements and the depoliticisation of citizens. The narrative of the communist threat obscures the fact that the 1965 communist massacres in Indonesia had paved the way for the consolidation of the predatory state and capitalism under an authoritarian regime called the New Order of Soeharto. Business actors have used street gangs since then to protect their interests and ensure capitalist expansion through violent land grabbing in rural and urban areas. Today, political actors increasingly use an alliance with gangs to help them mobilise ethnic and religious sentiments during electoral contests. The political and economic functions of the gangs help to maintain and reproduce the predatory nature of democratic politics and the state in Indonesia.

Significantly, these street gangs are not autonomous; they cannot challenge the power of the state or political–economic elites, as is potentially the case in the fragmented state thesis. Yet, organised violent groups are an integral part of the predatory alliances that constitute the nature of the state and capital. Wilson (2012, 289), who advocates the fragmented state thesis, argues that 'forms of organised non-state and privatised violence in Southeast Asia' undermine 'state power and legitimacy by operating within gaps created by its patchiness'. He further claims that their continued existence 'cannot be attributed solely to their occasional usefulness to the state and elite interests' (Wilson 2012, 289). For him, their survival should be attributed to various structural forces that operate on regional and global scales and include urbanisation, globalisation and the dynamic of democratisation (Wilson 2012, 289). However, non-state violence is not a predominant feature of all democratic countries that experience 'the staggering explosion of urbanisation' and globalisation. So what kind of social dynamics open the way for the proliferation of privatised violence? For Wilson (2012), these social dynamics relate to decentralised democratisation, in which power has been dispersed. He argues that decentralisation provides 'not only a new socio-political reality but also a new discursive framework' in which the street gangs may articulate territorial claims based on communal identities and 'populist rights claims of marginalised groups and critiques of the state, rather than vertical lines of political patronage and defence of elite ideology and interests' (Wilson 2012, 293). There are two issues here that need to be addressed.

First, Wilson's argument implies that democracy creates a better environment for non-state violence organisations, and that these groups have fewer opportunities to survive under a centralised authoritarian regime. In fact, when power was still centralised under the Soeharto regime, various *preman* groups had been in existence and were able to articulate territorial and popular claims (see Chapter 3 of this thesis). Yet, in another part, he claims that their existence 'is not the unique preserve of the developing world or particular kinds of regime' (Wilson 2012, 299). Despite this inconsistency, Wilson tends to generalise the nature of privatised violence as inherent in all democratic states—especially those that experience urbanisation. Wilson refers to John Hagedorn, the criminologist who defines 'the gangs and groups of armed men' as a permanent feature of the 'urban landscape globally' (Wilson 2012, 290). According to Hagedorn (2008), gangs are a common feature of contested cities in slums around the world, regardless of whether they are in a strong or weak state, in an economically advanced country or in a developing country, or in a large or small city. The growing number of urban gangs is not a product of globalisation, but a result of 'massive urbanisation, immigration, poverty, and weakened state' (Hagedorn 2008, xxiv). Hagedorn (2008, xxx) states that 'as long as the new globalised economy and polity produce inequality and prolong suffering, gangs will be one of a panoply of angry, and often armed, responses'.

Second, the claim that gangs serve popular interests or 'the general good' (Bakker 2015, 2016), therefore potentially transforming them into a social movement (Wilson 2015; see also Brotherton and Barios 2004), is necessary for their survival. Similar to Wilson, Bakker (2015, 91) points out that the use of violence by street gangs can be accepted by society as long as it is in line with societal needs. Bakker (2015, 91) further suggests that 'the (il)legitimacy of [violent] actions is hence not a matter of the law but of public perception of the general good being served'.

As explained in Chapter 4, the perceived social functions of gangs are a mere rhetoric constructed by their elites to mobilise support through which they can join predatory alliances. The engagement of gangs in predatory practices not only perpetuates the socioeconomic marginalisation of the urban poor youths that they mobilise, but it also reproduces non-state violence and predatory politics. The engagement of gangs in predatory practices is also the quality that limits the ability of these street organisations to transform into a social movement, which contrasts with the claims of Migdalian scholars.

Many scholars who have been influenced by the Migdalian state-in-society approach also define Indonesia as a fragmentary state, as reflected in the existence of non-state violence organisations that challenge formal authority (see Aspinall and van Klinken 2011; see also Barker and van Klinken 2009; van Klinken and Barker 2009; Eilinberg 2017; Telle 2013, 2015; Bakker 2015, 2016; Ryter 2009). They refer to Lund's concept of twilight institutions to explain the fragmentary nature of the Indonesian state, as also reflected in the prevalence of non-state violence organisations. For example, Telle (2013, 185) argues that vigilante groups are better understood as twilight institutions because they 'operate in the twilight between state and society, public and private'. She further asserts that 'the informal authority wielded by civilian security groups' reflects 'a privatisation of the public order … [and] an informalisation of security arrangements' (Telle 2015, 40). Drawing from case studies of Amphibi and Tigabersatu, two prominent militias in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, she concludes that 'the ability to enforce collectively binding decisions on members of society' is no longer exclusively nested in state institutions (Telle 2015, 43). She argues that multiple groups, like gangs and private security organisations, can also exercise authority (Telle 2015, 43), by which the state is 'far from being a unitary subject that is capable of action', but is closer to being a non-unitary and fragmented entity (Telle 2013, 185).

Similarly, Barker and van Klinken (2009, 23) assert that 'the actually existing state in Indonesia is spread thin […] fragmented, overwhelmed, and ineffective—characteristics it shares with states in developing countries'. Again, this statement confirms the failure of Migdalian scholars to go beyond the Weberian account by characterising state fragmentation as a common feature of developing countries. In this sense, the fragmentary state is little different to the weak state as presented by Weberian scholars.

Aspinall and van Klinken (2009) also point out that 'the homogeneity of the state and its autonomy from social forces' is a description of the Indonesian state during the New Order. They argue that the entrenched illegality that has accompanied the process of democratisation in Indonesia illuminates a new understanding of the nature of the state as being fragmented and embedded within society, and thus 'the boundary dividing state from society may be blurred almost to the point of erasure, especially at the local level' (Aspinall and van Klinken 2011, 11). In advancing the state-in-society explanation, they further argue that 'the socially embedded character of the state shapes and impels certain forms of illegality', as can be seen in the case of Indonesia (Aspinall and van Klinken 2011, 11).

The characterisation of the Indonesian state as fragmented is developed more thoroughly by Aspinall (2013) in his other works when he refers to the changing pattern of patronage politics in the post-authoritarian context. For him, 'the most important glue of political relations in Indonesia'—namely, clientelism—has now been dispersed (Aspinall 2013, 28). This means that various actors, including the gangs, can establish patronage relationships with different political and economic elites for their survival. According to Aspinall (2013, 30), this is possible because political connections are now based more on personalistic relationships than on ideologies or identities, thereby creating endless possibilities 'for multiple patrons and clients to compete for individually beneficial political relationships'. For Aspinall (2013, 30–31), 'democracy limits patrons' capacity to order clientelism through coercion' and thus exacerbates 'the fragmentary effects of clientelism'. However, as Chapter 6 will show, the use of violence and intimidation in electoral contests remains prevalent in certain regions in Indonesia, such as North Sumatra. Many local leaders in this province are also associated with the most influential *preman* organisation in Indonesia—Pancasila Youth (*Pemuda Pancasila*). More importantly, the number of agrarian conflicts involving organised gangsters has increased considerably. The latter development is not unrelated to a democratic system that is fuelled by money politics, which confirms the predatory nature of the state.

Further, clientelism—which is defined as the practice of exchanging material benefits for electoral support—as the premise of Indonesian politics presumes the logic of exchange as the foundation that defines the nature of the state (Aspinall 2013; Aspinall and Mas'udi 2017; Aspinall and Berenschot 2019). Within this logic, it is assumed that the two parties involved (patron and client) are equally positioned, which has never been the case. In fact, it is the logic of accumulation rather than the logic of exchange that underpins Indonesian politics. Within the logic of accumulation, resources can be concentrated through violent and forced appropriation rather than voluntary exchanges by equally positioned partners. Thus, resource extortion and predation are a fundamental aspect of Indonesian politics that define the nature of the Indonesian state as predatory rather than fragmentary. This predation creates a framework of disorder within which Indonesia's democratic politics works.

Gangsters, militias and other violent groups operate within this structural framework, through which they continue to survive in different political settings. This also explains why money politics remain pervasive in Indonesian democratic politics. Both state agencies and businesspersons perceive various forms of predation as a means—instead of as an obstacle—

to the accumulation process. Thus, the rule of law in the Indonesian democratic context cannot be understood in terms of simply creating blurred boundaries between legality and illegality. Rather, the Indonesian rule of law operates within the framework of disorder but is not understood from a classical legal perspective that reflects the experience of Western societies. As another form of order found in the predatory capitalist context, this disorder 'has its own rationalities and causalities' (Chabal and Daloz 1999, 155) and is shaped as a result of historical conflicts over power and resources.

The case of violent land grabbing in North Sumatra, as will be explained in Chapter 6, illustrates how Indonesian predatory politics works through the reproduction of the state of disorder, which also provides a basis for the operation of various street gangs, thereby facilitating capitalist accumulation. As in many other regions, violent land grabbing that leads to agrarian conflicts was made possible by the maintenance of uncertainty and obscurity in land management. This is because there was no inherent interest to resolve the confusion in overlapping land use rights on the part of state agencies, especially after the destruction of Indonesian communism in 1965, which marked the end of effective organised demands for land redistribution. As a result, social interests to redistribute the land have been continually marginalised. This does not mean that the state lacks the capacity to organise land use and planning. Rather, disorder is created and maintained to facilitate the extraction of natural resources, including through illegal means and other illicit forms of capital accumulation based on land use. Different government agencies at the national and local levels have a legal basis to issue permits for land use and planning, which creates a complex and overlapping system of land entitlements. However, the confusion of this land titling situation does not necessarily hamper the interests of domestic and international investors. Instead, it provides more opportunities for them to appropriate land from small farmers, as well as land that has unclear titles. Under such circumstances, gangsters in North Sumatra serve the interests of state agencies and corporations to facilitate land grabbing. At the same time, land occupation is the only weapon that the poor have to reclaim their right to agrarian property, which often refers to a historical narrative of land distribution that was interrupted by the event of 1965. Such occupations have frequently occurred within the democratic context. As a result, the number of agrarian conflicts has increased significantly.

A national single-map policy as a point of reference for land entitlements was proposed by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in 2010, influenced by the neoliberal idea of good

governance. Since then, numerous policies and regulations have been issued to implement the idea. However, the confusing and overlapping system of land titles remains in place. This has also been a concern for President Joko Widodo, Yudhoyono's successor. Widodo issued Presidential Decree No. 9/2016 to accelerate the implementation of the one-map policy, which was aimed at facilitating an ambitious programme of infrastructure development and has become one of his signature policies. He also ordered the implementation of land redistribution for social forestry. However, the confusion of land titling is still evident, although it has never really affected big business interests. The situation instead provides an opportunity for local leaders and politicians to issue permits for extractive industries and mining corporations in return for financial support. Consequently, agrarian conflicts in rural and urban areas continue to increase in different regions; thus, non-state violence remains useful.

Factories in many industrial estates can also adjust to disorder and predation, as seen from the fact that they continue to use street thugs to protect their premises and to weaken labour unions, especially given that the deployment of formal coercive institutions of the state for such purposes is now constrained by a series of regulations. Within this context, as discussed in Chapter 5, gangsters have become the most effective instrument not only for confronting the labour movement, but also for intimidating working-class communities and families, thereby preventing the consolidation of labour organisations. Gangsters provide a security service for factories, and in return, they may receive business projects and 'social donations', as well as employment opportunities for their members as outsourced unskilled labour.

The Islamisation of non-state violence in Indonesia's democracy, as discussed in Chapter 7, provides more evidence of how the predatory nature of the state is important to the continued existence of Islamic vigilantism. The Islamisation of the gangs is not a reflection of the transformation of petty criminals into militant Muslims; rather, it is a response to the changing sociopolitical environment in which Islamic conservatism has been mainstreamed. The Islamic identity and rhetoric are employed to establish and maintain alliances with predatory elites within the context of an increasingly Islamised society. Islamic vigilantism can be seen in countries like Iran and Turkey, where Islamist politics are more coherently organised than in Indonesia. This means that Islamic vigilantism can exist in different contexts, but the main focus should be on its functions in relation to contests over power and resources. In Indonesia, street gangs instrumentalise the Islamic identity to negotiate power, while in Iran and Turkey, Islamic vigilantism works to maintain the ascendancy of Islamist actors over state power.

1.2 Methodology

This thesis uses the critical political economy approach as a framework to analyse the existence of non-state violence in different political settings. As explained in Chapter 2, this approach advocates a view that understands sociopolitical dynamics without separating them from the analysis of how economic forces operate to accumulate capital. This is in response to the tendency of liberal political economists to maintain the separation of the political and the economic. As argued by Marx (1990), this separation marks not only the birth of capitalist social relations, but also the emergence of bourgeois social sciences. Hence, it is misleading to abandon the analysis of capital to understand the persistence of non-state violence. The discussion at the start of this chapter shows the tendency of existing studies of the phenomenon of non-state violence to be concerned merely with the nature of the state. This tendency obscures how particular forms of capitalist social relations contribute to making it possible for non-state violence to survive and thrive in different political contexts. In response, this thesis investigates the logic of capital as an important force that contributes to creating the framework for the operation of non-state violence. Thus, analysis of the state and its violent practices must be placed in the context of the complex social relations by which the state is constituted. Thus, given that the state and capitalism are considered social relations, and given that the economic and the political are entwined, violent practices represent one way in which the capitalist logic can operate in society.

Based on this theoretical framework, the key to understanding non-state violence is not simply to examine the nature of the state and the elements of political power, authority and sovereignty per se, as suggested by the weak-state thesis and fragmented state explanation. What is important in the analysis of violence wielded by non-state elements is the historical conflicts over power and resources through which coercive forces and their functions in relation to the state are formed. Hence, the critical political economy approach involves four main tasks: (1) understanding social practices conducted by related actors and institutions; (2) analysing the structure of power relations and the logic of capital based on the conflicts among social interests that shaped the possibilities and constrains of social practices; (3) investigating the historical legacy of past conflicts over political and economic resources that shaped the structure of power relations and the logic of capital; and (4) analysing cases to discover insights that will lead to general propositions.

Following this logic, this thesis uses qualitative methods to investigate the roles and functions of various non-state violence organisations for their members, local communities and the political–economic elites. According to Creswell (2007, 37), 'qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem'. Primary data collection through in-depth interviews, observations and a literature review were conducted in three different regions of Indonesia: Jakarta and its surrounding areas; Solo, Central Java; and North Sumatra. These regions represent a variety of urban and rural contexts in which non-state violence organisations operate.

Fieldwork in these locations was conducted during the period of July to December 2016. Data gathered in Solo specifically aimed to understand the transformation of many criminal gangs into Islamic militias in the decentralised democratic context. Several groups became the object of study, including the Islamic Youth Front of Surakarta (*Front Pemuda Islam Surakarta*, FPIS), *Hisbullah* lascar, Ngruki's student lascars, Communication Forum of Mosques' Activists (*Forum Komunikasi Aktivis Masjid*, FKAM), MTA militias, Islamic Defender Front of Surakarta (*Front Pembela Islam Surakarta*, FPI), Hisbah lascar and the DMC *preman* group. In Jakarta and its surrounding areas, the FPI—the most prominent Islamic vigilante group—is also studied to understand how Islamic rhetoric is articulated to establish alliances with predatory elites. Other groups, including the Betawi Brotherhood Forum (*Forum Betawi Rempug*, FBR), Betawi Communication Forum (*Forum Komunikasi Anak Betawi*, Forkabi) and Pancasila Youth (*Pemuda Pancasila*) are studied to understand how local *preman* organisations establish control over the underworld, how they survive and how they establish alliances with formal coercive institutions and with politico-business elites. In North Sumatra, fieldwork was undertaken to understand how PP has become the most powerful violent group in this province by facilitating land grabbing for business expansion in a democratic political context. Key informants interviewed in this province were members and leaders of PP, Association of Functional Youth Groups (*Ikatan Pemuda Karya*, IPK), peasant unions, indigenous people organisations, local non-government organisations (NGOs), local state agencies that are concerned with land management issues, plantation industries, and local politicians and businesspersons.

Another, shorter, period of fieldwork was undertaken in September 2018 and focused on how gangs mobilise urban poor youths in Jakarta and its surrounding areas and how they make

claims about serving the interests of the poor and local communities. The data were gathered by interviewing members and leaders of the gangs, local communities and victims of vigilantism. Interviews were also conducted with several NGOs that advocate for urban poor issues. To better understand how predatory alliances were established between the gangs and the politico-business elites, interviews were also conducted during this period with local police and military commanders, local government leaders and legislative members and businesspersons.

Meanwhile, analysis on how vigilante groups mobilise ethnic identities, as can be seen in Kalimantan, was conducted through a literature review because of limitations in research funding and time. Data analysed in this case were collected from local and national newspapers, including *Kompas, Tempo*, *Gatra*, *Detik Magazine* and Merdeka.com. Academic literature on this topic was also used to help understand the sociopolitical dynamic that makes possible the increasing politicisation of ethnic identity. Literature studies were also used to conduct a comparative analysis that examines cases of non-state violence in different countries in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa, South America, Russia and Western Europe. While there was no intention to develop a full-fledged comparative analysis—this thesis focuses on the Indonesian case—comparisons are made with other experiences because they provide insights that illuminate this case and help to develop a structural framework regarding the persistence of non-state violence in different political settings and its relationship with capitalist accumulation.

1.3 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is presented in eight chapters. After this introduction, Chapter 2 provides a theoretical discussion of the relationship between non-state violence, the state and capitalist development by advancing a critical political economy approach. It discusses the concept of predatory capitalism or primitive accumulation, which is characterised by the use of extra-economic means, as a driving force that shapes the functions of the state and its institutions and that structures the logic of practice of various actors, including non-state violence organisations.

Chapter 3 discusses the specific historical trajectories that make possible the persistence of non-state violence in different political settings in Indonesia. The chapter argues that the historical development of capitalism, which requires the use of extra-economic means (e.g.,

non-state violence) for the accumulation process, ensures that providers of non-state violence play a role in conflicts regarding wealth and power. In particular, the practice of non-state violence tends to be reproduced when predatory social relationships are prevalent in the workings of capitalism. This means that the persistence of non-state violence in Indonesia's democratic context is not simply a result of the legacies of state formation—particularly in the colonial period—but is also fundamental to how capitalism itself has evolved.

Chapter 4 analyses the engagement of urban poor youths with organised gangs. It discusses the context that makes possible the mobilisation of the poor for non-state violence. For example, exclusionary urban development that marginalises the poor has enabled the gangs to claim that they substitute the state's functions of delivering social services to the urban poor. The limits of class-based politics in organising the urban poor also provide an environment for the gangs to claim that they can replace the role of social movements in advocating popular interests. These claims have been used by the elite of the gangs to mobilise urban poor youths to establish and maintain alliances with predatory businesses and state elites.

Chapter 5 further develops the arguments of Chapter 4 by elaborating on the political and economic functions of the gangs in the decentralised democratic context. It argues that the survival of non-state violence is not the result of their social functions in the service of the urban poor; rather, it is the result of their political and economic functions in the service of the predatory alliance.

Chapter 6 addresses the question of why the use of non-state violence has tended to decline in the political arena but increase in the economic field. By answering this question, this chapter criticises arguments about declining political gangsterism caused by the institutionalisation of democracy or the pervasive use of money politics in electoral contests. Yet, as shown in this chapter, Indonesian decentralised democracy—fuelled by money politics—has instead required massive extraction of material resources, which contributes to increased violent land grabbing for the plantation and mining industries. Under these circumstances, non-state violence has often been mobilised to secure and facilitate this extraction.

Chapter 7 answers the questions of why and for what purposes non-state violence actors use Islamic rhetoric and identity. It argues that non-state violence is endemic within predatory states and that the use of certain forms of cultural identity in mobilising physical force relies on the effectiveness of such identity to be used by dominant social and political forces. Hence,

the Islamisation of non-state violence is possible because the Islamic identity has become a cultural source of mobilisation in contests over power and material resources. This argument is a response to existing major explanations of the proliferation of Islamic vigilantism in Indonesia's democratic context, which often disregard the nature of the state and capitalism in relation to violence.

Chapter 2:
Non-State Violence, the State and Primitive Accumulation:
A Theoretical Discussion

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a theoretical discussion of the relationship between non-state violence, the state and capitalist development. It argues that non-state violence characterises the workings of predatory forms of capitalism in what Marx (1990) calls 'primitive accumulation', and it shapes the functions of the state and its coercive institutions to serve the interests of dominant social alliances. The argument presented here is underpinned by an understanding of the state as being constituted by a complex set of social relationships that, in turn, shape and determine the uses of its apparatus (see Jessop 2008, 1990). The state itself facilitates the creation and reproduction of capitalist social relations, including through violence.

This understanding, developed from a critical political economy perspective (see Marx 1990; Wood 1995; Hadiz and Robison 2013), raises questions regarding idealist assumptions about the role of the state and its relation to non-state violence, which largely stem from Weberian accounts (see Weber 2008). Hence, the existence of non-state violence is not the anomaly perceived within the Weberian perspective (see Nordlinger 1981; Skocpol 1979, 1985; Evans et al. 1985; Mann 1983; Migdal 1988) or the Migdalian state-in-society approach (Migdal 2001, 2004) that is related to it. This means that the state cannot be understood as the sole entity that monopolises legitimate violence, because other societal actors can also exercise violence almost without being punished by the state.

However, the existence of non-state violence does not reflect the fragmented nature of the authority to exercise legitimate coercion, as argued by Migdalian scholars (see Aspinall and van Klinken 2011; van Klinken and Barker 2009). Instead, non-state violence is endemic to predatory states as part of their purpose of facilitating capital accumulation. In this regard, the development of states in the context of predatory forms of capitalism, which is characterised by the fusion of political authority with economic power and expressed in the workings of the state itself, is understood in relation to the evolution of institutions of coercion, whether residing within the formal state apparatus or outside it. This repressive

apparatus, which is manned by social groups such as gangsters, vigilantes, militias and paramilitaries, has become integral to capitalist accumulation in such contexts.

This chapter discusses the following concepts that underpin the argument of the thesis. First, it explains the critical political economy perspective that was primarily inspired by Marx's critique of liberal political economy in analysing capitalist society. This perspective will form the basis of the theoretical framework of the thesis in studying the phenomenon of non-state violence as part of primitive accumulation. Second, this chapter discusses the concept of primitive accumulation as a driving force of capitalist development in Indonesia that shapes the functions of the state and its institutions. It is characterised by capital accumulation that primarily involves extra-economic compulsion. Third, this chapter examines the evolution of predatory capitalism in relation to the workings of Indonesia's electoral democracy, which maintains the relative absence of progressive movements that could challenge the position of predominantly predatory interests.

2.2 Critical Political Economy

The critical political economy approach requires the scrutiny of political dynamics, including the use of non-state violence in the pursuit of economic interests. It focuses on the way in which political–economic forces shape the state and its institutions. This theoretical position can be distinguished from the tendency of liberal political economy and modernisation theory (see Weber 2008) to posit a false dichotomy between the economic mechanisms of capitalist accumulation and political power. Such a dichotomy enforces the idea that non-state violence is merely a political problem that represents a deviation from the state's monopoly on the use of violence. Meanwhile, Marx's (1990) critique of bourgeois political economy was based on the idea that there is no clear separation between the economic and political spheres, which are constituted by specific sets of social relations. In this respect, the primary focus of analysis in critical political economy is capitalist social relations. In the Indonesian context, these are dominated by predatory forces that rely partly on non-state violence to maintain their social position.

2.2.1 Critique of the Separation of the Political and the Economy

The separation of the political and the economic marks the starting point of the birth of capitalist social relations and signifies the emergence of the bourgeois social sciences that

sustain and legitimise that system. As pointed out by Wood (1981, 69), according to Marx, the liberal political economy 'universalises capitalist relations of production precisely by analysing production in abstraction from its specific social determinations'. Thus, the appropriation of the means of production from the direct producers is understood as a natural process. Inequality emerging from such relations appears as a peaceful affair in which the concentration of wealth at one point and the accumulation of misery at another point is the result of the nature of human aspirations. Those who are hardworking will have a greater chance to accumulate capital, while those who are lazy will be poor and have to surrender their agrarian property or their labour power to the rich in return for wages. This naturalisation of capital accumulation marginalises non-economic aspects from the analysis of a process that simultaneously lays the foundation of a laissez-faire ideology whereby the state has to withdraw from the production system. Wood (1981) explains this as the abstraction of the original accumulation from the specific social determinations through which economic processes are separated from social, political and historical aspects.

Critical political economy aims to reveal the complexities of the production and reproduction of capitalist social relations, and it emphasises that there is no such thing as a natural process of accumulation. Instead, original (or primitive) accumulation is an historical process assisted by the state and political institutions through which the means of production are violently appropriated from the direct producers. As a result of the separation of these historical and political processes from the economy, the violent aspects of accumulation are overlooked in the analysis of bourgeois social sciences. In contrast, disregarding aspects of capitalist social relations in political analysis—assuming that sociopolitical dynamics are autonomous from economic forces—also perpetuates such a separation. As stated by Wood (1995, 20):

> there has been a tendency to perpetuate the rigid conceptual separation of the 'economic' and the 'political' which has served capitalist ideology so well ever since the classical economists discovered the 'economy' in the abstract and began emptying capitalism of its social and political content.

According to Wood (1981, 77), Max Weber was a proponent of bourgeois political economy, which advocates a 'purely economic definition of capitalism' by abandoning its social and political dimensions and 'evacuating the social meaning of capitalism' as opposed to Marx's theoretical position. However, a critique of the separation of the political from the economic, which obscures the violent and historical processes of capital accumulation, does not simply

claim that the economic and political spheres are interrelated. At a certain point, liberal political economy also acknowledges and considers the link between both spheres. The explanation of the correlation between capitalism and liberal democracy that is given by proponents of modernisation theory (e.g., Dahl 1988; Huntington 1968) also represents such an attempt, but they presume that the process of capital accumulation is purely economic.

This classical version of modernisation theory considers economic factors an independent variable that might influence the quality of democracy. For example, Dahl (1988) argues that the growth of capitalism supports the establishment and consolidation of liberal democracy. Dahl's student, William Liddle (2013), also argues that economic growth produces more resources to reduce absolute poverty and increase the educated population, resulting in a growing middle class, which is the main element that could improve the quality of democracy. Dahl (1988) explains that a laissez-faire form of capitalism would lead to tension within liberal democracy because the pure market system would create an unequal distribution of economic resources. However, in this account, it is not clear how such a laissez-faire system would be created in the first place.

Other versions of modernisation theory treat the development of capitalism as a dependent variable that is influenced by the level of state capacity. The theory of ordoliberalism, which was developed by Alexandre Rustow and other Freiburg scholars (see Bonefeld 2012), argues that instead of minimising the role of the state as advocated in classical liberal political economy, strong political institutions should provide more opportunities for the neoliberal market system to develop. This theory was advanced in response to the global economic depression in the early twentieth century and as a foundation for the German social market economy, and it posits that the free market economy requires a strong state. That is, the ordoliberal argument is within 'a tradition of state-centric neoliberalism' in which 'economic freedom is ordered freedom […] and that the strong state is the political form of free markets' (Bonefeld 2012, 633). According to Gamble (1979, 5), 'the social market doctrine is not that it is against all state intervention, but that it wants the state to intervene less in some areas and more in others'. Similarly, Keynes (1973) believes that state interventions through monetary and fiscal policy can help the market system to deal with crises. From here, it can be said that modernisation theory also considers political factors important to the survival of capitalism, but state interventions are perceived as a peaceful affair, while the origin of capitalism itself is not problematised. Social and historical processes are eliminated from the economic analysis

of capitalist accumulation, while capitalist social relations are abandoned in political analysis. In this regard, although they link economics and politics, liberal political economists view the two as distinct phenomena.

As further explained by Wood (1981, 81):

> the differentiation of the economic sphere in these senses is not, however, to suggest that the political dimension is somehow extraneous to capitalist relations of production. The political sphere in capitalism has a special character to the extent that the coercive power supporting capitalist exploitation is not wielded directly by the appropriator and is not based on the producer's political or juridical subordination to an appropriating master. Nevertheless, a coercive power and a structure of domination remain essential aspects of this exploitive relation, even if the ostensible freedom and equality of the exchange between capital and labour mean that the 'moment' of coercion is separate from the 'moment' of appropriation. Absolute private property, the contractual relation that binds producer to appropriator, the process of commodity exchange—all these require the legal forms, the coercive apparatus, the policing functions of the state. Historically, too, the state has been essential to the process of expropriation that is the basis of capitalism. In all these senses, the 'economic' sphere rests firmly on the 'political', despite their 'differentiation'.

Therefore, the purpose of critical political economy is to scrutinise the logic of capitalism, which appears as a differentiation of the economic and the political (Wood 1995, 20). As observed by Marx (1990), critical political economy reveals the political face of the economy, which had been obscured by liberal political economists. Therefore, analysis of the state and its violent practices must be located in the context of the complex social relations through which the state is constituted. In turn, given that the state and capitalism are understood to be social relations, and given that the economic and the political are entwined, violent practices represent one way in which capitalist logic can operate in society.

2.2.2 Central Tasks of Critical Political Economy

As explained above, critical political economy rejects the separation of politics and economics but does not simply claim that both spheres are interrelated, as is done by modernisation theory. Critical political economy presumes that capitalism is a set of social relations embedded in the political struggle in which Hadiz and Robison (2013, 41) argue that 'conflicts over wealth and power are part of the same broad process of social change'. For this reason, there are two central aspects of this perspective. First, it reveals the violent process of accumulation of

resources and power by presuming that the economic sphere is inseparable from extra-economic forces; thus, capitalist development is not understood as a natural process. Conversely, conflicts over power and authority are not autonomous from the process of capital accumulation. Second, as argued by Hadiz and Robison (2013), critical political economy explains 'the forces and interests that are historically thrown up in the evolution of capitalism and how conflicts between these shape economic and political life and the institutions in which they operate'. This perspective emphasises the historical analysis of the conflicts over wealth and power that give rise to the new form of forces and interests 'and to new conflicts over rules that will govern the market' (Hadiz and Robison 2013, 41).

Thus, the key to understanding non-state violence is not simply to examine the nature of the state and the attributes of political power and authority per se, as proposed by the Weberian tradition and forms of modernisation theory. What is important in the analysis of violence, particularly violence used by non-state actors, is the historical process of conflicts over power and resources through which coercive forces and their functions in relation to the state are formed. However, the prevalence of non-state violence is an outcome of specific kinds of historical evolution. As mentioned earlier, the survival of the elements of non-state violence in different political regimes is a result of the predatory form of capitalism, which defines the functions of the state through which coercive elements are required to facilitate accumulation processes. The existence of non-state violence also contributes to the reproduction of the predatory state.

In this respect, the critical political economy analyses social phenomena using a dialectical logic that conceptualises society as a product of historical struggle and contradictions involving competing social interests (see Wood 1996; Sayer 1989). To understand social practices, we need to understand the logic of the power relations that shape them, and to understand the logic of the power relations, we need to investigate how the struggle for power and economic resources takes place and is organised. In this sense, employing a critical political economy perspective is a method of explaining social phenomena and historical trajectories that places primacy on specific kinds of social conflicts. This perspective contradicts mainstream explanations of the phenomenon of organised violent groups in Indonesia, which places the institutions at the starting point of the analysis (see Lindsey 2001; Masaaki and Rozaki 2006; Cribb 2011) and emphasises conflict over authority (see Aspinall

and van Klinken 2011; van Klinken and Barker 2009; Wilson 2015; Telle 2015; Bakker 2016).

In the Indonesian context, the use of the critical political economy approach is well represented in the works of Robison (2009) and Robison and Hadiz (2004), who define the logic of capitalist accumulation in relation to the requirements of an evolving oligarchic system. This study suggests that their oligarchy thesis is not merely a tool for analysing 'elites' to understand the phenomenon of non-state violence, whereby non-elites are represented as virtual automatons animated by a structural logic. That is, the thesis is also useful in understanding the role of violence and intimidation in capitalist development in Indonesia through analysis of the social practices of non-state violence providers.

2.3 Non-State Violence and Primitive Accumulation

The main argument of this thesis is that the survival of non-state violence in different political settings is a result of the resilience of predatory forms of capitalism—what might be called '*ursprüngliche akkumulation*' (literally 'original' or widely translated as 'primitive' accumulation) (Marx 1990). Such accumulation appears to be primitive because it 'forms the pre-history of capital and of the mode of production corresponding to capital' (Marx 1990, 875). This process also involves transforming the means of subsistence and production into capital and the direct producers into waged labourers. It defines the origin of capital and the creation of capitalist social relations. As a historical process, it 'was written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire' (Marx 1990, 875).

2.3.1 Reproduction of Capitalist Social Relations

Although primitive accumulation initially appears as a prehistoric stage of capital, it does not mean that it is only present at the beginning of the production of capitalist relations. Instead, the survival of capitalism in contemporary society shows that such relations are reproduced by extra-economic means, including violence. Thus, primitive accumulation is not only part of the historical transition to a capitalist society, but is also intrinsic to the reproduction of capitalist social relations. Marx insists (1990) that primitive accumulation is a process in the creation and reproduction of capitalist social relations whereby violence and coercion are used to separate producers from their means of production. However, he also argues (1991, 355) that

primitive accumulation subsequently appears ‘as a constant process in the accumulation and concentration of capital’.

As argued by some Marxist scholars and the proponents of world system theory (see Luxemburg 1968; Harvey 2003; Wallerstein 1974), the persistence of primitive accumulation is not simply a response to capitalist crises—as a result of either under-consumption or over-accumulation—as part of the way in which capitalism reorganises itself. Rather, the violent process of separating direct producers from their means of production is a necessary element and permanent feature of capitalist reproduction. According to Luxemburg (1968), primitive accumulation is a process that stabilises capitalism by helping to find new populations, create new markets, discover raw materials and recruit newer and cheaper proletarians. Following Luxemburg, Harvey (2003) argues that primitive accumulation—or ‘accumulation by dispossession’—appears at both the periphery and the centre of capitalism. In this sense, primitive accumulation is the basis of the capitalist mode of production and the result of expanded capitalist reproduction. For Harvey (2003), in particular, accumulation by dispossession as a response to the capitalist crises is the basis for all further capitalist accumulation and includes not only the process of violent separation of producers from their means of production, but also the privatisation of nationalised industries.

However, Bonefeld (2011) identifies that primitive accumulation is not only a necessary outcome of the imperialist form of expanded capitalist reproduction (as stated by Harvey 2003) or a means of subjugating labour (as argued by de Angelis 2007), but is also the premise for capitalist social relations. Bonefeld (2011) also argues that primitive accumulation is not the historical starting point of capitalism, but a central process of capitalist accumulation that generates coercive proletarianisation. Primitive accumulation is a historical presupposition of capitalism and a necessary element of its reproduction. The historical presupposition consists of the doubly free wage labourer—the proletarian who is free from their means of production and free to sell their labour power—and the concentration of capital. Capitalism presupposes such separation and maintains it on an expanding scale. That is, primitive accumulation is not only part of the history of capital, but also the foundation for the maintenance of the separation of producers from the means of production.

Sidel (2015, 6) suggests that there is a need to investigate colonial legacies and ‘acknowledge the importance of primitive accumulation by highlighting the lingering legacies of state and class formation on contemporary politics in Southeast Asia’. For Sidel (2015), primitive

accumulation is a point of departure through which the very basis of political order can be traced back. As further explained by Sidel (2015, 10):

> if primitive accumulation was necessary for the making of capitalist production relations, the formation of capitalist classes and working classes, and the construction of modern nation-states across Southeast Asia, then variation in the circumstances and processes of primitive accumulation in the region must be foundational and fundamental in many ways.

The Indonesian case provides an example whereby primitive accumulation is not simply a response to the crises of capitalism. The historical development of capitalism in Indonesia had been characterised by the use of extra-economic coercion that was often violent. Political interventions and the mobilisation of coercive forces, including from non-state elements, accompanied the accumulation process.[1] The fusion of political and economic forces is the primary characteristic of capitalist development in Indonesia because of the state's instrumental role in the emergence of a domestic capitalist class (see Robison and Hadiz 2004; Robison 2009). The rise of a domestic bourgeoisie relied heavily on patronage relationships with the state apparatus in terms of receiving protection and various kinds of economic concessions.

This is also the case in newer capitalist countries in the South, which have a different trajectory of capitalist development compared with European countries. In simple terms, capitalism in the South has been characterised by the limited degree of autonomy from vested interests and the prevalence of rent-seeking behaviour as part of the array of extra-economic means through which accumulation occurs, which, according to modernisation theory (Huntington 1968; Olson 1982), would impede the free market system. However, the trajectory of capitalist development in European countries is not replicable in the South, including in Southeast Asia, even after taking into account variations in the European experience. In countries like Indonesia, domestic and international capital have been able to adjust to and exploit predation and rent-seeking behaviours, including those that create unpredictable business environments (see Robison 2009; Robison, Rodan and Hewison 1997; Hewison 1997; Sidel 2004). Hence, as argued by modernisation theory, political gangsterism and other forms of predatory politics

[1] In a different political context, during both authoritarian and democratic periods, non-state violent organisations serve the interests of the predatory alliance by repressing the opposition and mobilising political support in the process of accumulation of power and capital.

have not impeded the interests of the bourgeoisie in accumulating capital. Under these conditions, accumulation in its predatory form is instead reproduced.

Even as Southeast Asian governments were being praised for participating in neoliberal globalisation, Robison, Rodan and Hewison (1997) point out that capitalist development in Southeast Asia has been accompanied by states that play a crucial economic role. These states continue to 'maintain systems of trade protection, develop and implement strategic industry policies, and public sector investment remains significant' (Robison, Rodan and Hewison 1997, 2).

In the post-communist world, gangster rule and wholesale corruption has accompanied the transition to capitalism. Western economic experts that brought about market reform failed to create a liberal model of capitalism because they relied on 'a historical-fantasy-world' and imagined that the 'transition to capitalism would be a natural: virtually automatic economic process' (Holdstorm and Smith 2000, 2, 4). These experts ignored 'the historical origins of capitalism in Europe, the United States and elsewhere', where violence and other extra-economic means had been used predominantly in the accumulation process (Holdstorm and Smith 2000, 2). However, this gangster capitalism appeared during the transition process directed by Western economists and continued to be a feature of capitalist development in the former Soviet bloc and in China, where the market system goes hand in hand with political illiberalism (Holdstorm and Smith 2000).

Some proponents of modernisation theory (Huntington 1968; Olson 1982; Dahl 1988) may argue that capitalist development, which is accompanied by illiberalism, including the use of non-state violence, was a result of states that were characterised mainly by political instability. In Southeast Asia, this instability is believed (see Liddle 1985; MacIntyre 1991; Korte 2011) to have been the product of a resilient neo-patrimonial culture. Similarly, Jeffrey Sachs, the Western economic advisor for Russian market reform in the 1990s, blamed 'the political culture of the old Communist regime' for the emergence of gangster capitalism in Russia (Holdstorm and Smith 2000, 8). Meanwhile, others (see Krueger 1974; Bauer 1970) had earlier claimed that illiberal capitalism was a consequence of political interventions in the market system that resulted in poor economic performance. This understanding has led scholars within this tradition (see Huntington 1968; Olson 1982) to propose the strengthening of government capacity to establish political order through which economic growth and development would

be successfully pursued. This requires state intervention to provide the regulatory framework that is necessary for market capitalism.

Alexandre Gerschenkron (1962; see also Hirschman 1968), who emphasised the timing of capitalist development, explains that backward societies that experience late industrialisation would require state intervention to pave the way for capitalist development. This political intervention is needed to substitute for the role supposedly undertaken by the bourgeoisie to create a path to both capitalism and liberal democracy (see Moore 1966). In contrast, others (see Krueger 1974; Bauer 1970) suggest further deregulation to strengthen the market system so it can develop freely from any vested interests. According to Robison, Rodan and Hewison (1997, 14), both views presume political and economic forces to be natural, neutral and separated from the dynamic of other forces, including historical conflicts over power and resources. Thus, such views fail to reveal that the entrenched forces and interests nurtured in rent-seeking regimes are able to reorganise themselves in response to more liberal economic agendas. At the same time, international capital can also adjust to unpredictable business conditions and exploit politico-business networks, thereby maintaining the persistence of predatory capitalism. Hence, according to Robison, Rodan and Hewison (1997), the market's development goes hand in hand with non-liberal politics. This observation shows that predatory alliances have become an integral part of capitalist development in certain countries and are not necessarily a response to specific crises.

In this regard, 'the practices of state-enforced and pervasive politics of plunder' (Hadiz 2015, 311) are a permanent rather than transient feature of capitalist reproduction characterised by the absence of a strong capitalist class in the onset of the modern state formation. This allows the state to undertake the leading role in capitalist development and set the structural foundations for the fusion between political and economic forces and for the use of extra-economic means in the accumulation of power and resources. This relationship persists even though the domestic bourgeoisie have arisen. As explained above, it is not only because any forms of state interventions and extra-economic means have facilitated their emergence, but also because the capitalist class itself, both domestic and international, has been able to adapt to and exploit the legacies of predation. However, this fusion does not necessarily mean that the state is a mere instrument of the capitalist class. The state still has a degree of autonomy from the interests of the capitalist class. To a certain extent, this partly depends on the presence of social and political forces that could challenge capitalists' interests. The degree of the

organisation of political challenge specifies the way in which political intervention, including non-state violence, is used to facilitate capitalist accumulation. This means that the absence of an organised political challenge contributes to paving the way for the use of non-state violence in private capital accumulation, as will be explained in the following sections.

2.3.2 Reproduction of Non-State Violence

The use of extra-economic coercion—through which primitive accumulation is defined—is the main feature of capitalist reproduction. However, the specific form this takes can differ from one society to another. Included in this is the use of non-state violence. In some countries, the process of capitalist reproduction is accompanied by the use of non-state violence, whereas in other countries, such as contemporary North America, European countries and Argentina, it is not. The historical trajectory of capitalist development and the evolution of the state determines the type of extra-economic coercion used to reproduce capitalist social relations. Specifically, the survival of non-state violence in different political settings requires three main aspects, which are outlined below.

First, the existence of non-state violence is made possible by the fusion of political–economic forces in the process of capitalist accumulation. This fusion exposes a particular type of capitalist development that is facilitated by the state as a result of the relative absence of the capitalist class. As discussed above, it is mostly experienced by late industrialised countries. This historical trajectory produces predatory capitalism, which is not necessarily a response to capitalist crises.

Second, disorganised progressive movements that could challenge accumulation for private property also help to pave the way for the emergence and reproduction of non-state violence. This is because this condition creates an opportunity for non-state violence organisations to mobilise populist support from the poor and maintain accumulation for private property. In this sense, as will be discussed in Chapter 4, organised violent groups proliferate and appeal to the rural and urban poor because other social associations such as labour and peasant unions are disorganised, fragmented and unable to channel their interests, while formal democratic representative institutions such as political parties and parliaments represent predatory interests rather than the interests of marginalised groups. At the same time, one of the main tasks of non-state violence is to disorganise political challenges from predatory interests.

Third, the historical organisation of coercive forces in accelerating the accumulation process determines the reproduction of non-state violence under which the specific characteristic of primitive accumulation is defined. That is, the historical way in which the state organises its coercive institutions is a precondition of using non-state violence to facilitate the accumulation of power and resources. This process is primarily related to how the state uses violent groups, including those that could appropriate local political institutions, as in the case of Thailand and the Philippines (see Sidel 2004), to serve the interests of politico-business alliances by ensuring the disorganisation of significant political challenges. When the use of formal coercive institutions is more dominant in making way for the emergence of capitalism, the element of non-state violence is less likely to be part of predatory alliances. Meanwhile, when and where the state mobilised non-state vehicles of coercion in early capitalist development—in addition to its formal institutions—civilian militias and vigilante groups will likely remain significant. The elimination of the leftist movement and labour repression are some functions delivered by non-state violence providers to disorganise challenges to the state. Various non-state violence organisations are also used to mobilise political support, maintain state power, secure land-grabbing for business expansion and urban development, and protect illegal economic activities through which predatory capitalism is reproduced.

The combination of these three factors is prominent in Indonesian history and dates back to the early post-colonial formation of the state, when anti-colonial militias had not been able to be fully absorbed into formal military institutions (see Crouch 2007; van Dijk 1981). At the same time, the transition from the agrarian colonial order to the new industrial capitalism was also unable to absorb members of the excluded civilian militias into waged labourers, maintaining the lumpenproletariat as the source of recruitment for non-state violence providers. The elements of civilian militias were mostly affiliated with various political forces, including the military, to serve their interests in the contest for power and resources. However, the crucial moment that paved the way for the ascendency of non-state violence and reproduced predatory capitalism in Indonesian politics occurred when various civilian militias were mobilised by the military as frontline agents in exterminating the left in 1965 (see van Dijk 1981; Ryter 1998; Siegel 1999; Mudhoffir 2017). Since then, the state has centralised control of non-state violence to facilitate the organisation of political–economic power of the authoritarian regime, particularly to ensure state subjugation and domestication of any potential opposition. Under export-led industrialisation, non-state violence facilitated the interests of politico-business alliances by playing a significant role in securing the extortion of natural resources, as well as

land-grabbing to establish new factories, housing projects and other infrastructural developments, along with plantations and mining industries.

The capitalist class benefited from what adherents of modernisation theory describe as 'socio-political disorder' and was uninterested in generating a more liberal political order. Consequently, predatory politico-business alliances and providers of non-state violence were able to reorganise themselves within the new democratic landscape. However, this was not unique to the Indonesian case. For instance, Trocki (1998) shows that the emergence of individual men of violence, who have dominated politics at the local level in Myanmar, Thailand and the Philippines, is the legacy of authoritarianism and rampant capitalism. The local bosses used to serve the authoritarian regime, thus paving the way for them to maintain their position within electoral democracy. Many of those who have been well-positioned in the local politics were murderers, or 'those who have not themselves murdered have ordered others to do so on their behalf' (Trocki 1998, 10). As further described by Trocki (1998, 10):

> They have in their hands in most forms of large-scale crime … They are involved in drugs, prostitution, gambling and extortion. Political corruption is fundamental to their way of life. They […] control the political process in order to reap the benefits of influence in land grabbing, illegal logging and mining, industrial pollution, and violence of labour laws. They maintain active and intimate relations with the underworld. In short, they are gangsters, thugs and members of what Americans would class as organised crime.

Sidel's (2004) extensive studies of political gangsters in the Philippines and Thailand argue that their emergence, survival and success are shaped by the very structure of the state in the early stages of capitalist development instead of resulting from what Migdal (2001) describes as the 'weblike structure of society'. For Sidel (2004, 53), the existence of local gangsters in these countries 'facilitates and benefits from the expansion of market relations and the process of industrial growth' rather than impedes successful industrialisation and growth resulting from disorder and weak state capacity, as signalled by the existence of violent groups. Ockey (1998) also finds that rapid economic growth in Thailand has paved the way for the *chaopho* (godfathers) to prosper and multiply. In the early development of the modern Thai state, local bosses became state agents to extract money from illegal economic activities and 'exert control and collect taxes, establishing a pattern of collaboration' (Ockey 1998, 40). Under the military regime, *chaopho* were often in alliance with members of the bureaucracy to extort economic resources using state access, both legally and illegally, which was then flourished and

multiplied by rapid economic growth (Ockey 1998). *Chaopho* were also employed by the government to use violent measures to exterminate communists, particularly in the Cold War context (Ockey 1998).

In some post-communist countries, such as Russia and China, gangsters have also been a dominant actor integrated into the political and economic world of early capitalist development. In these countries, gangsters undertook the role that was supposedly carried out by the bourgeoisie in the transition to market capitalism. As imagined by the Western economists that assisted the transition process, post-communist countries need capitalists to take command of the economy. However, no one in these countries during that period had sufficient finances for the appropriate state enterprises (see Holdstorm and Smith 2000). Eventually, capitalists were created illegally. In Russia, they comprised 'underground mafiosa, the nomenklatura, especially the top managers of certain industries and segments of intelligentsia … [who] were drafted to privatise the economy criminally' (Holdstorm and Smith 2000, 9). In China, 'cadre capitalists strive to privatise "their" enterprises by means of stock frauds, back-door deals, bilking government treasuries, and outright theft' (Holdstorm and Smith 2000, 13).

In Latin America, which has a trajectory of state formation and capitalist development that is similar to that of Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries, the existence of non-state violence in facilitating the accumulation of power and resources is also evident. For example, Colombia's experience with capitalist development is accompanied by the pervasive use of civilian militias. The introduction of neoliberal economic policy in 1989, which led to the collapse of the country's manufacturing and agrarian sectors (see Aviles 2006, 2008; Cake 2009), exacerbated rural and urban poverty and resulted in many unemployed people, who were then encouraged to become involved in the drug trade or join guerrilla armies or paramilitaries. The paramilitaries were directly strengthened by the state, especially in its effort to exterminate groups that opposed neoliberal economic reforms. In the Cold War context, civilian militias became an integral part of the counter-insurgency strategy known as the National Security Defence, which was devised in coordination with the United States (Aviles 2006, 2009). During this period, the political regime worked with civilian militias to supress political opposition to the project of closer integration with the global economy by ensuring the security of investments by international corporations that were being wooed to enter the Colombian economy. Given that the state's indirect role was a deliberate part of the strategy

of using political violence to facilitate the integration of Colombia's economy into global markets, paramilitary groups further proliferated in the 1990s and escalated their massacre of peasants, leftists and trade union activists (see Aviles 2006).

However, unlike in Colombia, the reproduction of a predatory form of capitalism in Argentina has not been accompanied by the persistence of non-state violence. This is because of the slightly different historical trajectory resulting from the way the state organised its coercive forces to domesticate political challenges from the left. In Argentina, there is a long tradition of leftist populist politics, including the Peronist movement (created by Juan Peron in the mid 1940s), which used thuggery to intimidate opponents. These movements aimed to redistribute resources and open up space for the urban poor to organise themselves within a progressive political movement instead of engaging with non-state violence (see Peralta-Ramos 1992; Brennan and Rougier 2009). During the military dictatorship in Argentina (1955–1973 and 1976–1983), the left associated with Peronism suffered from state repression and political exclusion (see Munck 2004; Peralta-Ramos 1992; Brennan and Rougier 2009), as was the case in authoritarian Indonesia. However, the significant difference is that, in Indonesia, the left and other social and political movements associated with it were totally banned and destroyed, while in Argentina they remained able to organise themselves despite restrictions on their participation in electoral politics from 1955 to 1971. Consequently, in Indonesia, the possibility to organise the poor for progressive politics was absent, whereas in Argentina, the left still had room to organise themselves as an oppositional movement, as seen in the case of the unemployed workers' movement known as *piqueteros* (Kabat 2014; Petras 2002; Dinerstein 2001, 2003). In addition, the main instrument used by the military dictatorship to repress the left was formal coercive institutions rather than the paramilitary. However, the leftist element of Peronism remained in underground movements, within which many unemployed workers and other urban poor were able to organise opposition to the state (Peralta-Ramos 1992; Brennan and Rougier 2009). To some degree, these circumstances restricted the space for non-state violence providers in Argentine politics.

2.4 Nature of the State and Democracy in the Predatory Capitalist Context

The reproduction of predatory capitalism and the pervasive use of non-state violence constitute the nature of the state and democracy. This fact overrides the Weberian characterisation of the state as an autonomous institution, separated from society, that monopolises the legitimate use of coercive forces. It also disregards the premise that liberal political values are the foundation

of democracy as a prerequisite for the advancement of a market economy. Hence, the survival of non-state violence does not mean that the state has failed to establish order and centralise control of the use of violence, or that the nature of state power is fragmented. The existence of non-state violence is also not because liberal democracy has yet to be fully consolidated or because the foundation of the rule of law lacks institutional capacity. Instead, the persistence of non-state violence in different political settings indicates its usefulness for politico-business elites. This means that politico-business elites do not view non-state violence as something that can create 'disorder' and hinder their accumulation of power and resources. They would rather conform to and take advantage of such a condition and maintain the existence of non-state violence and other forms of predations. In the end, the disorder also constitutes the predatory nature of the state and democracy through which non-state violence became endemic.

2.4.1 Understanding the State through Violence

Given that non-state violence can accompany the development of the state in different political settings, including a democratic one, defining the state on the basis of institutional capacity, as advanced by Weberian accounts and within forms of modernisation theory (see Nordlinger 1981; Skocpol 1979, 1985; Evans et al. 1985; Mann 1983; Migdal 1988), is no longer convincing. Within the Weberian perspective, violent practices exerted by social groups are perceived as deviant and indicate the failure of the state to ensure security. According to this account, the existence of private security organisations is a product of the weakness of state institutions, particularly related to the enforcement of law and order.

An attempt to move from this viewpoint, as presented by the 'anthropology of the state' (see Migdal 2001), which describes the state from its actual practices, is also inadequate. Developed primarily by Joel Migdal (2001, 2004, 2013), this definition is a response to empirical evidence that the state cannot always maintain its monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force. This led Migdal (2001, 2004, 2013) to opine that the very structure of state power is fragmented. State power has always been challenged by fragmented authorities emerging from society. However, this Migdalian view shares similar assumptions with the Weberian perspective and thus leads to the same mistakes.

First, to a certain extent, the concept of the fragmentation of power and authority has been defined institutionally. It is measured by the degree of state capacity in establishing an autonomous stance from society and centralising control of the use of violence. From here, the

existence of non-state violence indicates the fragmentation of social control as a consequence of the weakness of state capacity to establish order. Second, both perspectives tend to depict public institutions in neutral terms. The state is perceived as a terrain that is independent from social conflicts and from the forces and interests that could shape the way institutions work. Consequently, both views also perceive non-state violence to be an indication of disorderliness, disruption and lawlessness, which hamper the establishment of liberal politics and the market. In this view, re-establishing orderliness by strengthening state capacity and the rule of law might be the only way to overcome the problem. In contrast, critical political economy views the survival of organised violence groups as an outcome of the historical conflicts between different political–economic forces and interests. From here, the state is better understood as a system of political domination within which an amalgam of complex social relationships provides a dynamic that shapes the uses of the state apparatus, including coercive institutions, for particular kinds of interests (see Hewison, Robison and Rodan 1993).

Many international development agencies advocate an institutional approach in understanding non-state violence in developing countries. Among them, the World Bank provides the most prominent example of the use of a Weberian ideal–type definition of the state in analysing and proposing solutions to security problems and other issues in developing countries. For example, the World Development Report (WDR) 2011 (World Bank 2011), which focuses on issues of security, conflict and development, argues that institutional legitimacy is the key to creating social and political stability. Strengthening legitimate institutions and governance is considered crucial to breaking the cycle of violence, which is viewed as foundational to accelerating state development. The WDR (World Bank 2011, 7) also affirms that 'the weakest institutional legitimacy and governance are the most vulnerable to violence and instability and the least able to respond to internal and external stresses'. Further, the report (World Bank 2011, 86) states that 'weak institutions make a country vulnerable to violence, just as a weak immune system makes a body vulnerable to disease', and that 'solutions that do not involve transforming institutions may postpone rather than solve problems'.

Robert Rotberg, director of the Belfer Center's Program on Intrastate Conflict, Conflict Prevention, and Conflict Resolution at Harvard University, takes a similar standpoint. According to Rotberg (2003), the main factor that defines state capacity is whether there is violence within a country. States are considered to have failed when they cannot ensure the

social and political security needed to fulfil their function of delivering public services to their citizens. Strong states are distinguished from weak states, and weak states from failed or collapsed states, 'according to the levels of their effective delivery of the most crucial political goods' (Rotberg 2003, 2). Thus, Rotberg (2003, 4) asserts that:

> Strong states offer high levels of security from political and criminal violence, ensure political freedom and civil liberties, and create environments conducive to the growth of economic opportunity. The rule of law prevails... Overall, strong states are places of enviable peace and order … Weak states include a broad continuum of states that are: inherently weak because of geographical, physical, or fundamental economic constraints; basically strong, but temporarily or situationally weak because of internal antagonisms, management flaws, greed, despotism, or external attacks; and a mixture of the two.

In this definition, the weak capacity of the state is identified from its place in the spectrum between those that can fully impose their territorial authority in monopolising legitimate violence and those that fail to enforce it. Hence, failed states lose authority over territory and population. This failure is also indicated by increases in criminal violence, insurgency and social conflicts. Even the state becomes 'criminal in its oppression of its citizens, so lawlessness becomes more apparent' (Rotberg 2003, 6).

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2013) also situates institutional capacity as a starting point in explaining problems in developing countries. For the UNDP (2013), the state is considered to have a fundamental responsibility to provide public security through its law enforcers. The institutional weaknesses of law enforcers and the growing perception of insecurity have contributed to a substantial increase in hiring private security guards over the past two decades. According to the UNDP's Regional Human Development Report 2013–2014, security issues should therefore be addressed by strengthening not only the capacity of state institutions, but also civil society's capacity in countering potential violence.

However, according to its critics, the institutional approach is unable to grasp the complexity of the relationship between the state and violence. According to them, modern conceptions of the state that are primarily derived from the Weberian perspective are mainly concerned with distinguishing the state from society. However, problems arise when state practices and social practices overlap, making the boundaries blurred and difficult to locate. This can be observed in cases whereby non-state actors exercise violence and challenge state authority or when the state engages in criminal acts or conducts illegal activities. As pointed out by Mitchell (1991;

see also Gupta 1995), the boundaries of the political system are more elusive than recognised in the Weberian account, and they expand to fill the entire space of society. Therefore, Mitchell (1991) identifies the elusiveness of state–society boundaries as a feature of the nature of the state.

Inspired by Mitchell (1991) and Gupta (1995), the blurred boundary between state and society is also one of the central concerns of Migdal (2001, 2004, 2013), who rejects the idea that the state is a unified autonomous entity as advocated within more classical Weberian accounts. For Migdal (2001), the characterisation of the state as autonomous is a mere exercise in constructing an ideal type. Actual states often display 'deviations from the ideal or corrupted versions of the ideal' (Migdal 2001, 14). According to Migdal (2001), Weber did not mean to suggest the ideal-type state was 'normal'. From here, Migdal conceptualises the state using Weber's starting point, from which variations from the ideal type can be discerned. Falling short of this ideal type (Migdal 2001, 15–16), the state becomes 'a field of power marked by the use and threat of violence', which compensates for its fragmentation and lack of capacity by promoting an image of coherence and unified power.

The existence of social organisations that can challenge the state's authority to exercise violence is perceived to be an indication of the fragmentation of authority instead of a symptom of the state's failure to regulate society. Migdal (2013, vii) admits that 'establishing authority is no easy business'; however, he does not veer as far away from the Weberian understanding of the state as claimed by those advocating his approach. According to Lambach (2004), 'Migdal's model of state-society interaction is close to the one of Max Weber, even though Migdal shows a somewhat ambivalent relationship to Weber's work'. Weber (2008) himself identifies different types of interpersonal relations in the context of social control. When control is delivered by the state through dominance it is a *herrschaft*, while through association it is *verbande*. Further, 'if associations are structured through relations of dominance, they are considered *herrschaftverbande*' (Lambach 2004, 11). Weber defines *herrschaftverbande* as a state—that is, a political association characterised by a monopoly on legitimate violence. Hence, unlike Migdal's interpretation, Weber not only conceptualises the state as an ideal-type unified image that can claim that authority, but also admits that other social associations can claim their own authority and create rules. According to Lambach (2004, 11):

> Weber does not provide his ideal type definition with the normative bias that the state *ought* to be the predominant authority within society. It might be, as Migdal asserts, that the

> scholarly reception of Weber's work has developed such a bias, but this cannot be inferred from an orthodox reading of Weber's original work.

Therefore, it can be concluded that both Migdal and Weber share the same assumption of the state not as 'a structure that exists somehow outside, or even above, society', but as a 'distinctive entity that is, in principle, only one of a multitude of associations within society' (Lambach 2004, 11). Moreover, although Migdal breaks down the Weberian definition of the state into 'image' and 'practice', his conception is still premised on the state as an entity that aims to regulate society, which relies on the mobilisation of various forms of capital. This tendency is more clearly demonstrated in his earlier work, *Strong Society and Weak State: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Migdal 1988). Migdal explains that the challenge with social control is that it is provided by the state as a characteristic of the 'weak state' in developing countries, whose authority is challenged by 'weblike societies' presented by 'chiefs, landlords, bosses, rich peasants, clan leaders, *za'im, effendis, aghas, caciques, kulaks* (for convenience, "strongmen") through their various social organisations' (Migdal 1988, 33). In weblike societies, social control is fragmented and heterogeneous, but people are still governed because 'the allocation of values … is not centralised' and 'numerous systems of justice operate simultaneously' (Migdal 1988, 39). Here, the Weberian definition of the state is quite prominent. Indeed, Migdal explains that social organisations that claim a right to the use of force are a direct challenge to the state's own claim-making. Hence, a strong society is characterised by social organisations that are able to press such claims successfully when faced by a weak state.

As mentioned above, placing institutional capacity as the point of departure in analysing non-state violence has several conceptual shortcomings. First, it ignores the complex factors that influence and shape institutions. In fact, much of the literature that emphasises strong/weak state binary categories provides no exemplars of actual strong states because it is more of an ideal-type definition than an actual one. Moreover, issues related to the existence of organised violent groups occur not only in weak and failed states, but also in states that might be imagined to have a strong capacity, such as in developed countries and authoritarian regimes. To move beyond this simplistic assumption, institutions should not be perceived as existing in a social vacuum. Rather, they should be placed in the context of the conflicts of social interests that constitute institutions and determine how such institutions function.

Second, institutionalism depoliticises problems in developing countries by attributing them to the technical failings of institutions. As such, problems caused by political contestations are perceived merely as technocratic issues. This tendency is reflected in how donor agencies almost uniformly propose strengthening the institutional capacity of the state, developing the capacity of state officials and empowering civil society as the solution to such problems. Thus, technocracy becomes part of a broader 'anti-politics' strategy that overlooks the importance of political contestations in directing social change (Ferguson 1990; Jayasuriya and Hewison 2004). As part of an anti-political machine, broad-ranging governance projects promoted by donor agencies aim to discipline social conduct, as reflected by their main concern for issues of capacity. According to Jayasuriya and Hewison (2004), these projects serve 'to promote consensus over economic and social reform through mechanisms that enable the technocratic management of social conflict'.

Third, given that institutionalism offers an ideal-type conception of the state, it fails to grasp the capitalist social relations and significant political–economic forces that are prominent in shaping the work of the institutions in which violent politics become a characteristic. It assumes that the state is a sole entity that monopolises legitimate violence; other actors that can also exercise violence are considered deviant. However, the fact is that many societal actors coexist with state coercive institutions in exerting violence, as shown in the cases in Indonesia (see Wilson 2015), Thailand, the Philippines (see Sidel 1997, 2004), Russia (see Volkov 1999) and Colombia (see Aviles 2006). Although non-state actors exercise violence, the state does not penalise them and may even endorse their actions.

In this regard, the endurance of predatory capitalism implies that state institutions are not neutral and independent from conflicts regarding power and resources. Thus, the state and its institutions are better understood in relation to the broader constellation of social forces in the sense that they represent certain modes of political exclusion and inclusion that are the outcome of prior social conflicts (see Hameiri 2007; Jayasuriya 2005). Consequently, the existence of non-state violence is not simply an institutional problem, but a result of the constellation of social forces in the contest over power and resources. The survival of non-state violence is not because the state fails to enforce the law and establish order, but because the element of the state apparatus and other politico-business elites maintains the use of non-state violence and other forms of predation in accumulating and securing wealth and political authority.

2.4.2 Predatory Democracy

Establishing a liberal democratic government in the Global South is now part of the market capitalism agenda advanced by many international development agencies. During the Cold War era, Huntington (1968) assessed that modernisation projects had been threatened by political instability and a strong government was therefore needed to establish the political order required to accelerate economic development. This argument provided a justification for authoritarian regimes to eliminate opposition for the sake of establishing political order. But now, following the end of the Cold War, market capitalism needed more democratic politics, partly to facilitate more investment than before the Cold War. As asserted by the Freedom House (2015), more stable and transparent governments that are supported by free and fair elections and respect for human rights and the rule of law will 'foster environments that are conducive to the establishment and unfettered operation of private enterprises'.

However, in many cases, a regime change from authoritarianism to democracy does not necessarily eliminate predatory politics, including the use of non-state violence. Liberal political agendas promoted by development agencies, such as programs of good governance and strengthening legal institutions, remain subordinated to predatory interests. Rent-seeking behaviour, patronage politics and the use of intimidation and violence in both electoral contests and business remain prevalent in Indonesia and many other countries. This confirms that the attempt to replicate Europe's trajectory in establishing liberal politics and a free market in the Global South has failed. However, the failure of development programs to foster liberal democratic politics has little to do with the lack of capability of the bureaucratic apparatus in furthering good governance and eliminating rent-seeking behaviour.

According to Hadiz (2010, 3), drawing from the Indonesian case, the failure more likely results from the fact that long-entrenched predatory interests 'have been able to usurp the agenda of good government reforms, including that of decentralisation, to sustain their social and political dominance'. That is, advanced democratic politics are not a threat to the interests of predatory alliances, which include non-state violence organisations. As further explained by Hadiz (2010, 4), 'institutional reforms […] inspired by neo-liberal notion of "good governance", have ironically assisted in "clearing the way" for the kind of social and political milieu for their emergence and consolidation, rather than their pre-emption and eradication'. The resilience of predatory interests is evidenced in the adaptability of the old forces to easily shift their alliance with 'the bureaucrats and despots of a centralised regime' to 'the new political parties, and the

parliaments and the political entrepreneurs that inhabited these institutions' (Robison 2011, 15).

As will be explained in Chapter 6, the case of North Sumatra clearly illustrates how members of various violent groups have appropriated electoral democracy and successfully held positions as state officials in legislative and executive bodies to win access and control over state revenues and abundant natural resources. Using Trocki's (1998) phrase, they are 'the men of violence' who have used physical threats and coercion not only to extort and land grab, but also to mobilise political support during elections. In many parts of Indonesia, the wealthiest tycoons in the country are leading actors in predatory alliances with local politicians and bureaucrats because they provide money for elections and bribe state officials to acquire direct control over land and other natural resources and to gain legal impunity. These alliances also maintain the use of violent organisations. That is, significant elements of the domestic bourgeoisie have already benefited from a corrupt political system and have little interest in advancing more liberal politics, thus aborting institutional reforms.

However, it is not only predatory interests that hijack democratic politics. International capital is also able to adapt to the entrenched corrupt political system. Hence, the absence of transparent and predictable rules for business has 'not prevented a continued influx of foreign investment' (Robison, Rodan and Hewison 1997, 16). In the cases of Taiwanese and Korean capitalists, foreign investors 'have adeptly exploited the politico-business networks within Indonesia' (Robison, Rodan and Hewison 1997, 16). As further explained by Robison (2011, 11–12):

> the various neoliberal administrative reforms and the establishment of democratic politics were not inimical to the interests of the oligarchies who successfully reorganised their power within the new structures. Within this process, the neoliberal enterprise contained important paradoxes. Because market capitalism provided the property rights necessary for the privatization of public wealth and opened access to highly unstable banking and financial institutions, it was highly suited to the consolidation of various forms of authoritarian and predatory regimes and to political–business oligarchies that relied on extra-economic relationships. Ironically, the very forces that had provided the political muscle for market reform in the first place, sweeping away opposition from the Left and from social democrats, now stood as the main obstacles to liberal political reforms and 'good governance' where these threatened their political ascendancy.

Against this backdrop, various non-state violence providers—such as criminal forces, gangsters, vigilantes and civilian militias that employ religious and nationalist identities and other xenophobic sentiments, which are the legacies of the reactionary authoritarian regime—have been able to organise themselves within democratic politics. They are part of a broader alliance that is 'against the demands of popular forces or the threat to economic rents' (Robison 2011, 15). The continuity of predatory capitalism—consolidated during authoritarianism—in the context of electoral democracy shows that the new political environment does not necessarily change the structure of power relations built during prior authoritarianisms.

2.5 Conclusion

It is important to note that the survival of non-state violence in different political settings is a result of the persistence of primitive accumulation. This notion is defined as the process of accumulation of power and resources using extra-economic means, including non-state violence, to reproduce capitalist social relations. This process is the foundation that constitutes the survival of capitalism, not only as a historical moment of violent expropriation of producers from their means of production. Thus, the endurance of non-state violence is not only the legacy of an early form of integration of society within the market system during colonial capitalism, as argued by Sidel (2015), but it is also part of the alliances that reproduce the predatory accumulation of power and wealth. The use of extra-economic coercion is also not simply the way capitalism deals with its crises to further capitalist expansion as argued by world system theory. In many developing countries, extra-economic means have been continuously used in the accumulation process. However, not all of these predatory states use non-state violence. The latter is also an outcome of historical contexts in which states organise coercive institutions to maintain political power against the demands of popular forces and facilitate capitalist development. In countries in which formal coercive institutions are more prominent in serving the interests of predatory alliances, non-state violence is unlikely to be prevalent.

Such an understanding—drawn from a political economy tradition that places primacy on the analysis of historical conflicts between competing forces and interests in the evolution of capitalism—challenges mainstream explanations of non-state violence that place institutions at the starting point of analysis and emphasise conflicts regarding authority. These existing accounts are derived from the Weberian idealist definition of the state as an autonomous political entity that monopolises the legitimate use of physical force. Although the Migdalian explanation might attempt to move out from this ideal-type conception, it continues to present

Weberian assumptions about the state in the way it examines the fragmentation of power and authority. Arguing that the existence of non-state violence is an institutional problem fails to explain the survival of non-state violence in different political settings. The fact that gangsters, militias, vigilantes and other non-state violence providers are able to survive in both authoritarian regimes and democracies is not because of the weakness capacity of law enforcers in establishing order and centralising the control of the use of violence, but because these elements are useful for the reorganisation of political and economic power that constitutes the predatory nature of the state and democracy.

Chapter 3:
The Genesis of Indonesia's Predatory Capitalism and the Evolution of Civilian Militias

3.1 Introduction

The critical political economy approach discussed in the previous chapter provides the tools to analyse the prevalence of non-state violence in contemporary Indonesia. Using this approach, this chapter examines the specific historical trajectories that make possible the persistence of non-state violence in different political settings. It is argued here that the historical development of capitalism, which requires the use of extra-economic means (e.g., non-state violence) for the accumulation process, ensures that providers of non-state violence play a role in conflicts regarding wealth and power. In particular, the practice of non-state violence tends to be reproduced when predatory social relationships are prevalent in the workings of capitalism. This means that the persistence of non-state violence in Indonesia in the democratic era is not simply a result of the legacies of state formation—particularly in the colonial period, as has been argued in some existing studies (see Wilson 2015; Trocki 1998); rather, it is also fundamental to how capitalism itself has evolved.

Predominant historical explanations emphasise the process of state formation in the colonial period as the main factor in the emergence of civilian militias, as observed in the history of the *jago* in Javanese society, the *jawara* in Banten and the *vrij-man* (free man or *preman*) in Batavia (see Schulte-Nordholt and van Till 1999; Schulte-Nordholt 1991; Onghokham 1984, 2003; Bertrand 2004). For example, Bertrand (2004, 326) argues that the state formation process led to the emergence of a system of indirect government and informal authority that facilitated an alliance between the state and criminals. Onghokham (1984) notes that colonialism produced a gap between a bureaucratic–hierarchical colonial state and traditional order that relied heavily on personal relations. Thus, the *jago* arose as a powerbroker that mediated between the ruler and the ruled (Onghokham 2003, 132). For Schulte-Nordholt (1991, 89; see also 2002), 'unfinished state development' during the colonial period broke down the local order and created the administrative vacuum in which *jago* 'set themselves up violently as political entrepreneurs'. Hence, according to Schulte-Nordholt (1991), the *jago* was not simply a powerbroker, but also a local hero, a criminal and someone who was

thought to possess a supernatural ability. Wilson (2015, 11) argues that 'the relationship between state and criminal networks extends back to pre-independence, finding its heritage in the nature of colonial power and centre-periphery relations established during the colonial state'.

What is noticeably missing in the existing literature is an explanation of the economic structure in which civilian militias served state interests or mediated popular interests with those of political–economic elites. Political gangsters may have emerged as a result of the way formal coercive institutions were organised during the state formation process, but how they persist in various political circumstances primarily depends on the particular form of capitalist development. For example, according to Trocki (1998), the experience of colonialism and military rule may have provided the foundations for gangster politics, but it was the growth of capitalism that gave the 'greater power to those who are least likely to use it'. Contemporary Indonesian politics is characterised by a predatory form of capitalism in which non-state violence plays a notable part in the accumulation of wealth and power. Such political–economic structures initially appeared during colonial times and were then largely consolidated during the New Order period before being reproduced in the decentralised democratic era. That is, the evolution of the state itself in relation to the way coercive institutions were organised is intricately related to the development of capitalism, which requires various political interventions to facilitate the accumulation process. As explained in Chapter 2, contestation of power and authority is inseparable from the broader conflict regarding wealth, through which the extra element of violence is constituted. From here, in the historical analysis of non-state violence in Indonesia, it is important to examine the various political–economic forces and interests, as well as the historical conflicts between them, that shape the way coercive institutions were organised.

This chapter presents these historical arguments in three parts. The first section explains the history of predatory capitalism in Indonesia. It analyses the political–economic forces and interests that led to the predatory nature of the state and capitalism, particularly in the colonial context. The context was characterised by the absence of an indigenous capitalist class, which enabled the colonial state and its apparatus to act as frontline agents for a predatory form of capitalism. This political–economic structure shaped non-state violence organisations as an instrument that facilitated the interests of the colonial order rather than as an autonomous powerbroker. The second section discusses the continuity of predatory capitalism in the early

post-colonial period, which was also characterised by the relative absence of indigenous bourgeoisie. This paved the way for the state—in particular, the military—to dominate control over political and economic activities, including mobilising gangsters to undermine the influence of the communists. The third section examines the reproduction of predatory capitalism as observed in the consolidation of state capitalism under the New Order. In this period, predatory capitalism was characterised by the absence of a coherent progressive movement and the centralising use of non-state violence to ensure the ascendency of state power and to facilitate the accumulation process. Although the domestic bourgeoisie emerged under export-oriented industrialisation as a result of the state facilities, it tended to maintain an illiberal form of politics, including the use of non-state violence to protect its interests. These historical processes in the authoritarian context, which maintained the absence of progressive political challenges, enabled the survival of a predatory form of the state and of capitalism, as well as the continued existence of non-state violence in the present democratic era.

3.2 Birth of Predatory Capitalism in Indonesia

3.2.1 Colonial Plantation System and the Birth of Predatory Capitalism

The capitalist economy during the colonial order (1830–1942) in the Dutch East Indies was primarily based on the plantation system supported by the colonial government. According to Onghokham (2003, 181), this colony was the first state in Asia with a modern bureaucracy and administrative structure. Its territories were divided into regencies (*kabupaten*), which had clear borders and were headed by regents (*bupati*), who were paid a salary by the Dutch. Regents served the interests of the Dutch colonial government. At the lowest level, the Dutch created administrative units headed by village chiefs (*lurah*), who were paid with *tanah bengkok*, land that the right of its management is used as a source of salary for village officials (see Onghokham 2003). In 1830, the Dutch colonial government implemented a system of state plantation called *cultuurstelsel* (cultivation system), which mainly grew export commodities such as sugar in Java and rubber in Sumatera and Borneo (see Onghokham 2003; Gordon 1982). However, the new administrative politics in the Dutch East Indies was created not only to modernise the political system of the colonised society, but also to facilitate the coloniser's economic interests.

The new bureaucratic system was established, in particular, to force people to lease their land and sell their labour cheaply to the Dutch plantations (see Gordon 1982, 1999). Fines were

given to farmers who were late in leasing their land to the plantations. This shows that the system was orchestrated and organised through extra-economic means, thereby constituting the birth of predatory capitalism in early Indonesian history. The colonial officers used the village heads to force farmers to lease their *sawah* land to sugar entrepreneurs (see Gordon 1999). These coercive practices were observed in documents such as the official Colonial Report in 1878–79 (Gordon 1999, 14). Furthermore, the 1893 Colonial Report announced that the Besuki Regency applied violence through the village heads to acquire sugar land leases from farmers and access unpaid labour for harvesting. In the Panarukan district, another report revealed that the village heads frequently applied coercion, including through the mobilisation of non-state violence elements known as the *jago* (fighting cock) to establish land lease contracts. In the Surabaya Residency, the village heads used similarly coercive methods to hand over land from farmers to the mills.

Another important feature of early predatory capitalism was that although the cultivation system introduced the money economy to the Dutch East Indies, no indigenous capitalist class successfully emerged from it. Long before the capitalist mode of production was introduced by the Dutch through the cultivation system, Javanese traders had been unable to develop themselves into large-scale businesses. This was mostly because these traders 'were merchant princes whose mercantile activities relied heavily upon the exercise of political power to enforce tolls and taxes on trade and to control sources of supply and trade routes' (Robison 2009, 19). Further, their influence had declined since VOC (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, United East India Company) had spread its mercantile hegemony throughout Java in the early seventeenth century. In the manufacturing sector, indigenous capitalists could only develop household petty commodity production. Indigenous traders and producers were also weak compared with Chinese businesspersons (see Robison 2009). These economic sectors were dominated by foreign capital, primarily Dutch. At the end of the colonial period, foreign capital (including non-Dutch) remained a dominant element in colonial capitalism.

According to Gordon (1999), the use of coercion in managing colonial state capitalism hindered the growth of the indigenous bourgeoisie during the colonial period. As he shows in the case of the Javanese colonial plantation system, cheap land and labour were acquired through extra-economic coercion. The use of extra-economic means in capitalist accumulation has been reoccurred throughout history—in this case, in the predatory form of

capitalism in post-colonial Indonesia. This trajectory differentiates Indonesia's capitalism from that of Western countries (see Knight 1982; Boeke 1953) because the development of a domestic capitalist class in Indonesia continues to rely heavily on state facilities and other extra-economic mechanisms. However, the Dutch used coercion not only to obtain cheap land and labour for plantations, but also in an attempt to monopolise the business sector by blocking competitors, including Chinese and indigenous businesspeople. As a result, until the 1930s, around 90% of sugar mills were owned predominantly by the Dutch (Gordon 1999). In the rubber plantation area, the Dutch colonial state also strongly discriminated against indigenous smallholder production (see Gordon 1982).

According to Gordon (1999) and Onghokhham (2003), in indirectly ruled regions like the Princely Territories of Surakarta and Yogyakarta, the Javanese aristocrats (*priyayi*) had an opportunity to transform themselves into a landowning bourgeoisie. However, the Javanese aristocrats preferred to be colonial officials rather than landowning bourgeoisie because they already enjoyed privileges in the bureaucracy as paid agents of the Dutch colonial state.

Pre-colonial economic and political relationships that did not involve conceptions of private property were also reinforced by the VOC by reinforcing the authority of *priyayi* (see Robison 2009, 13). As Robison (2009, 14) points out:

> Opportunities were also given to both *priyayi* and local officials to secure the best land as bengkok in the course of the redefinition of village boundaries which accompanied the cultivation system. Economic activities were conceived in terms of the financial and political costs of maintaining household rather than capital accumulation and expanded reproduction. The exercise of state power remained the most effective means of securing wealth in early nineteenth century Indonesia.

3.2.2 Establishing Colonial Order through the *Jago*

Some scholars (see Schulte-Nordholt 1991; Adas 1981) have argued that pre-colonial Southeast Asia can be defined as 'contest states'[2]—an early stage of government in which monopoly over power was contested among various actors (e.g., warriors, princes, strongmen and bandits). This explanation is in line with Migdal's (2001) argument regarding the fragmented nature of power and authority through which various non-state violence providers

[2] Since the state is projected to monopolise taxation and violence, according to Schulte-Nordholt (1991), the term 'state' is inappropriate to describe such an entity.

are perceived as autonomous social forces that can negotiate with the state or perform as powerbrokers. However, according to Schulte-Nordholt, this characterisation only applies in the pre-colonial era. In this context, a permanent state of insecurity emerged, which facilitated the development of a hybrid form of private and public violence known as *jago*. As a result, the population had a relatively strong position in negotiating with certain elites with whom they might find protection from the *jago*, thereby confirming the autonomous degree of the criminals from the political elites during the pre-colonial period.

The role of the *jago* shifted under the colonial order in which the bureaucratic government had been created and the capitalist plantation system had been established. According to Schulte-Nordholt (1991), the contest states had transformed into centralised bureaucratic systems. Control over taxation and violence had been centralised and monopolised by the colonial state. However, not all levels of territories and populations were under direct colonial control through which creating the shady area and defining the new role of the *jago*. Under this circumstance, the *jago* indirectly served the interests of the colonial state and was part of the colonial power structure. It was indirect because the regents and village chiefs were the primary agents of the Dutch in maintaining relationships with the *jago* to enforce colonial rule and order. For the regents, the *jago* served as a paid spy and informer (*weri*) to ensure peace and order at the local level. For the village heads, the *jago* also helped to prevent resistance from villagers and facilitate the collection of taxes. Given that they were also thugs, the *jago* and the village heads often conspired to conduct illegal activities such as cattle rustling, gambling and opium smuggling. Village chiefs also protected the *jago* when the colonial government attempted to investigate criminal cases at the village level (Onghokham 2003).

However, the colonial government never seriously attempted to exterminate the *jago* because the role of the *jago* as an agent of violence was needed to further the economic interests of the colonial government through the plantation system. At the village level, the *jago* could help village chiefs intimidate villagers to pay taxes and provide cheap land and labour for the sugar mills (see Gordon 1982). At the regency level, regents accumulated wealth and power from their political position as colonial bureaucrats and through the ownership of the men (see the case of Madiun in Onghokham 2003). As noted by Cribb (2009, 20–21), criminal gangs in Batavia enjoyed a close relationship with the police force and the army.

Thus, the *jago* and their significant role in politics did not result from the inability of the Dutch to strengthen the colonial administration at the local level, or from the *jago* mediating different

actors' various interests produced from the gap between the bureaucratic and traditional systems of politics and society (Onghokham 2003). Instead, the role of the *jago* was reinforced by the Dutch colonial state to assist in the accumulation of capital through the plantation system. Hence, the persistence of non-state violence until the end of Dutch colonialism was more a product of colonial capitalism than an outcome of an unfinished state formation project, as argued from the historical institutionalist perspective.

3.2.3 Facilitating Japanese Occupation through the Mobilisation of Civilian Militias

The legacy of Dutch colonial capitalism strengthened the role of non-state violent actors in politics as muscle power who were always ready to be mobilised. However, it was during the Japanese occupation that non-state violent actors received military training. More than one million youths were mobilised and trained as civilian militias, comprising criminals, thugs, *jago* and *jawara*, ordinary villagers, officials, schoolteachers and students from Islamic boarding schools (Crouch 2007). The purpose of this mobilisation was to defend the territory from external threats, especially from allied forces. Some nationalist and religious figures recognised the Japanese as an 'older brother' and protector of the people, especially after the Dai Nippon Army expelled the Dutch in March 1942. They also viewed this mobilisation as an excellent opportunity to prepare for future Indonesian armed forces.

The best-trained and most important militia was PETA (Pembela Tanah Air, Fatherland Defence Force), which was established in October 1943 (see Anderson 1972; Benda 1958; Kahin 2003; Reid 1974). The Japanese war authority designed PETA as a decentralised auxiliary guerrilla for local defence to prepare against an allied invasion of Java. It was also structurally organised as a professional military unit whereby around 500–600 troops were deployed in each region as a battalion in Java and Madura. Some scholars have estimated the total number of PETA personnel to be between 35,000 and 100,000 (see Anderson 1972; van Dijk 1981). The battalion commanders were recruited from local schoolteachers, local officials and Islamic notables (Anderson 1972). Many former members of the Dutch armed forces joined the PETA troops. In West Java, *Hisbullah*[3] (troops of God) was the largest Muslim guerrilla organisation.

[3] Van Dijk (1981) notes that the establishment of *Hisbullah* at the end of the Japanese occupation was to give Javanese Muslims their own defence force. However, the Muslim leaders (especially from Japanese founded-Islamic organisation MIAI, which then transformed into *Masyumi*) asked the Japanese authority to set up a Muslim volunteer corps in Java. For them, the reason for the establishment of the militia was to destroy the US

While PETA and *Hisbullah* were prepared as a military unit,[4] the Japanese war authority also mobilised other organisations for internal security and political mobilisation. Among them were the Youth Corps (*Seinendan*), the Vigilance Corps (*Keibodan*), Java Service Association (Java *Hokokai*), the Centre of People's Strength (*Pusat Tenaga Rakyat*, *Putera*) and *Hokokai*'s frontline force called Vanguard Corps (*Barisan Pelopor*, *Suisinthai*) (see Kahin 2003; Benda 1958; Anderson 1952). These civilian militias were formed around 1943 and 1944. The *Seinendan* was set up as a scout organisation to employ various tasks related to local defence, and as a recruiting base for PETA. *Keibodan* was formed as an 'auxiliary police force to help maintain order and security and to watch out for spies and saboteurs'. This organisation was established at the village level, and its membership was more than one million men. Meanwhile, the *Hokokai* and the *Putera* aimed to organise popular support and control the population. Although the leader of the *Hokokai* was usually a politician, the *Putera* was headed by a *pangreh praja* official. As some members of these militias were incorporated into the regular republican army, they paved the way for the Indonesian military to play a significant role in politics (see Crouch 2007).

Until the end of the Japanese occupation, these civilian militias were primarily active as defence and security organisations. Given that most members were also young (aged 14–35), these militias provided a channel for them to express their nationalist spirit. After the proclamation of independence in November 1945, *Masyumi* (after it re-established itself as a political party) formed another volunteer corps, the *Sabilillah* (the way of God) (see Benda 1958). Hence, the precursor of a security guard of a political party can be traced back to the history of *Sabilillah*. While *Hisbullah* was a military unit of *Masyumi*, *Sabilillah* was an organisation for the mobilisation of the Islamic population to prepare Muslims for *jihad fi Sabilillah* (endeavour in the way of Allah). Both *Hisbullah* and *Sabilillah* recruited their members primarily from Islamic boarding schools like *madrasah* and *pesantren* (see Benda 1958). The enthusiasm of youths to organise themselves within government-backed civilian

and England and support Dai Nippon for Greater East Asia (see Benda 1958, 139). This request followed a similar application to create a general volunteer corps. In December 1944, the Japanese authority finally granted permission to establish the Muslim volunteer corps *Hisbullah*. As an informal armed force, *Hisbullah* was also designed as a PETA reserve corps, although both organisations ran independently of each other, except for the participation of PETA members in *Hisbullah* training (van DIjk 1981, 75). Overall, *Hisbullah* was no match with PETA, especially in terms of military skill, equipment and personnel. PETA's well-trained troops also spread throughout all regions, whereas *Hisbullah* had around 500 members who were trained several months before the Japanese occupation ended.

[4] *Heiho* (auxiliary forces) was another military unit that was an integral part of the Japanese army. However, in contrast to PETA, all *Heiho* officers were Japanese (see Anderson 1972).

militias marked the beginning of the institutionalisation of non-state violence in politics. However, problems arose when the new Indonesian state consolidated and rationalised its regular armed forces, thereby creating the new environment for non-state violence to proliferate within Indonesian politics.

3.3 Continuity of Predatory Capitalism in Post-Colonial Indonesia and the Military Control of Militias

In the early days of independence, colonial economic structures still prevailed in Indonesia, where the Dutch and Chinese bourgeoisie played the dominant role as the capitalist class. This was primarily because 'Indonesia possessed neither the capital nor the political resources to maintain or replace the colonial economic structure' at that time (Robison 2009, 38). However, this created an opportunity for the state to facilitate the rise of the indigenous capitalist class, which characterised and reproduced predatory capitalism. Several state policies were established to foster the emergence and development of indigenous capitalists, especially through programs of economic nationalism such as the Benteng program (see Thee 1994). The state also attempted to establish control over major economic activities such as in the banking sector, infrastructure, manufacturing and import–export trade. However, as pointed out by Robison (2009, 41), 'the development of state enterprises did not represent a concerted move toward socialisation, or indeed even nationalisation, of the economy'. This was also the case in the import trade sector, whereby the government made systematic attempts to build an indigenous bourgeoisie by giving licences to importers through the Benteng program. However, most of the government credits were misused, which hindered an attempt to take over the foreign and Chinese economic dominance. The recipients of the import licences were mostly associated with 'powerful figures in the bureaucracy or the parties who controlled allocation of licences and credit' (Robison 2009, 45). Many licences were also subcontracted to Chinese traders, making indigenous merchants merely licence brokers. In general, the state economic facilities were hijacked by politico-bureaucrats, primarily from the political parties that owned the companies.

In 1957, the state subsidy through the Benteng program ended in response to pressure from different political parties as a result of the program's ineffectiveness in facilitating the development of the indigenous bourgeoisie. For example, the Indonesian Socialist Party (*Partai Sosialis Indonesia*, PSI), the Islamist party Masyumi and the moderate Indonesian

National Party (*Partai Nasional Indonesia*, PNI) preferred to return to the market economic system, whereas the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, PKI) and the left wing of the PNI proposed to move towards economic nationalism, which placed the state as the main actor in developing the national economy (Robison 2009). The military also supported the agenda to nationalise the economic system and develop state capitalism, which was in line with its interests in centralising political authority. In 1959, the liberal democracy based on the multi-party system was formally dismantled and replaced by an authoritarian regime under Guided Democracy. The central political power rested with the president and the military because the authority of the parliament was replaced by the president, and the party representatives were eroded by functional social groups selected by the president and the military (Crouch 2007). In the economics field, the changing political structure gave the military an opportunity to control the new political enterprises, and other forms of economic power resulted from the appropriation of Dutch companies under the nationalisation policy. The strategic political and economic positions held by the military had given the military the opportunity to undermine the influence of the main challenge from the PKI, including by mobilising thugs and militias—which were unabsorbed in the rationalisation program to be integrated within formal military units—to attack communists in rural and urban areas.

3.3.1 Nationalisation and State Capitalism: The Road to Military Control of Politics and Economics

As mentioned above, the military was the most important political force that benefited from the new power structures. Several factors contributed to building the momentum that enabled the military to hold strategic positions in the political and economic arenas. The first was the failure of the Benteng program, which was mainly caused by the corruption associated with the political parties and the unstable political situation that was perceived to result from the parliamentary system. The second was regional rebellions that were primarily undertaken by the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (*Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia*, PRRI) and Permesta, which were supported by the PSI and Masyumi (Kahin 2003; Bertrand 2004). This event paved the way for the military to consolidate its power by defeating the rebellions and weakening the influence of the PSI and Masyumi, including in advocating economic nationalisation (Kahin 2003). The third was Sukarno's interest in centralising political power on himself under the presidential system, which paved the way for the military to be an enthusiastic partner in realising the agenda.

Under the 1959 Decree, Sukarno announced a return to the original Constitution (UUD 1945) and established Guided Democracy, which extended the authority of the president and enabled him to establish authoritarian order. To maintain this centralised power system, Sukarno established several new bodies, including the Supreme Advisory Council (*Dewan Pertimbangan Agung*, DPA), functional social groups as a new component of the representative body, the Supreme War Authority (*Penguasa Perang Tertinggi, Peperti*), which supervised martial law, and the Supreme Operation Commands (*Komando Operasi Tertinggi,* KOTI) (see Robison 2009; Crouch 2007). Half of the cabinet members were selected from the army faction, whereas only three ministries had been used previously. These new bodies showed that the military had acquired greater authority within politics. Any government policy would gain greater support from the parliament and primarily from the army to ensure more political stability. However, Sukarno also considered that relying only on the military force as his main ally would make his position vulnerable; thus, he also cultivated a support base in the PKI.

Under Guided Economy, Sukarno was also concerned with centralising the state's control of economic activities, initiated by the expropriation of Dutch estates and enterprises. Ironically, the PKI supported the establishment of this new political–economic structure, which paved the way for military dominance. The nationalisation of foreign enterprises had been an aspiration, primarily of the left, before 1959. In fact, in 1957, workers and unions begun seizing foreign-owned firms, but the military halted these syndicalist actions. Since then, most foreign-owned enterprises have come under military supervision. In 1958, the expropriation was legalised through a Nationalisation Bill, and a new Ministry of Economic Stabilisation was established. According to Robison (2009, 72), the transfer of ownership involved '90% of plantation output, 60% of foreign trade, some 246 factories and mining enterprises, plus banks, shipping and a variety of service industries'. However, because domestic private capital failed to use the opportunity offered by the Benteng economic policy, the formerly foreign-owned companies came to be under the control of state-owned enterprises. This policy benefited the military because, as managers of many key state enterprises, it offered them an opportunity to have direct control over greater economic resources.

Given that the PKI was complicit in the establishment of the new system, this period marked the beginning of the end of labour unions' challenge of military dominance over political and economic powers. The number of labour protests drastically dropped after the nationalisation process. As discussed by Stoler (1995, 1986), for the plantation estates in North Sumatra, there

were 729 protests in 1956 and 281 in 1957, followed by fewer than 200 cases in 1965. That is, although the PKI gained more power after aligning itself with Sukarno in the late 1950s, 'the labour movement had only partial and diminishing success' (Stoler 1995, 126). This was not necessarily because of the repression and control of labour movements carried out by the state and the military, as was argued by Hawkins in 1963. The direction of the political activism carried out by the PKI and its labour unions targeted Western imperialism more than capitalism in general, and it facilitated the hijacking of the nationalisation process by the military. The inclusion of many union leaders within Sukarno's inner circle since the late 1950s also weakened the movement and 'compromised their ability to negotiate as agents of labour' against the companies that represented state interests, especially the military (Stoler 1995, 147). Consequently, the military was able to strengthen its position within the new political–economic structures and continuously undermine the influence of the PKI, including by mobilising thugs and militias in rural and urban areas to attack the communists.

3.3.2 Rationalisation of the Army and the Proliferation of Civilian Militias

The incomplete incorporation of civilian militias—which were mobilised in the armed struggle for independence—into formal military forces made possible the proliferation of political gangsters in the Sukarno era, which also contributed to maintaining predatory capitalism. Prime Minister Amir Syarifuddin had ostensibly attempted to rationalise the Indonesian regular army in 1947. However, this plan failed as a result of the Renville agreement in 1948, which led to further Dutch military aggression and the downfall of the Syarifuddin government (see van Dijk 1981; Crouch 2007). Hatta, a successor of Amir as Prime Minister, made rationalisation his priority program, which was then executed based on Presidential Decree No. 9, 27 February 1948. The main aim of this program was to reorganise the Indonesian army to establish regular hierarchies and a standardised training program (see Crouch 2007). Notwithstanding problems related to the insufficient state budget to fund a massive army, Hatta was also concerned that a poorly organised army could threaten the government. Under this program, expenditure for military forces was cut by 40%, and army personnel were gradually reduced from around 350,000 regular troops and 470,000 irregular militias to only 160,000 and then 57,000 regular armed men (see Kahin 2003, 331).

Unfortunately, not all irregular guerrilla groups were willing to join the Republican Army, primarily because they had already set up their own organisational structures, headquarters and territories. Integration also meant subordination, whereby militia leaders might lose their

privileges. Hence, confrontation was sometimes involved in the incorporation of these irregular forces. Several rebellions, such as the Darul Islam movement led by Sekarmadji Maridjan Kartosoewiryo to establish the Indonesian Islamic State (*Negara Islam Indonesia,* NII), occurred following the attempt to rationalise military forces (see Alamsyah and Hadiz 2017; Nieuwenhuije 1950). Meanwhile, the rest of the militiamen who were not incorporated in the rationalisation program because of a lack of military skills became a source of political gangsters. Many of them assisted political party machineries to mobilise support from unemployed youths and the poor. This also created an opportunity for the military to mobilise gangsters to weaken the influence of communists in poor communities.

3.3.3 Protecting the Military's Business Interests: Establishing the New Political Gangster

As part of the strategy to reduce the influence of the PKI and maintain the ascendancy of the military in the new political and economic structures, army chief of staff Abdul Haris Nasution established the gangster organisation Pancasila Youth (*Pemuda Pancasila*) in 1959. However, as pointed out by Ryter (1998; see also Wilson 2010), Nasution's attempts to mobilise networks of gangsters and former militias began long before the 1959 Decree. In 1954, the year that Nasution tried to push Sukarno to suspend parliamentary democracy, he formed the League of the Supporters of Indonesian Independence (*Ikatan Pemuda Kemerdekaan Indonesia*, IPKI) to advance the military agenda 'in a civilian political format' (Ryter 1998, 52). The members were recruited from former irregular troops together with their relatives and friends, active military men and gangsters. The IPKI declared Pancasila as its ideology to stand against political parties, which was in line with Nasution's political agenda to overthrow the parliamentary system. As early as 17 October 1952, when protesting against parliamentary intervention into the army's internal affairs, Nasution and Simatupang mobilised civilian demonstrators, including thugs, to surround the presidential palace.

The reorganisation of the IPKI to become *Pemuda Pancasila* was intended as a challenge to the PKI (see Ryter 2014). The chairperson of the IPKI in Medan, Effendi Nasution, was appointed as the first head of *Pemuda Pancasila*. The PKI's reaction, as noted by Ryter (2014, 157) was to organise a gang consisting of the sons of railway workers into the People's Youth (*Pemuda Rakyat*) to counter *Pemuda Pancasila*. The rivalry between the military and the PKI concerned not only political power, but also economic resources primarily related to the

nationalisation of Dutch enterprises (see Mortimer 2006). This continued to take place and reached its peak in 1965.

The event in 1965 was triggered by the 30 September Movement in which Achmad Yani, the commander of the army, as well as five other generals, were kidnapped and killed (see Mortimer 2006; Roosa 2006; Malvin 2018). Senior army general Suharto led the counterattack, which paved the way for him to replace Sukarno as the president and marked the rise of the New Order. However, this counterattack not only targeted the army involved in the movement, but also all PKI members and communist sympathisers, including those who were affiliated with the Indonesian Peasants Front (*Barisan Tani Indonesia,* BTI), the All-Indonesia Central Workers' Organisation (*Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia,* SOBSI), the Consultative Body of Indonesian Citizenship (*Badan Permusyawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia,* Baperki), the Indonesian Women's Movement (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia,* Gerwani) and the People's Youth (*Pemuda Rakyat*) (see McGregor, Melvin and Pohlman 2018). In doing so, Suharto not only used the army, but also mobilised civilian militias by accentuating anti-communist sentiment, stating that communism was a threat to both the national ideology of *Pancasila* and religion. This event signified further momentum for the mobilisation of civilian militias during the regime change, and it reinforced their significant role within the new military–dictator regime, which reproduced predatory capitalism.

3.4 Reproduction of Predatory Capitalism and the Centralising Use of Non-State Violence

While predatory capitalism survived in the Soekarno era partly because of the lack of an indigenous capitalist class, in the New Order it was characterised by the consolidation of state capitalism and the absence of coherent political challenges from the left. Within this authoritarian context, the use of non-state violence was centralised to facilitate the accumulation of power and wealth. The birth of this new regime was marked by the orchestration of civilian militias and gangsters in eliminating communists, which paved the way for the consolidation of state capitalism. In strengthening its political power, the New Order mobilised gangsters to exert violence and intimidation over the population, ensuring the victory of the ruling party and maintaining its ascendency for three decades. The state mobilisation of gangsters was also made possible by the absence of a progressive movement, thus making available an unorganised lower class as a source of recruitment for reactionary

politics. A new capitalist class emerged, especially from among the Chinese conglomerates, but their development relied heavily on the state's protections and access to expropriating resources, which reproduced predatory capitalism. Here, gangsters had been centralised under the direct control of Suharto not only to serve the political interests of the regime, but also to protect resource appropriation by capitalists.

3.4.1 Mobilising Civilian Militias in Exterminating the Left: The Road to the Consolidation of State Capitalism

The military coup in 1965 that led to the extermination of the left not only cleared the way for General Suharto in the presidential office, but also led to the reshaping of predatory capitalism in New Order politics. In this historic episode, around 500,000 PKI members and sympathisers were massacred (Cribb 2001). Globally, this event gained momentum in the Cold War context because the US considered the PKI, which was the largest communist party in Southeast Asia, a threat to the regional geopolitical constellation. In the domestic context, this violent event was made possible by the fact that, since the 1950s, the PKI had been a rival of the army and was the greatest challenge to military dominance over political–economic structures. Most importantly, the massacre gained popular support, as observed by the fact that the main executors of the massacre were various civilian militias and gangsters. Their involvement in the mass killing was not a spontaneous reaction but was in fact orchestrated by the military (Anderson and McVey 1971; Kammen 2017; Melvin 2018).

The mobilisation of various civilian militias meant that Suharto and the army successfully deployed anti-communist propaganda to shape the public's perception of communism as a national threat. For secular nationalist militias like *Pemuda Pancasila*, *Pemuda Patriot* and other organised gangs, communism was a threat to the national values of Pancasila. As explained earlier, the establishment of these gangster organisations in the 1950s was meant to serve the military's interests in undermining the influence of communists. For Islamic militias, communism was a threat to religion, and fighting against it was considered war in the name of God (*jihad fi Sabilillah*). However, this narrative was shaped as a result of lengthy historical conflicts between the communists and Islamic groups. The conflict reached its peak after the communists carried out serial unilateral actions (*aksi sepihak*) following the slow implementation of the 1960s agrarian law regarding the issue of land redistribution for landless farmers (see Mortimer 2006; Roosa 2006). Such unilateral action threatened the interests of Islamic businessmen—mostly associated with traditional clerics—who feared communist

expropriation of private property. During 1965–1966, *Pemuda Pancasila* in North Sumatra and Aceh was actively slaughtering suspected communists (see Ryter 1998). In Bali, the PNI and its paramilitary unit were a leading civilian actor that killed communists (see Farid 2006). In Java, various civilian militias were involved in massacres of communists, including Ansor Youth (*Pemuda Ansor*) and Multipurpose Ansor Front (*Barisan Ansor Serbaguna, Banser*), the paramilitary wings of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Islamic Students Association (*Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam*, HMI), *Pemuda Pancasila*, including former insurgent Darul Islam militia, and paramilitary units of the banned Masyumi (Farid 2006).

In this sense, the 1965 massacre and anti-communist propaganda were crucial in consolidating Suharto's political power. Various non-state violence providers were organised as the state proxy to maintain political order and serve the interests of capitalist accumulation. However, what was at stake in this historical episode was that the organised radical challenge to the state is absent in the Indonesian social and political landscape, leading to the strengthening of military rule in the political and economic arenas and the consolidation of state capitalism.

More importantly, Suharto's rise to power was welcomed by foreign investors and Western governments because the new regime was believed to clear away 'elements of reactionary and radical populism that stood in the way of market capitalism' (Robison and Hadiz 2004, 40). However, instead of dismantling the state capitalism established during Sukarno's Guided Economy, international development agencies and foreign investors were frustrated by the New Order, which continued the nationalist policies and trampled the liberal political agenda. State capital had been more consolidated than before and was even growing significantly. Many state enterprises, presided over by Suharto and the military officers, continued to control access to economic capital, including in the resources, infrastructure, banking, manufacturing, basic commodities, agriculture, transport and trade sectors (Robison 2009, 217–220). For example, the case of Pertamina shows that the state's oil company, controlled by military officer Ibnu Sutowo, had been used as 'an unofficial banker for projects associated with major figures within the New Order' and as an 'independent source of revenue for the military' (Robison 2009, 238–239).

The development of state capital was rapid, especially during the oil boom in the 1970s, because it relied heavily on petrodollars. The petrodollar had been used by Suharto to establish patronage networks to ensure the loyalty of his supporters, primarily from the military. However, in addition to military officers, the Chinese bourgeoisie benefited from the

development of state capitalism, mainly because Chinese capitalists, known as *cukong*, had long sponsored and operated military businesses. Hence, when the military became the dominant political force after 1965, the position of these *cukong* was strengthened, albeit their racial discrimination (see Robison and Hadiz 2004). Not only did Chinese capitalists have the strategic position to secure monopolies of access to state credits and contracts, but they could also 'take advantage of government policy to boost import-substitution manufacture and control foreign investment' (Robison 2009, 273).

In the early 1980s, following the fall of international oil prices, the end of the petrodollar period might have ended state capitalism, but the Chinese bourgeoisie were able to survive. Indeed, they became the major capitalists in the following period, although they remained dependent on various state protections—because of their cultural animosity as the legacy of colonial politics, which was reproduced by the post-colonial state—and they established a complex oligarchic coalition of politico-bureaucrats and Chinese conglomerates in appropriating state resources. The politico-business alliance during the rise and fall of the petrodollar uses various coercive measures, including mobilising gangsters and militias to silence political challenges to ensure the ascendency of state power and protect the accumulation process (see Robison and Hadiz 2004; Robison 2009). During the consolidation of state capitalism, political gangsters were mobilised sporadically by military figures such as Ali Murtopo, particularly to ensure the victory of the ruling party during elections. The fall in oil prices, which damaged the patronage system and occurred at the same time as rising dissent among military figures regarding the concentration of wealth within Suharto's family, led the regime to centralise control over political gangsters.

3.4.2 Disorganised Urban Poor and Their Engagement in Reactionary Politics

The destruction of the left in 1965 not only eliminated political vehicles that channelled the interests of the poor, but also restricted the possibility of political opposition movements, including those based on progressive politics. This left the urban poor unorganised, but it provided a source of mobilisation for reactionary politics. In contrast to communism, which had been completely expelled, *marhaenism* was sometimes allowed in a limited environment to voice the interests of the poor, primarily by the adherence of Sukarnoism (Eklof 2003; Soekarno 1957). However, it was only in the first election of the New Order period that the PNI was still a contestant. Later, when Suharto simplified the political party system, in which, apart from Golkar, the ruling party, there would be only two others, the influence of the PNI

and its ideology *marhaenism* was undermined. The PNI was merged into the new Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI), which resulted from the fusion of non-Islamist parties, including the nationalist army-affiliated party, the IPKI (see Eklof 2003).

Another aspect of the New Order's floating mass policy was also responsible for the disorganisation and depoliticisation of society. Although the policy was never officially implemented, it aligned with the creation of the fusion of political parties in the beginning of the New Order era to restrict mass-based politics and separate the parties from their constituencies. However, at the same time, it facilitated Golkar to mobilise support from the population through its bureaucratic tentacles and various subjugated social organisations. As a result, the poor lost their political channels to articulate their interests, except through social organisations, which had been domesticated by the government to serve the interests of the regime. In this sense, although poor people could become members of organisations such as farmer associations and labour unions, these could only serve to endorse the government's agenda.

The broader interests of the poor in relation to economic justice and equality were excluded, and this was their daily experience for decades during the Soeharto era. The poor then established social organisations, including organised violence groups, mostly for their pragmatic needs of survival. *Pemuda Pancasila*, among others, was organised by the military to mobilise the poor for reactionary politics, including using violence and intimidation to mobilise votes during elections and protect resource accumulation by politico-business elites. During the political turmoil in 1965, many members of the *Marhaen* Youth (*Pemuda Marhaen*) also joined *Pemuda Pancasila* to seek protection and detach from the leftist association (see Ryter 1998). *Pemuda Pancasila* was also a youth wing of IPKI, the party that fused into PDI to undermine the influence of the PNI's *marhaenism*. Under such circumstances, the disorganised urban poor provided the resource pool of mobilisation for reactionary politics that was needed to serve the interests of the politico-business alliance.

3.4.3 Mobilising Political Gangsters and Consolidating Authoritarian Power

In the New Order period, the mobilisation of political gangsters became more pervasive than under Nasution during the Sukarno era. This aimed to help consolidate the authoritarian regime and state capitalism. Within the Special Operation Command (*Opsus, Operasi Khusus*) designed by Suharto's intelligence chief, Lieutenant Colonel Ali Murtopo, in the early 1970s,

individuals and organisations were co-opted to support state-defined agendas. Before the first election in 1971, Suharto and Murtopo designed political instruments to win the election. The most valuable tool created by Murtopo was the floating mass policy, which defined how political parties could mobilise their support by not allowing them to establish organisational structures at the village level. This was meant to destroy the social bases of existing parties. For Suharto's party, Golkar, this policy did not prevent mobilisation through the many professional associations incorporated by Murtopo as part of Golkar's political machinery. At the village level, several strategies were applied, including mobilising anti-communist propaganda and organising support from the criminal world (see Ryter 1998; Farid 2006).

To ensure the success of Golkar in greatly orchestrated national elections, Murtopo also organised enormous networks of thugs and gangsters, also known as gangs of wild kids (*gabungan anak-anak liar, gali*). In the 1971 election, Golkar won 63% of the total votes. This strategy was continuously applied in the following years to help legitimise and mobilise support for the regime. *Gali* were also mobilised for other political purposes. For instance, in the Malari riot[5] in 1974, Murtopo was believed to have used them as 'agent provocateurs' to infiltrate peaceful demonstrations to discredit his rival within the regime, the head of the Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order (*Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban,* Kopkamtib), General Sumitro (Bourchier 1990).

In 1973, and to prepare for the 1977 general election, Murtopo established the Indonesian National Youth Council (*Komine Nasional Pemuda Indonesia,* KNPI) as the sole organisation representing youths in Indonesia. Many of its members were unemployed youths associated with the criminal world. The organisation was affiliated with Golkar and helped to ensure the party's victories during the election. However, more specifically, according to Ryter (2014, 160), the KNPI was established 'to detach political party youth wings from their parent parties and thus depoliticise them'. In 1978, Murtopo established another youth organisation, the Indonesian Renewal Young Generation (*Angkatan Muda Pembaharuan Indonesia,* AMPI). Moreover, to target groups from the criminal world, Murtopo created Prems in 1979. This organisation—associated primarily with *preman* (thugs) in urban areas—recruited local bosses and recidivists 'to consolidate themselves into formal organisation' (Ryter 1998, 63). During the election campaign in 1982, Murtopo also organised *gali* to defame the PPP and prevent the

[5] Previously a peaceful student demonstration against foreign investment, which turned into a riot after it was infiltrated by Moertopo's youth gangs (see Bourchier 2015).

party from winning votes in Jakarta. Murtopo mobilised hundreds of *gali* in uniforms associated with the United Development Party (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*, PPP) to 'disrupt a massive Golkar rally in Lapangan Banteng' (Bourchier 1990).

However, Suharto was unhappy with Murtopo's actions in Lapangan Banteng (Bourchier 1990), which Suharto considered a threat to his power. For this reason, another episode of mass killings occurred, which targeted *gali* associated with the networks of gangsters that comprised the main power base of Murtopo (Bouchier 1990). From 1982 to 1984, thousands of suspected *gali* were killed in what was known as mysterious shooting (*penembakan misterius*, *petrus*). In 1983, Suharto repositioned Murtopo into a powerless position in the Supreme Advisory Council. As Ryter (1998, 64) notes, 'Suharto feared the ambitions of Ali Murtopo, especially his power base in the *gali,* and that Benny Murdani was under orders to wipe out his underworld forces'.

These killings were concentrated in larger cities such as Jakarta, Jogjakarta, Surabaya, Bandung, Semarang and Medan. Media reports on the *petrus* killings illustrate that they were organised and brutal. They involved kidnappings by masked death squads and bodies being abandoned in side streets and rivers (see Siegel 1999). The brutality of these killings was described by Bouchier (1990, 186) as follows:

> Criminals, gang members or ex-prisoners, frequently tattooed and almost always young and male would be met in their houses or in the street by a group of four or five heavily built men. In many cases they would shoot their victim where they found him. More often they would bundle him (or them) into a jeep or Toyota Hardtop and drive off into the night. The victim would be taken to a quiet place and shot through the head and chest at close range with .45 or .38 calibre pistols. His corpse would then either be tossed into a river or left in some public place such as outside a cinema, a school or on the footpath of a busy street. Victims frequently had their hands bound, and often bore marks of torture. The following day there would be a short report about the finding of a '*mayat bertato*', (tattooed corpse) in the local paper, usually accompanied by grisly pictures.

Government officials refused to acknowledge that the killings were state-sponsored and instead claimed that they were the result of gang warfare (see van der Kroef 1985, 753). However, President Soeharto's autobiography (1989) eventually stated that the killings in which the corpses were publicly exhibited were meant to provide shock therapy for criminals and the public (see also Siegel 1999). Indeed, these killings marked the end of Murtopo's political

influence during Suharto's administration, especially in organising the criminal world. Murdani, a rival of Murtopo, was then appointed to assume responsibility for this matter.

3.4.4 Rise of Capital and Centralising Control of Political Gangsters

Suharto's response to the perceived threat from Murtopo must be understood in the context of emerging challenges from a section of the military to the New Order regime since the late 1970s. In 1980, some prominent retired military officers expressed criticism of Suharto by sending a 'statement of concern', also known as the 'petition of fifty' to the House of Representatives (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat,* DPR). The statement criticised Suharto's attempt to consider himself the embodiment of the national ideology of *Pancasila*, which appeared in his speech before a meeting of the armed forces commanders in Pekanbaru in 1980 (see Crouch 2007; Jenkins 1984; Ramage 1995). According to Ramage (1995, 17), in his speech, Suharto 'linked attempts to destroy him', including criticism of his family's business activities, 'with attacks on Pancasila'.

The killings marked a turning point in how political gangsters were organised by the authoritarian regime. Unemployed youths and gangs were no longer mobilised sporadically as they had been by Murtopo, but were institutionalised centrally under the direct control of Suharto, as in the case of the re-establishment of *Pemuda Pancasila* in the early 1980s. However, Ryter (2014, 162) argues that 'the process of formalising gangsters into youth organisations of national scope did not occur merely at the initiative of the military'. For him, the re-emergence of *Pemuda Pancasila* under the headship of Japto Soerjosoemarno, the leader of Jakarta's most feared youth gang, the Siliwangi Boys Club (SBC), had occurred in the early 1980s before the *petrus* case, showing that the initiative to organise gangs also came from some *preman's* figures. This argument aimed to justify his claim that gangster organisations, including *Pemuda Pancasila* in the 1980s, were independent and autonomous from the direct and formal control of the state, reverberating the Migdalian state-in-society approach. However, Ryter (1998, 67) explains that *Pemuda Pancasila* before *petrus* had 'made itself needed by the regime'. This contradicts his own claim about 'autonomous gangs' because it shows that gangsters had indeed relied on state patronage networks for their survival.

Japto was appointed as the chairman of *Pemuda Pancasila* in 1980; however, in 1981, he was detained for gun possession, confirming that without their patrons in the state, gangsters were vulnerable. In fact, Japto was finally able to control and centralise the organisation of gangsters

within *Pemuda Pancasila* only after he gained formal recognition by the regime after the 1982 election and the 1983 *petrus* operations. Japto was then responsible for the 'personal security of Suharto's family' (see Bourchier 1990, 204) and for ensuring the loyalty of the youth and gangs through *Pemuda Pancasila* to Golkar, taking over the role previously held by the AMPI, KNPI, Prems and other gangsters associated with Murtopo's patronage networks. To further ensure the centralisation of political gangsters under the direct control of Suharto, the New Order issued a mass organisation law in 1985 that classified gangster organisations and youth groups as the Youth Social Organisation (*Organisasi Kemasyarakatan Pemuda*, OKP). Under this law, all social organisations were required to adopt the sole ideology of *Pancasila*.

The centralisation of political gangsters was in line with an attempt to consolidate Suharto's economic power after the decline in oil revenue in 1982. The oil bust 'threatened the revenue base and Indonesia's balance of payment position', forcing the state to reduce the subsidies and protection of 'favoured business groups in the import-substitution manufacture sector' (Robison 2009, 125). This led to economic liberalisation and transformed the industrialisation policy from import-substitution to export-oriented, which favoured the interests of the emerging domestic capitalist class. However, as the powerful politico-business alliance 'continued to determine the allocation of licences, contracts, distributorships and credits', various financial and trade deregulations did not lead to the creation of a liberal market economy. Instead, the reform only changed the mode of extraction of state revenues from a public monopoly to a private monopoly that relied on the role played by Chinese corporate groups. In the end, instead of suffering from such economic reforms as expected by the World Bank, the oligarchic alliance—the focus of which was Suharto's family—remained the main beneficiaries of the changing formation of capital. However, it thwarted some sections of the military, whose interests were affected by this metamorphosis of capital. For this reason, the centralisation of political gangsters should be understood as a response of the authoritarian regime to increasing dissidence among military figures.

When the disappointment of the military officers reached its peak, as observed from the protest openly expressed by Murdani in 1988 regarding the expansion of Suharto's family businesses, the political configuration changed. During this period, Suharto consolidated the political support of the Islamic organisations that had previously experienced constant repression by the state. This led to the partial Islamisation of public institutions. Suharto and his family also manipulated public perception by presenting themselves as pious Muslims to attract and

mobilise support from the increasingly Islamised society. As will be explained further in Chapter 7, the changing social and political environment also attracted gangsters and militias to employ the Islamic rhetoric and identity for their survival. This strategy was to become increasingly useful to establish patronage networks in the context of electoral democracy after the fall of the New Order.

3.5 Conclusion

As argued in this chapter, the political–economic structure determines the way coercive institutions are organised by the state despite different political settings. Predominant historical institutionalist perspectives claim that the existence of non-state violence providers is a result of the unfinished state development, which can be traced back to the colonial period. It might be true that their emergence was related to the historical organisation of violence during the state formation process. However, as the organisation of political power is inseparable from the process of capitalist development, we cannot neglect the aspect of the conflict over wealth that defines the way in which the state organises public institutions, including the use of violence. In this sense, political gangsters might have emerged as a result of the way in which formal coercive institutions were organised during the state formation process. However, how they continue to survive in different political contexts primarily depends on the particular form of capitalist development. The evolution of the state in relation to the organisation of violence is intricately related to the development of capitalism, which requires various political interventions to facilitate the accumulation process. Hence, it is capitalism in its predatory form—characterised by the use of extra-economic means—that defines the emergence and survival of gangsters and militias in facilitating the accumulation of power and wealth.

The colonial plantation system introduced capitalist social relations in pre-independence Indonesia, in which production was conducted mainly through extra-economic coercion, constituting the birth of predatory capitalism. Coercion was used by colonial officers to force farmers to lease their land to plantation estates. Colonial-era gangs, or *jago*, as a violent agent were also mobilised by the colonial government to serve the interests of the plantation system, such as collecting taxes and providing cheap land and labour for sugar mills. In early independence, such colonial economic structures, which predominantly used extra-economic means in the accumulation process, still survived. They were characterised by the absence of a domestic capitalist class, making the Dutch and Chinese bourgeoisie the dominant players in the accumulation of wealth. The post-colonial state intervened to help the domestic capitalist

class emerge. The failure of these interventions led the state to appropriate foreign companies, which were then taken over by the military. This paved the way for the emergence of authoritarian rule in the Sukarno era, which enabled the military to expand its role in the political and economic arenas. Within this context, *Pemuda Pancasila* was established by the military figure to help protect the interests of the military, especially from challenges posed by communists.

During the regime change in 1965, civilian militias were mobilised by the military to exterminate communists, which paved the way for the emergence of a military–dictator regime. The mass killings signified the refashioning of predatory capitalism and the use of non-state violence to ensure the ascendency of state power. In the Sukarno era, predatory capitalism survived mainly because of the lack of indigenous bourgeoisie. In the New Order, this was characterised by the consolidation of state capitalism and the absence of coherent political challenges primarily from the left. Within this context, *preman* and gangsters were mobilised sporadically in many different social groups to help consolidate state capitalism, which relied on the petrodollar.

When oil revenue declined in the 1980s, the formation of capitalism changed slightly but remained predatory. The military no longer managed state corporations as the frontline agent in the accumulation of capital because the new economic structure had helped Chinese conglomerates to emerge as the new domestic capitalist class. However, these conglomerates remained dependent on various state protections and facilities. As Suharto's family businesses grew significantly and political and economic power continued to be centralised within the family, dissidents began to emerge from a section of the military. In the early 1980s, mysterious shootings occurred in response to the regime to address friction within the military. This led thousands of gang members—mostly associated with Murtopo's network—to be systematically murdered by the military. The organisation of the gangsters was then centralised under the direct control of Suharto, as in the case of the re-establishment of *Pemuda Pancasila* in the early 1980s.

However, what makes the practice of non-state violence survive in different political settings under authoritarianism and democracy, both in the colonial and post-colonial periods, is the persistent reproduction of the predatory form of capitalism. Hence, as this chapter has discussed, the survival of non-state violence is not simply a product of the unfinished state formation in organising coercive institutions, but it is also a result of the specific historical

organisation of capital that requires the use of extra-economic means, including non-state violence.

Chapter 4:
Exploiting the Void:
Mobilising Disorganised Urban Poor for Reactionary Politics

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the engagement of urban poor youths with organised gangs. In particular, it addresses the question of why, in Indonesia's democratic context, non-state violence organisations remain appealing, especially for many urban poor youths. As discussed in previous chapters, the predatory nature of Indonesian democracy (see Robison and Hadiz 2004; Hadiz 2010) requires non-state violence as an instrument in the contest over power and material resources. This is facilitated by the fact that large numbers of urban poor, precarious workers and unemployed youths have not been able to organise themselves as an 'autonomous social movement' through vehicles that promote in the interest of the urban underclasses.

Organised violence groups proliferate and are appealing in such a sociopolitical context because other social associations, such as those of labour and peasant unions, are disorganised, fragmented and unable to channel the interests of the poor. In contrast, formal democratic representative institutions, such as political parties and parliaments, better represent predatory interests rather than marginalised groups. Various non-state violence providers continue to exploit the void by presumably serving the interests of the urban poor by providing them with the means to survive economically, as well as a perceived channel for their political aspirations.

In this sense, the urban poor that suffer from social exclusion, material deprivation and other forms of insecurity organise themselves within various non-state violence organisations for two main purposes. First, they perceive that the gangs are substitutes for the state's functions of providing jobs and distributing wealth. Second, they view such groups as replacing the roles abandoned by fragmented social movements in channelling their interests and political aspirations. These perceptions of the sociopolitical functions of the violent groups are constructed and reproduced by the gangs' elites to mobilise popular support and enable them to join predatory alliances, thereby legitimising their continued existence.

It is important to differentiate the imagined functions of the gangs from their actual role to understand the type of social relations that define their survival. Existing studies lack awareness

of this because they accept the gangs' rhetoric, which is used to justify their presence in Indonesian society (see Wilson 2015, 2012; Bakker 2015, 2016; Kingsley and Telle 2016; Yasih 2017). This leads to the view that organised violence groups are autonomous social agents that are criminal organisations and possibly a nascent social movement. For example, Wilson (2015, 95), who refers to Brotherton and Barios (2004),[6] points out that organised violence groups 'can be sources of criminality, while also acting as vehicles for proactive social and cultural resistance by politically and socially marginal communities'. According to Wilson (2015, 97), the typical view of the 'city's middle class' is that the gangs and the poor are merely 'a source of crime and violence against which protection and greater law enforcement is needed'. For urban poor neighbourhoods, 'organised gangs are often community benefactors' that provide various kinds of protections. For Bakker (2015, 2016), the rise of non-state violent actors is a result of their capacity to appropriate state authority to deploy violence for the general good, which benefits the government and the people. According to Kingsley and Telle (2016, 172), 'the use of local militias/community security groups is a means of providing local political identity'.

The gangs claim that they serve the interests of the poor and replace the functions of the state in delivering social services. For Kingsley and Telle (2016, 172), religious militias and criminal gangs appropriate 'different language[s] of stateness that such group may become state-like'. Indeed, inadequate state services, exclusionary urban development and the absence of organised progressive movements have enabled gangs to create an image as agents that can deliver 'the general good'. However, this narrative is often used by the gangs' elites to reproduce non-state violence through which the urban poor can be mobilised and the predatory alliances can be established. The gangs might address the short-term economic problems of their members, but their form of reactionary politics perpetuates not only poverty and inequality, but also non-state violence and predatory politics. As will be explained in Chapter 5, this reactionary form of politics is reflected in the role they undertake in facilitating private accumulation. Thus, the perceived capacity of the gangs as groups that can substitute state services and replace the role of the social movement attracts urban poor youths to engage with them. At the same time, it helps the gangs to create social legitimacy in exercising violence,

[6] Drawing from the case study in New York, Brotherton and Barios (2004; see also Brotherton 2007) argue that organised gangs as a street organisation represent a transitional stage 'from a gang to a social movement'.

which makes them useful in the sociopolitical arena. This quality limits the ability of the gangs to transform themselves into a social movement.

The discussion in this chapter is presented in three parts. The first section discusses the context that makes possible the mobilisation of the poor for non-state violence, including the marginalisation of the poor by the democratic state through exclusionary urban development despite the space provided for formal political representation. However, social inequality continues to increase,[7] which enables the gangs to claim that they substitute the state functions of delivering social services to the urban poor, providing protection and creating social order. The second section explains the limits of class-based politics in organising the urban poor in Indonesia's democratic context, through which the gangs can also claim to replace the role of the social movement in advocating popular interests. The third section examines how organised violence groups exploit this void by mobilising their image as a social movement and reproducing the narrative of their contributions in addressing the subsistence problems of the urban poor. It explains how the urban poor might be attracted to the gangs and how these groups legitimise their existence to help establish predatory alliance.

4.2 Exclusionary Urban Development

Urban localities have been the main sites of the operation of various non-state violence organisations in many parts of the world, including Indonesia (see Albrecht and Kyed 2015; Hazen and Rodgers 2014; Hageorn 2004). Not only has this type of environment been an abundant source of poor people who are ready to be mobilised, but it has also provided circumstances, such as inadequate state services, through which organised gangs might develop a narrative to establish their social legitimacy. Many studies have shown that urban development tends to prioritise the interests of the upper-middle class population and marginalise the poor, which exacerbates poverty and deepens inequality. According to Harvey (2012), housing and commercial property development facilitates the interests of market capitalism as part of the process of realising surplus value.[8] This process concurrently creates urban margins as the hotspots of the pool of unemployed, informal workers, criminals and

[7] After the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997-1998, Indonesia's Gini ratio was 0.31 and 'by 2011 it had jumped to 0.41' (Suryahadi 2018). Suryahadi (2018) argues that 'a Gini ration of 0.4 or greater is a new normal for Indonesia'.

[8] In his book *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*, Harvey (2012, 5) states that the process of urbanisation, which is the way cities are made and remade, is a result of 'the geographical and social concentration of a surplus product' through which surplus values can be acquired by capitalists. Further, he said that 'capitalism needs urbanization to absorb the surplus products it perpetually produces' (Harvey 2012, 5).

gangs. This marginalisation occurs in terms of both physical space and social, political and economic arenas. According to Goldstein (2012), this site is characterised by the absence of the state and the law, thereby creating a space for gangs to imitate the state function by providing various kinds of protections and establishing order.

Indonesia's democratisation might have widened the space for political participation, but it does not change the life situations of the urban poor, who remain excluded from urban development that largely prioritises the interests of the upper-middle class. Despite this problem, rural–urban migration has continued to increase over the last two decades (World Bank 2014). As noted by the World Bank (2019, 1), Indonesia was ranked in 'the top ten fastest urbanising countries of the world during 1990–2014', when the average rate of the rising urban population was 4.1% per year between 2000 and 2010, 'faster than any countries in Asia'. Thus, Indonesia has the second-largest urban population in East Asia after China. However, a large proportion of the urban population has a low level of education and skills, with many relying on informal jobs and various insecure forms of employment to survive. At the same time, they inhabit informal urban neighbourhoods (*kampong*), some of which occupy land along riverbanks and railroad tracks and have no legal status, constituting 'urban slums' (see Kusno 2018, 2013; Firman 2004; Padawangi 2018). According to UN-Habitat (2010), a slum area is characterised by inadequate housing infrastructure, overcrowding and insecure residential status. The World Bank (2019) estimates that in 2014, approximately 29 million people, or 22% of Indonesia's urban population, were living in urban slums and had a low level of access to basic needs.

To date, local governments and development agencies have perceived urban slums as a source of illegality, criminality and disorderliness. More importantly, the private sector perceives them as an obstacle to business expansion in urban areas in relation to the need for space in inner cities and to create cities without slums. Thus, slums have been the target of urban development not so they can be transformed to meet dwellers' basic needs and improve infrastructure and housing conditions, but to evict them from the area (see Kusno 2018, 2013; Padawangi 2018).

In the case of Jakarta, Governor Sutiyoso (1997–2007) promulgated bylaw No. 4/2004 on Population and Civil Regulation concerning administrative registration in regard to permanent employment and residents, which targeted the poor and the migrants to be expelled from the city centre. They were blamed for urban problems such as disorderliness, criminality and flooding (see Human Rights Watch Report 2006). During the Sutiyoso administration, around

200,000 houses were demolished to restore the image of Jakarta as the capital city after the 1998 riots. This aimed to attract tourists and investors to create more development in the urban centre. These policies have been continued by other governors, mostly to create order and implement a program of cleaning up the Ciliwung River. However, in many cases, these reasons have been a pretext for private sector infrastructure projects. Moreover, many evictions have been executed using repressive methods or without providing alternative public housing (Beritasatu, 27 August 2016). Under Sutiyoso and his successor Fauzi Bowo (2007–2002), the instruments of preserving public order consisted of Police Unit for Peace and Order (*Satuan Polisi Ketentraman dan Ketertiban*, *Tramtib*), Municipal Police Unit (*Satuan Polisi Pamong Praja*, Satpol PP) and Community Protectors (*Lindungan Masyarakat*, *Linmas*). As a result of decentralisation laws, these groups had their budgets increased to a level that was greater than the allocation for education and health services (Wilson 2015, 137). This illustrates the city managers' concerns during this period in terms of regulating urban space and enforcing public order for the interests of the market and the middle class.

Fauzi's successor, Joko Widodo (2012–2015), widely known as Jokowi, was considered to favour a more humane approach in conducting evictions given his reputation when he was mayor of Solo, Central Java, from 2005 to 2012. He attempted to prepare alternative public housing for some evictees; however, given that public housing tends to be on the fringes of the city, squatters often lose their networks of informal economic activities when they move (see Reerink 2013; Savirani and Aspinall 2018), yet they still have to pay rent and utility bills without significant government subsidies. In the end, the relocation program became another way of forcing the poor to move out of the cities (interview with Sandyawan Sumardi, Ciliwung Merdeka community leader, 3 September 2018.).

More aggressive forced evictions were carried out by Jokowi's successor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, popularly known as Ahok (2014–2017). Ahok became known as 'the eviction king' when he collaborated with large developers such as Agung Sedayu Group, Salim Group and Agung Podomora Group to execute forced evictions (Padawangi 2017). Sandyawan Sumardi, former Catholic priest cum social activist, admitted that he had been directly pressured by Sugianto Kusuma, who was the owner of Agung Sedayu Group and widely known as Aguan, to withdraw the Bukit Duri residents' lawsuit against the Jakarta Government's eviction policy[9]

[9] Bukit Duri Kampong is one of the sites of mass evictions executed by the Ahok administration (2014–2017) to implement flood mitigation programs through the normalisation of the Ciliwung River. The eviction process faced resistance from residents, including Ciliwung Merdeka community leader Sandyawan Sumardi, who was a

(interview with Sandyawan Sumardi, Ciliwung Merdeka community leader, 3 September 2018). Evictions in Kampung Pulo were contested by many actors, including military and police figures as well as the elites of gangs on different sides of the conflict. The evictions in Bukit Duri and Kampung Pulo were part of the flood mitigation programs through the normalisation of the Ciliwung River. However, Sumardi suggests that this was only a pretext to obtain urban space for the interests of private developers:

> After I filed the lawsuit of Bukit Duri residents, Hong Tjin my old friend who is also former social activist from Yayasan Budha Tzu Chi and is now the CEO of the Chinese DAAI TV[10] asked me to have an interview about the evictions in Jakarta in his office. I agreed, and after the interview, Hong Tjin brought me to another room where surprisingly Aguan had been sitting. I was thinking that it was a trap. And it was true that then Aguan directly asked me to cancel Bukit Duri's lawsuit. He said he was asked by Ahok to do so. He asked me the cost for the compensation of Bukit Duri residents that he would pay from his own pocket as long as they would move from Bukit Duri. He also offered me a land, a house and money. Hong Tjin also said to me that the land in the evicted location of Kampung Pulo had been owned by developers linked to the military and the police figures as well as the elite of the gangs, which was meant to threaten me. But, of course I refused their demands (interview with Sandyawan Sumardi, 3 September 2018).

LBH Jakarta (2016, 2017, 2018) shows that there were 416 eviction cases and 15,042 households affected by those evictions during Ahok's administration in 2015–2017. However, Ahok still received high popularity and electability ratings for his perceived clean governance and assertiveness in executing infrastructure development programs. His eviction policy only affected the urban poor, who then chose to make a political contract with his rival Anies Baswedan when Ahok ran for re-election in 2017. Ahok was eventually defeated by Anies, partly because of the latter's support from conservative Muslims mobilised by Islamic vigilante groups like the FPI (Islamic Defenders Front). However, Anies has broken his political promise to the urban poor and continues the same eviction policies (LBH 2018).

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resident of the *kampong*. The non-government organisation (NGO) Ciliwung Merdeka has been based in this *kampong* since the early 2000s and has focused on empowering urban poor youths in Bukit Duri. In facing the threat of eviction, the Bukit Duri community was assisted by many other NGOs and social activists that initiated a class action lawsuit against the Jakarta administration in mid 2016. A decision made by the Central Jakarta District Court in 2018 and backed by the Jakarta High Court ruled in favour of the residents (*Jakarta Post*, 6 September 2018); however, as of the writing of this thesis, the decision has not yet been executed.

[10] Previously, he was a senior executive of Sinar Mas Group—a corporation owned by another Chinese tycoon.

Similar cases can be found in other urban areas in Indonesia, especially in the context of democratic decentralisation, whereby municipal governments gain more autonomy to generate income by attracting domestic and international investments. This new political context provides more opportunities for private capital to transform the urban landscape, leading to rapid gentrification (see Bunnel et al. 2013; Bunnel and Miller 2011). This transformation includes the expansion of the urban space through the reclamation of bays and seashores in several regions in Indonesia, which affects the livelihood of fishing people and opens other urban dwellers along the coastline to eviction. According to the Ministry of Marine and Fisheries (Tirto, 18 April 2016), there were 49 locations of planned reclamation in Indonesia in 2016, mostly linked to large conglomerates such as Tommy Winata in Benoa Bay Bali and Aguan in Jakarta Bay. Most reclamation permits have not been accompanied by the mandatory environmental impact analysis.

International development agencies also contribute to shaping the urban landscape for the interests of the market and the middle class by excluding marginalised people. This has been conducted primarily through urban development projects funded by the World Bank. In 2012, the World Bank (2012) funded a flood mitigation program through the Jakarta Urgent Flood Mitigation Project (JUFMP), which the government translated into 'the normalisation' of Jakarta's rivers. Many riverbanks have been inhabited 'illegally' by the urban poor for more than 30 years,[11] and this program has led to forced evictions of residents living in informal houses in those areas. The increasing number of eviction cases during the Jokowi and Ahok administrations was part of the implementation of the JUFMP.

Another program funded by the World Bank that affects the living conditions of the urban poor is the National Slum Upgrading Project (NUSP), also known as the City without Slums program (*Kota Tanpa Kumuh*, KOTAKU). This program has been implemented as part of the National Mid-Term Development Program (RPJMN) 2015–19, which targets 269 cities in 34 provinces. A study by a coalition of human rights and environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Koalisi Pemantau Pembangunan Infrastruktur 2017) regarding the implementation of this program in Makassar city shows that the upgrading scheme excludes the poor who inhabit the urban areas without secure land tenure. One activist suggests that this program replicates the Kampung Improvement Program (KIP), which was implemented in the

[11] According to Indonesian Basic Agrarian Law, such a status can be questioned considering the long occupation of the land.

1960s by then-governor Ali Sadikin, who had successfully upgraded the condition of urban *kampongs* without relocating the urban poor (interview with Elisa Sutanudjaja, executive director of Rujak Centre for Urban Studies, 3 January 2019). According to Devas (1981, 30; see also Jones 2017), the KIP has successfully improved the *kampongs* without evictions because it has adopted 'low standards for upgrading'. This strategy could 'avoid making improved areas too attractive to the higher income groups', which leads to gentrification (Devas 1981, 30). However, ethnographic studies (see Jellinek 1991; Abeyasekere 1989) have shown that the slum upgrading project during the Sadikin period also involved evictions, particularly of those deemed to be 'illegal' urban inhabitants. Indeed, according to Devas (1981, 30), most upgrading schemes in urban slums in many countries have led to displacement of the poor 'by the better off, once an area has been improved'.

In many cases, formal coercive institutions such as the police and the military contribute by exacerbating various social exclusions in regulating the urban space. City managers and private capitals use them as repressive instruments to facilitate evictions and provide urban space for the interests of the market and the higher-income population. For the poor, this situation paints the state in a more negative light. However, it is within this context that gangs find a space to justify their usefulness to the urban poor by acting like a state, particularly in delivering social services and addressing the subsistence problems of the poor. At the same time, while the urban margins and slums are characterised by disorderliness, they also provide social legitimacy for gangs because they appear to be needed by the state to establish a semblance of order.

4.3 Disorganised Urban Poor Movement

The gangs' appeal to the urban poor youth is also made possible by the absence of organised movements that could substantially challenge exclusionary urban development projects. Insofar as such movements exist, they are led by NGOs, which suffer from the problems outlined below. More importantly, such movements have not directly addressed the subsistence problems of the poor, thus leaving a space for *preman* groups to take over.

Various NGOs have attempted to organise the poor—either in urban or rural areas—mainly based on particular human rights issues. This in turn largely depends on the role played by NGO activists. This is also common in urban areas, particularly in relation to the advocacy of the rights of the poor to defend their livelihood against evictions as a consequence of the state's urban development programs. However, given that the legacies of the destruction of the left

and the domestication of civil society are still obvious, the organisation of the urban poor remains fragmented. Resistance from the urban poor might appear, but it is often sporadic, spontaneous and mostly based in the area that is under the direct threat of forced evictions instead of as a much broader and coherent urban poor–based movement.

For example, in the Jakarta context, the urban poor living in the riverside *kampongs* are organised by several NGOs, including the Urban Poor Consortium (UPC), Ciliwung Merdeka, Rujak Centre for Urban Studies (RCUS) and Jakarta Residents Forum (*Forum Warga Kota Jakarta*, FAKTA), but they have not been able to deliver a fundamental challenge to broader predatory interests in regulating the urban landscape. Given that community empowerment approach of these NGOs is mostly based on certain *kampongs* that face the threat of eviction, there are limits to how this approach can establish a broader political alliance that could organise most of the urban inhabitants marginalised by market-driven urban development.

Each movement has its own *kampong* base for its advocacy program. For example, Ciliwung Merdeka, led by Sandyawan Sumardi, organises the urban poor and focuses on empowering the youth in Bukit Duri and Kampung Pulo along the Ciliwung River. FAKTA is led by Azas Tigor Nainggolan and has its main base in Kampung Penmas, where it helps inhabitants to defend their rights to the city from the threat of eviction. Both Sumardi and Nainggolan were members of NGO Jakarta Social Institute (*Institut Sosial Jakarta*, ISJ), established in the 1970s, which advocated for the urban poor. Further, ISJ member Ibe Karyanto established another NGO, Sanggar Anak Akar, which is concerned with empowering street children in Jakarta and giving them an informal basic education. Meanwhile, the UPC, established by Wardah Hafidz, carries out community development programs based on urban *kampongs* and employment status (e.g., street vendors, scavengers, beggars, street musicians, *becak* drivers) and organised within informal community-based organisation Urban Poor Network (*Jaringan Rakyat Miskin Kota*, JRMK). Some of the UPC's members—mostly urban architects—also established another NGO, RCUS, which is concerned more with the politics of urban space management.

These NGO-led urban poor movements have different social bases, concerns and methods in relation to defending the rights of the poor to the city. Most of them are based mainly in Jakarta, except the UPC, which expands its networks to some other cities in Indonesia. However, these networks were established based on issues that limit the possibility of establishing a more coherent social movement. Another network affiliated with the banned leftist party People's Democratic Party (*Partai Rakyat Demokratik,* PRD), known as Indonesian Urban Poor Union

(*Serikat Rakyat Miskin Indonesia*, SRMI), also faces difficulties in organising and transforming the urban poor community. SRMI experienced an internal conflict among its activists that led it to dissociate from the PRD in 2015. Marlo Sitompul, the leader of SRMI, laments the difficulty of expanding the network among urban poor organisers led by the NGOs above (9 September 2016), mostly because of their different advocacy approaches. Building a broader network of urban poor communities is also challenging because most of the urban poor only want to engage in activities if they believe they will receive direct and tangible benefits. NGO-led movements often neglect such material interests and fail to conceptualise the reasons why the urban poor should engage in political activism.

The result is that urban poor movements have failed to challenge predominant predatory interests in regulating the city. For example, the victory of the Kampung Bukit Duri evictees in the legal battle against evictions in 2016 was ignored by the Jakarta Government, and compensation for losses demanded in the lawsuit has not been executed (BBC Indonesia, 10 January 2017). Some activists have entered formal politics and become members of political parties or expert staff of city managers, expecting that they would be able to directly influence the policy-making process. However, they have been hindered by corrupt political institutions and must frequently give up their agenda to further reforms.

The rise of democracy has led other movements to find opportunities to make political deals with politicians during legislative and local executive elections. According to Savirani and Aspinall (2017, 5), this transactional bargaining represents a combination of clientelistic and programmatic forms of politics in which the candidates promise a package of programs or other material benefits in exchange for votes. In the case of Jakarta, FAKTA and UPC/JRMK carried out this strategy during the gubernatorial elections.

For example, in the 2007 gubernatorial election, FAKTA and Kampung Penmas made a political deal with Fauzi Bowo, while UPC/JRMK formed a contract with candidate Adang Daradjatun (interview with Azas Tigor Nainggolan, director of FAKTA, 20 September 2018; interview with Gugun Muhammad, Kampung Tongkol community leader and JRMK activist, 11 September 2018). When Bowo won the election, FAKTA observed that he did not fulfil all of the promises in the contract. Nainggolan has said that the contents of the contract were too general and were not legally binding (interview with Azas Tigor Nainggolan, director of FAKTA, 20 September 2018). However, during that period, FAKTA continued to support Bowo's administration, while UPC/JRMK took the oppositional stance. In the 2012 Jakarta

gubernatorial election, UPC made a political deal with Bowo's rival. This time, the paired candidates of Jokowi and Ahok, supported by UPC/JRMK, won the election; however, most of the deal was ignored. As mentioned above, the number of forced evictions increased significantly during Ahok's administration. UPC/JRMK withdrew its political support from Ahok when he ran for a second term.

Learning from the past, UPC/JRMK and RCUS organised 31 *kampongs*, 8 urban precincts (*kelurahan*) and the Jakarta *becak* driver union (SEBAJA) to make a more detailed political contract with Anies Baswedan and Sandiaga Uno, Ahok's rival. Although the candidate they supported won the election, some activists and community organisers have admitted that the implementation of the contract faces many difficulties (interview with Gugun Muhammad, Kampung Tongkol community leader and JRMK activist, 11 September 2018; interview with Sandyawan Sumardi, Ciliwung Merdeka community leader, 3 September 2018; interview with Evi Mariani, *Jakarta Post* journalist and urban activist, 18 September 2018). Problems that tend to obstruct the fulfilment of contracts are mostly related to bureaucratic capacity and interests that continue to treat the urban *kampongs* as illegal entities. Community action plans to produce policy recommendations for urban space management have been translated into one-way surveys by subcontracted consultants. Meanwhile, substantial problems relating to tenurial security remain untouched.

In this case, the political contract represents more of a compromise than a form of organised resistance. Further, in many cases, a contract made with a politician is only a means for gathering votes from the urban poor. Many promises have not been kept because political constraints that primarily come from the interests of the capitalists tend to contradict those of the poor. Moreover, political contracts made by urban poor alliances represent only limited communities, while others prefer to engage with vigilante groups for their survival strategies.

4.4 Exploiting the Void and Establishing Social Legitimacy

The urban poor youth are attracted to engaging with organised violence groups not only because they perceive that such groups could substitute for state functions in addressing their subsistence problem, but also because they believe that the gangs can channel their political aspirations. This is because the gangs' elites maintain that their group is more like a social movement that advocates and serves the interests of the poor rather than a gangster organisation, which is often perceived in a negative sense (interview with Lutfi Hakim, leader

of FBR, 5 September 2016). They have admitted that they are *preman* or *jawara*, but they reject a simplistic description of *preman* as a mere group of anarchists often associated with criminality, illegality and brutality, which can only deliver threats to the community (interview with Lutfi Hakim, leader of FBR, 5 September 2016). They claim that the *preman* groups are useful and needed by urban neighbourhoods seeking protection from external physical threats, including from state-led forced evictions (interview with Lutfi Hakim, leader of FBR, 5 September 2016). However, members of the urban community—especially those living in the grey area between legality and illegality—ambiguously view the *preman* groups as a source of threat and protection at the same time, which is defined by some scholars as the 'racket' (see Tilly 2003; Schute-Bockholt 2006; Wilson 2015). According to Wilson (2015, 6), the racketeer appears both as the protector and exploiter because 'the source and solution to the threat are one and the same'. However, the gangs act like a state to justify their existence so the urban poor will perceive that they need them.

4.4.1 Acting Like a State

Various social exclusions manifested through the politics of urban space development have provided the necessary conditions for organised violence groups to establish social legitimation. By acting like a state, the urban poor and the state itself find the gangs useful and legitimate. However, they are not autonomous brokers that occupy a grey area and mediate between the state and the urban *kampongs*, as believed by many scholars (see Wilson 2015; Kusno 2018). This Migdalian perspective (see also Albrecht and Kyed 2015) has led to the belief that the gangs have ambivalent functions as powerbrokers that act as both heroes and villains to the urban community. The gangs undoubtedly address members' short-term economic problems and provide protection for the community.

In the interviews, members of the *preman* organisations confirmed that they want to engage with such groups to obtain protection and security for their precarious life. They consider the gangs useful because they substitute the state's functions. However, in terms of the form of reactionary politics undertaken by these groups, the gangs perpetuate not only poverty and inequality, but also the existence of non-state violence and predatory politics. In simple terms, they tend to serve the interests of city managers and private capitalists in reproducing exclusionary urban development. In many areas, including Jakarta, the gangs have been used to help with forced evictions, even though many of their members are the victims of such market-driven urban development (interview with Nawi, FBR local leader of Depok chapter,

20 August 2016; interview with Sandyawan Sumardi, CIliwung Merdeka community leader, 3 September 2018). It is the gangs' elites who construct and reproduce the perceived image of the violence groups performing as the hero or delivering general good to the community to maintain popular support among the urban poor. Thus, the claim of replicating the state's functions benefits the gangs' elites and the predatory alliance they serve instead of their members and the urban neighbourhood.

For example, Lutfi Hakim, the leader of Jakarta's gang FBR (*Forum Betawi Rempug*, Betawi Brotherood Forum) repeatedly asserts that his group is useful both for society and the state (interview with Lutfi Hakim, leader of FBR, 5 September 2016). For him, FBR can give members access to jobs and money, and it can protect the community—tasks that have been abandoned by the state. Thus, according to Hakim, the state should be thankful to such groups instead of attempting to disband them (interview with Lutfi Hakim, leader of FBR, 5 September 2016):

> It was in 2010 when the government attempted to disband FBR. I said to the man in the bureaucracy: I should say thanks to the government if FBR would be disbanded because I no longer need to be responsible for my subordinates, many of whom used to be unemployed. If the government disbands the FBR, then many of the members from the lower class will lose their job and their money and they would then become the government's responsibility. If the government does not take the responsibility, do not blame me that they will create anarchy. Many people join the FBR only for their subsistence and to get respected from others. They will not be rich by being a parking attendant or security. If the government dissolve FBR, their access to job, social security and status will be vanished as well. Will the government be responsible for that? (Interview with Lutfi Hakim, leader of FBR, 5 September 2016)

This story outlines how the gangs construct the misguided belief of their usefulness to members and the urban neighbourhood. As the top leader of FBR, Hakim must reemphasise this image to rationalise his group to his fellow members, the community and the state. He was a civil servant and local *jawara* from Cakung East Jakarta when his uncle Fadloli el-Muhir, an Islamic preacher and former PDI-P politician, established the FBR in response to the perceived expansion of economic domination of Madurese migrants in urban neighbourhoods in East Jakarta (see Bertrand 2010; Wilson 2015). However, the establishment of this organisation in the early 2000s was not only meant to consolidate Jakarta's indigenous population against the Madurese, which often led to physical conflicts among them, but was also meant to become el-

Muhir's political vehicle to mobilise support and extract money from illegal economic activities (see Bertrand 2010). During el-Muhir's leadership, FBR publicly showed its support to Sutiyoso, including conducting forced evictions.

It was in line with the FBR's interests to establish domination over the Jakarta underworld from the perceived threats of migrants, particularly the Madurese. When urban activist Wardah Hafidz, director of the UPC, publicly denounced the alleged collusion between the governor of Jakarta and tycoon Tommy Winata in the forced eviction of the urban poor to provide space for business development, the FBR stood on the side of the governor and the developer (Bertrand 2010). In reaction, FBR stoned the UPC headquarters and beat members of the UPC, including women and children, while Hafidz had 'a machete held to her throat' (Wilson 2015, 108). According to Wilson (2015, 108), FBR's attack on the UPC shows not only that the violence groups are merely hired thugs, but also that they are a result of the contestation over 'capturing the marginalised for whom the FBR claimed to speak'. However, this claim should be understood as part of the way in which the FBR seeks out social legitimacy to carry out its functions as a group that serves the interests of predatory alliances of which it is a part rather than marginalised social groups.

The issue of social security in particular provides non-state violence groups with a way to sustain their existence in the context of predatory democracy. Given their capacity to provide the sort of social service that the state has failed to provide, the gangs could maintain the recruitment of members, primarily from the urban poor and unemployed youth. With little education and few skills, the poor can access jobs and money for their survival by becoming members of vigilante groups. These facilities define the engagement of the poor to the group. This means that the poor can pragmatically move from one organisation to another to seek employment opportunities provided by a particular violence group. This depends on the territory controlled by the organisation. The case in other cities, such as in North Sumatra, could also explain this situation:

> In North Sumatera, *Pemuda Pancasila* is an organisation that has helped many unemployed people. Because the easiest way to find a job without a particular skill is by joining this organisation. *Pemuda Pancasila* is everywhere, in every territory that they control, this organisation could bring wealth for the poor: in the night club, the traditional market, bus stations and brothels. They might get a job as a parking attendant, a pimp for prostitutes or as a security. They do not need educational background; they only need to have the prowess

> and the willingness to fight. Muscle is the only thing needed for this kind of job. If they join other organisations that do not control a territory, no job can be done and no money can be earned. (Interview with Utop, one of the leaders of *Pemuda Pancasila* in North Sumatra, 20 November 2016)

Hence, for the poor, non-state violence organisations are attractive because they are perceived as providing an opportunity for upward social mobility. By having the skills to fight, they might be able to acquire a structural position in the violence organisation as well as have subordinates and control certain territory. Prowess and fighting skills are needed to seize territory and defend it from rivals, through which they might be able to control economic activities in that area. However, upward social mobility mainly results from patronage networks with the gangs' elites and those in power. That is, political connections are important. For example, Hakim, who was chosen as the leader of the FBR after the death of el-Muhir, is a relative of the founder of the organisation. In North Sumatra, members of the *Pemuda Pancasila* can only have a strategic position in the organisation if they can establish patronage networks and serve the interests of the most influential figure in the organisation, namely the Shah family.[12]

Some members might be able to improve their socioeconomic condition, but this is more of an individual achievement compared with describing the gangs' ability to provide a better life for the general community of the urban poor. Further, individual wealth is acquired by becoming an elite of the gangs, which relies on links with established predatory forces. As asserted by Nawi, the leader of the Depok chapter of FBR, being the local leader of the violence organisation gives him more opportunities to increase his own wealth, but not that of his fellow members (interview with Nawi, FBR local leader of Depok chapter, 20 August 2016). He also admitted that most local leaders of the FBR have large houses, many luxurious cars and mistresses. They obtained all of this from establishing relationships with local political leaders and businesspersons:

> As the leader of FBR, I have many opportunities to improve wealth. We will receive many orders or projects from businesspersons, usually to back up their construction projects such as building apartment, mall, housing and other properties or securing the land clearing process. We have experience that can ensure security from any troublemakers, from petty

[12] The Shah family, led by Anif Shah, dominates the underworld in North Sumatra through the *preman* organisation *Pemuda Pancasila*. It is also a major actor in local politics and many business activities acquired by using violence and intimidation. See the details of how they established their domination over social, political and economic life in North Sumatra in Chapter 6 as an illustration of how political gangsterism remains significant in decentralised democratic Indonesia.

> preman, because I am the real preman. Usually, we are paid *monthly* for such a job. The value is around tens of millions for a certain period. In other projects, we obtain advance payment, including from the local government by helping them conducting forced eviction of street vendors, for example.

The trajectory of Utop from being a petty criminal to the local leader of *Pemuda Pancasila* in North Sumatra also illustrates how being a *preman* can provide access to increase one's own wealth by establishing alliances with the politico-business elites:

> When I was young, I was a petty bandit. I was nothing, but when I joined *Pemuda Pancasila*, wore the uniform, it gave me pride and the community respected me. When I became the leader of this organisation at the municipal level, I had many subordinates and my economic status was much better. Now I have a huge house and many luxurious cars. I no longer do petty criminal activities and behave like a petty bandit. My networks have been expanded and they gave me many opportunities to engage in formal business with political elites. I execute many local government projects with the value of tens of billions of rupiahs. If I need money, I just call the regent to give me a project. Every project offered by the local government uses opened bidding. But it is easy to set up the winner of the tender if you have a good network. In my region, being an influential figure of *Pemuda Pancasila* is capital to access any government project. After becoming a businessman, I became a politician of the Democrat party, the highest level of the real bandit. Being a politician with the background in influential youth organisations gives you more opportunities to increase wealth and to be more respected by others.

All of the stories presented by the *preman* figures above confirm how the poor organise themselves within the violence organisations or are mobilised by their leaders because such groups are perceived to address their subsistence problems. However, this narration is repeatedly reproduced by the gangs' elites to maintain their members and justify their social position instead of demonstrating real concern for the socioeconomic problems faced by the urban poor. More importantly, the gangs' elites continuously produce the narrative that their group represents the only available political vehicle for the urban poor to channel their interests. In fact, Indonesian predatory democracy is characterised by the absence of coherent progressive movements that advocate the interests of the poor. Thus, the gangs gain more opportunities to bolster their social legitimacy to establish alliances that help them remain useful and survive in the democratic context.

4.4.2 Political Vehicle of the Poor?

In establishing social legitimacy, the gangs also project an image of themselves as a social movement, which is perceived by their members as a political vehicle that can fight against perceived injustice and socioeconomic marginalisation. For instance, FBR explains that the marginalisation of Jakarta's urban poor has been caused by migrants and rising urbanisation. Meanwhile, gangsters in the Islamic Defender Front (*Front Pembela Islam*, FPI) identify the 'moral crisis' or 'moral decadence' as a source of marginalisation of the urban poor, and they propose the Islamisation of the public space as the solution. This idea is made possible not only by the failure of the state to provide social services to the urban poor, but also by the relative absence of organised progressive social movements that can channel the interests of marginalised groups. Meanwhile, formal representative institutions, such as the parliament and political parties, tend to further the interests of predatory alliances rather than the poor. The claim that the gangs constitute the political vehicle of the poor has been made by the gangs' elites as a means of exploiting such a condition. As explained earlier, this does not mean that they are really concerned with defending the interests of the urban poor or channelling their political aspirations. Indeed, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, the gangs serve the interests of the politico-business elites by undertaking a sort of reactionary politics, which exacerbates the social marginalisation of the urban poor.

However, the fact that the gangs also serve the demands of their elite patrons in addition to their perceived social functions is seen by Migdalian scholars as illustrating an ambivalent character instead of the key aspect explaining the continued existence of the groups. According to these scholars, ambivalence is one of the main features of the gangs because they exist between society and the state, thus representing the fragmented nature of authority. The gangs perform as brokers that appropriate the grey areas where illegality and legality as well as the private and the public are blurred, and are often defined as twilight institutions (see Lund 2006). Bakker (2016, 271) notes that, as twilight institutions, the gangs 'can appropriate "stateness" through public authority exercised by defending a community's shared interests'. Thus, according to these scholars, decentralised democratisation has not only diffused the centralised control over the *preman* groups—thereby now making them more autonomous—but this autonomous character has also produced a new form of accountability by which the gangs are socially acceptable. In this view, the accountability of the gangs—and thus their legitimacy—

no longer depends merely on the state or the political elites that hired them, but on society, their members and supporters.

As stated by Bakker (2016, 249), 'maintaining the peace and providing societal assistance rather than public displays of violence' enable the gangs to survive, by which they are 'subject to societal control'. A similar characterisation of the gangs is presented by Wilson (2015, 91), who argues that violence groups 'grow in size and influence, gaining recognition from government and becoming a significant presence throughout the city' because of their 'ability to provide "protection" (in an extractive, defensive and "moral" sense), extend its territorial network, and offer forms of social welfare and advocacy'. For Wilson (2015, 91), the FBR and groups like it reflect 'a particular type of populist political agency of the urban poor and working class shaped by the dynamics of democratic transition'. According to Wilson (2015, 95), they can be considered:

> an expression of and vehicle for the struggles of the urban underclasses, a means for seeking redress for perceived injustice and socioeconomic marginalisation and as modes of local governance in lieu of, in conjunction with or running parallel to state governance.

The gangs have indeed provided a pragmatic solution for urban poor youth seeking a job and other material benefits for their survival, and to the community seeking protection—tasks that have been abandoned by the state and fragmented social movements. The gangs also provide a view to define the problems faced by the urban poor through which they might find new hope by joining the violence groups. However, such a view offered by the gangs' elites tends to define the problems in cultural terms and conceals the main issues that marginalise the urban poor in the first place. Further, given that the engagement of the violence groups in rent-seeking politics is unavoidable in the predatory democratic context, it has in fact reproduced and accentuated such marginalisation. Therefore, the claim made by the gangs that they are needed by urban communities should be considered mere rhetoric to justify the mobilisation of their members and gain the popular support needed to establish predatory alliances. The support given by *preman* groups to help city managers execute forced evictions demonstrates that the engagement of the urban poor youth with violent organisations mainly benefits the bosses rather than rank-and-file members.

The case of FBR attacking the UPC/JRMK during the Sutiyoso administration, as mentioned earlier, shows that the *preman* groups have actively supported predatory alliances in executing

forced evictions. Human Rights Watch (2006) also reports a case in which the FBR attacked evicted residents at Cakung Cilincing, East Jakarta. In this report, members of the FBR interviewed by Human Rights Watch stated that the reason for their attack was to defend the rights of the indigenous Betawi population over the land in Jakarta. The evictees were depicted as migrants that marginalised the Betawi people. Even during the Ahok period, when most of the *preman* groups publicly declared their oppositional stance against the government—partly because the governor cut the local budget for mass organisations—some of the forced evictions were facilitated by the gangs. Sumardi, the Ciliwung Merdeka community leader who assisted Kampung Pulo communities against forced evictions in 2015, stated that he saw members of the FPI protect government officials who were executing evictions, and they helped the police secure the area, even though one of the FPI's main figures, Habib Sholeh, resided in that *kampong* (interview with Sandyawan Sumardi, Ciliwung Merdeka community leader, 3 September 2018). Interviews with a number of *preman* figures (interview with Utop, one of the leaders of *Pemuda Pancasila* in North Sumatra, 20 November 2016; interview with Nawi, FBR local leader of Depok chapter, 20 August 2016) confirm that they tend to maintain relations with politico-business elites to gain material benefits for themselves.

Nawi, FBR local leader in Depok, West Java, claims that he continually supports the local government in regulating street vendors by expelling them from around the area of Cinere Mall, Depok (interview with Nawi, FBR local leader of Depok chapter, 20 August 2016). He said to the street vendors:

> You might be able to do business in my area, but you must respect us. The attempt of the government in clearing the area of Cinere Mall from the street vendors should be respected. You should not oppose the government and cause a riot. If you come to my house and cause a riot, that is intolerable. If you do your business peacefully, that is good. Otherwise, I will expel you from my area.

Sastra, *Pemuda Pancasila* leader in North Sumatra, described his experience of how the government contributes to making the *preman* group useful for them (interview with Sastra, North Sumatra's *Pemuda Pancasila* figure, 21 November 2016): 'local governments—from the village leader, district leader and local military leader—also contribute in helping *Pemuda Pancasila* to establish domination over the underworld since it is an instrument for power to mobilise votes during the election'. Another *preman* figure in Solo, Central Java, who is also a politician from Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia*

Perjuangan, PDIP), Bimo Putranto (interview 23 October 2016), explains how violence groups are needed not only by the poor, but also by political-economic elites to extract money or use them as muscle power in political contestations. He stated that:

> We want the military to use us as their instrument through which we could get the money, jobs and projects. We know that the armies also need us. We have a mutual understanding on that. The army needs us to keep their hands clean in conducting illegal activities, through which they also get the money. (Interview with Bimo Putranto, a preman figure in Solo, Central Java and a PDIP politician, 23 October 2016)

Both Putranto in Solo and Sastra in North Sumatra admitted that mobilising the poor in their violence organisations helped their career as politicians. Such political functions in relation to the violent capacity of the gangs define the reactionary character of the groups as well as the individuals that engage with them. This contrasts with the argument presented by the Migdalian studies mentioned above regarding the possibility of street organisations like gangsters transforming into an autonomous social movement only because they organise sections of the most deprived society. In fact, most leaders and members of vigilante groups are unlikely to oppose the legitimate government and its apparatus. What they do is adjust to the social and political circumstances that require their groups to serve their own interests for upward social mobility and participate in primitive accumulation with politico-business elites. Nawi, an FBR local leader, admitted that his networks with politico-business elites and the state security apparatus have helped him accumulate wealth and expand his influence in controlling territory through which he could establish the claim that he serves the interests of his fellow members (interview with Nawi, FBR local leader of Depok chapter, 20 August 2016):

> Every local police officer in Depok knows me very well that I am the one responsible for the social security in this area. They always ask me to participate in securing the area from the petty criminals and troublemakers. All petty criminals in my territory also recognise me as the leader of the influential *preman* group. Many people ask for my help when they have a criminal problem with the police. And the police also respect my position if I ask them to help my fellows. That is why I maintain a good relationship with the state apparatus.

This story confirms that the role of vigilante groups favours the interests of predatory alliances and the gangs' elites rather than those of the general poor. They have been a useful instrument for politico-business elites instead of an autonomous organisation that could challenge predatory interests. Many of the urban poor youth are attracted to these organisations because

they are the only available vehicles for them to meet their pragmatic needs for subsistence, but not to fulfil their desire to challenge the state power.

4.5 Conclusion

The engagement of urban poor youths with organised gangsters has contributed to maintaining the existence of non-state violence in Indonesian democracy. The gangs remain appealing to the urban poor and unemployed youths because they are perceived as substituting the state functions of providing social services and protection to the community. They also carry out roles abandoned by social movements as a political vehicle. However, the state tends to disregard the interests of the poor, as reflected in exclusionary urban space development projects, which lead to gentrification in many parts of Indonesia. Meanwhile, urban poor movements are fragmented and disorganised and thus cannot offer a fundamental challenge to existing predatory alliances that marginalise the most deprived city dwellers. At the moment, the gangs are able to exploit circumstances in which the urban poor have been neglected in order to mobilise popular support through which urban communities will perceive that they need them. The question is whether engagement of the urban poor youth with the gangs and the popular support they attain from urban neighbourhoods reflect that they serve a 'common good'. If so, does that common good explain the continued existence of non-state violence organisations in democratic Indonesia?

According to Migdalian scholars, the social significance of the gangs illustrates that they have been appropriating stateness and performing as a vehicle of the urban poor in addressing their subsistence problems (Kingsley and Telle 2016, 172). This quality is an aspect that defines the gangs' continued existence. It is a result of democratic decentralisation whereby control over non-state violence groups has been dispersed to many patronage networks. In light of this perspective, the gangs are becoming more autonomous from the state capture by which they could manufacture their own legitimacy and accountability. In this case, responding to popular demands becomes more important for the violence groups to maintain their existence instead of demonstrating their prowess and ability to use violence. However, while the gangs continue to serve the interests of the politico-business elites, they are observed by scholars as representing the ambiguous feature of the gangs. The ambivalence of the gangs can be defined in two ways: first, the gangs are simultaneously the source of the threat and the protection; and second, the gangs perform as brokers that mediate between the state and society and between legality and illegality. As presented by the Migdalian approach, this characterisation of the

gangs in regard to their social functions tends to glorify the contribution of the violence groups in addressing the socioeconomic problems faced by the urban poor.

The gangs might provide a pragmatic solution to their members, supporters and urban neighbourhoods. However, the form of reactionary politics they undertake invalidates their claim of responsiveness to popular demands, which in turn is supposed forge new forms of accountability and legitimacy. This is because the unavoidable engagement of the gangs in predatory politics not only exacerbates the poverty of heir won constituency, but also defines their continued existence. Hence, the perceived capacity of the gangs as groups that substitute state services and replace the role of the social movement are aspects that attract urban poor youths to engage in reactionary politics. At the same time, this popular narrative is continuously reemphasised by the elites of the *preman* groups to help manufacture their social legitimacy and establish predatory alliances. In other words, those who benefit from this narrative are the gangs' elites instead of their members and the urban poor community. This quality limits the ability of the gangs to transform into a social movement, in contrast with the claims made by Migdalian scholars.

Chapter 5:
Establishing Predatory Alliances and Reproducing Non-State Violence

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the way in which non-state violence is reproduced in the context of Indonesian democracy. It is argued that the survival of non-state violence is defined by usefulness in contests over power and resources involving predatory political alliances. While non-state violence creates uncertainty in regard to law enforcement, the adaptability of capitalists and political actors to such uncertainty not only reproduces predatory politics, but also perpetuates the use of non-state violence in the accumulation of power and wealth.

In this context, gangs and other non-state violence providers facilitate and serve the interests of predatory alliances as seen in the roles they have undertaken. First, they perform a role as part of a repressive apparatus that suppresses political challenges by reproducing and maintaining anti-communist propaganda. Despite the destruction of the left in 1965, the communist spectre remains an effective means of weakening opposition to predatory political practices.

Second, the gangs act as agent provocateurs that mobilise the primordial sentiments needed by politicians to gain popular support in electoral contests. In places where religious identities—especially Islamic—have become an important cultural resource pool for political mobilisation (mostly in Java), many violence groups are able to establish alliances with political elites. However, in areas where ethnic identity has become predominant (e.g., Kalimantan and Papua), many gangsters have adopted this sort of identity instead and mobilised it as a way to make similar alliances.

Third, the gangs provide protection to capitalists through their role in land-grabbing and evictions in both urban and rural areas. Given that the democratic state limits the deployment of formal coercive institutions to protect industrial estates, the gangs have become the most effective repressive tool by undertaking union-busting and intimidating union members, which hinders the consolidation of the labour movement. In turn, the political and economic functions

of the gangs ensure their survival in the democratic context. The existence of these gangs has become significant for contending political–economic elites.

This argument criticises existing studies that claim that the survival of non-state violence is defined by the ability of the gangs to mobilise popular support from marginalised urban poor communities, and it is made possible by decentralisation and democratisation. For example, Wilson (2015) argues that political and economic elites now find it more difficult to control the gangs compared with the authoritarian period, which shows that the violent groups have become more autonomous. In turn, as argued by Bakker (2015, 91), the gangs justify their existence by serving the common good and defending 'a socio-political agenda that holds profit for both regional government and society'. As discussed in Chapter 4, gang leaders mobilise support from urban poor communities to enable them to join predatory alliances. That is, their survival is not due to their social functions in the service of the urban poor, but due to their political and economic functions in the service of the elites.

This chapter further develops the arguments of Chapter 4 by elaborating on the political and economic functions of the gangs in the decentralised democratic context. This elaboration is presented in three parts. The first section explains the role of non-state violence organisations in maintaining and reproducing anti-communist propaganda to weaken and repress potential political challenges to the political regime. The second section discusses their function in mobilising religious and ethnic sentiments to support political elites in power contests. The third section examines the function of the gangs in protecting the interests of capitalists and local businesspersons.

5.2 Reproducing the Communist Spectre

5.2.1 How Predatory Alliances Maintain Anti-Communist Narrative in the Democratic Context

As explained in Chapter 3, the persistence of predatory politics after 1965 was made possible by the reproduction of anti-communist propaganda, which was an effective means of suppressing political challenges. This was supported by a narrative, shaped during the 1960s, that communism was a threat not only to the national ideology of Pancasila, but also to religion. The military used this narrative to mobilise various Islamic militias and criminal gangs to torture and murder members and sympathisers of the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai*

Komunis Indonesia, PKI) (Melvin 2017; McGregor et al. 2018; Fealy and McGregor 2012). The New Order also issued regulation TAP MPRS No. 25/1966, which prohibited communist thought and banned the PKI. The bloody conflicts during that period were foundational for the New Order. For this reason, in 1984, the state maintained the narrative by producing a propaganda film called the Treachery of the 30 September Movement of PKI (*Pengkhianatan Gerakan 30 September PKI*), labelling it the official description of the events. The movie depicts the PKI as the perpetrators of the brutal murders of six generals and portrays Suharto as a hero. Between 1984 and 1998, the movie was broadcast on national television on 30 September every year (Heryanto 2006). This official explanation of the events was also taught in schools. Since Reformasi, the 1966 ban is still in force and has been maintained, strengthened and reproduced through Law No. 27/1999 regarding crimes against national security (see Evanty and Pohlman 2018). Thus, any attempt to spread communism, Leninism and Marxism not only violates the law, but also endangers the state. These regulations maintain the belief in the communist threat, which remains powerful in the democratic context. Any activities by individuals that are deemed to spread communist thought will make them public enemies. This is a powerful weapon for the gangs and various non-state violence organisations and can be used to suppress any political challenges through which they could establish an alliance with predatory elites (Mudhoffir 2017).

Since the beginning of the Reformasi period, survivors and their families and advocates have attempted to uncover past human rights violations, especially involving the 1965–66 events, and demanded that the Indonesian state take responsibility (Stanley 2000; Cribb 2002). For example, the Research Institute for Victims of the 1965–66 Killings (*Yayasan Penelitian Korban Pembunuhan 1965–66*, YPKP) was established in 1999 to collect information and uncover the truth about the mass murders; however, the institute encountered a dead-end as a result of the existing regulations mentioned above (Stanley 2000). The YPKP then demanded the abolishment of TAP MPRS No. 25/1966 during the presidency of Abdurrahman Wahid (popularly known as Gus Dur) in 2000–2002 (see Stanley 2000).

In a television interview in 2000, President Gus Dur voiced his concern for the victims of the 1965–66 killings and proposed annulling the 1966 ban. However, according to Evanty and Pohlman (2018, 320), the reaction against Gus Dur's proposal was 'swift and unforgiving', especially from conservative religious groups such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), which he formerly led. At that time, 'an Islamic jihad group armed with swords' visited the palace to

express its anger at the government's attempt to rescind the ban (Stanley 2000). Meanwhile, because the 1966 ban was issued by the People's Consultative Assembly (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat*, MPR), only this body could withdraw it. However, most of its members also rejected Gus Dur's proposal. Unsurprisingly, the proposal was not well received in the House of Representatives (DPR), which contributed to his impeachment (see Evanty and Pohlman 2018). Thus, the interest in maintaining the official narrative of the 1965 events, which became the foundation of the military regime during the New Order, remain dominant in the democratic period (see Kudus 2017).

Other efforts to restore the rights of the victims and their families through legal mechanisms also failed. This can be observed in the abolition of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Law (Law No. 27/2004) in 2006 by the Constitutional Court. This law, which was drafted during Gus Dur's administration, aims to provide ways to investigate 'grievous human rights violation during the New Order regime'. It specifically mandates the commission 'to investigate and uncover the truth of past abuses; to provide compensation, restitution and/or rehabilitation to the victims; and to consider the granting of amnesties to perpetrators' (Evanty and Pohlman 2018, 317). Given that the law contained in the articles allows perpetrators 'to avoid prosecution if they were willing to admit to their wrongdoing and ask forgiveness', civil society organisations submitted a petition to the Constitutional Court to remove the related provisions (Evanty and Pohlman 2018, 317). However, the Court accepted more than what had been required by the petition. It not only deleted the amnesty provisions, but also scrapped the law, thereby limiting the possibility of addressing the 1965 violence. The Court argued that because the amnesty provisions had become the core of the law, deleting the related articles made the law unenforceable. Again, this argument represents the dominant interest of covering the truth of the 1965 case and maintaining impunity for the perpetrators.

Under President Megawati Sukarnoputri (2002–2004), Gus Dur's successor, the government tended to avoid dealing with past human rights violations, including in regard to the 1966 ban, because it was more concerned with consolidating political support in anticipation of the 2004 presidential election. In 2003, there was an attempt to review all MPR Resolutions issued between 1960 and 2002 to correspond with recent constitutional amendments. However, of 139 Resolutions, TAP MPRS No. 25 of 1966 was one of three retained by the MPR (Puspitadewi 2007; see also Evanty and Pohlman 2018).

During President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's administration (2004–2014), the government reportedly drafted a text to make a formal apology to the victims and families of the 1965 atrocities after Indonesia's National Commission for Human Rights (*Komisi Nasional Hak Azasi Manusia*, Komnas HAM) submitted a report on human rights abuses in 2012 (see Santoso and van Klinken 2017). However, two days before Yudhoyono planned to deliver the formal apology, As'ad Ali, the vice chairman of Indonesia's largest Muslim organisation Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), held a press conference with other NU leaders, army generals and non-state violence organisations such as the Communication Forum for the Children of Retired Military Officers (*Forum Komunikasi Putra-Putri Purnawirawan ABRI*,[13] FKPPI) and Ansor's NU militia wing, in which he rejected Yudhoyono's plan (*Kompas*, 15 August 2012). Ali pointed out that the state would do better to propose reconciliation instead of making an apology because the communists were the party that should be blamed for the 1965 conflicts, during which many NU members were victims. He also said that the government's plan to deliver a formal apology indicated the resurgence of neo-communism and that many PKI members were already infiltrating government institutions (*Historia*, 16 August 2012). The plan was then cancelled. Retired army general Djoko Suyanto, the then coordinating political, legal and security affairs minister, said that he rejected the report from Komnas HAM and 'insisted that the mass killings were justified to save the country from communists' (*Jakarta Post*, 2 October 2012). Moreover, the attorney general refused to execute criminal investigations into the 1965 human rights abuses to follow up on the initial findings of Komnas HAM.

Unsurprisingly, with the predominant conservative view of the 1965 case, the new TRC draft bill formulated in 2009 was reoriented from truth-seeking to reconciliation. President Widodo's (2014–present) effort to delve into the 1965 case was also directed at reconciliation. This initiative was made after increasing domestic and international pressure, including from the International People's Tribunal on Crimes against Humanity in Indonesia in 1965 (IPT 1965) held by activists, scholars and survivors in Den Haag, Netherlands on 10–13 November 2015 (IPT 1965 Foundation 2016). The tribunal was planned in 2013, after the Komnas HAM report was not followed up by the attorney general (*BBC Indonesia*, 13 November 2015). The Indonesian government was one of the invited key participants 'but declined to be present or

[13] *Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia* (Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia) changed to the National Army of Indonesia (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*, TNI) and the National Police of Indonesia (*Polisi Republik Indonesia*, Polri).

make a submission' (Santoso and van Klinken 2017, 596). The government argued that it would have its own mechanism to redress the case and would emphasise reconciliation.

In May 2015, Jokowi established a Reconciliation Committee and held a national symposium on the 1965 tragedy a year later. During the opening remarks of the symposium, retired army general Luhut Binsar Panjaitan, the coordinating political, legal and security affairs minister and the head of the Reconciliation Committee, emphasised that the government would not apologise for the massacres. As quoted by Melvin (2016), Panjaitan said that: 'We will not apologise. We are not that stupid. We know what we did, and it was the right thing to do for the nation'. In an interview (6 September 2016), retired army general Agus Widjojo, the head of the symposium's organising committee, also stressed the non-judicial approach through reconciliation as the best way to redress the conflicts without problematising the past. He said:

> The victims and the perpetrators should share a similar understanding of the event as a basis to reconcile with the past. We should forget the past to make that reconciliation happen and face the future. Rehabilitation of the victims should also be seen as part of the reconciliation. But, it is important to discuss the past through the symposium to show that not only the communists but the whole nation was the victim of the 1965 conflicts. This means, when talking about the 1965 violence, people should also consider what happened in the years before that, especially the period in 1948 when a PKI rebellion killed many civilians.

5.2.2 How the Gangs Use Anti-Communist Narrative to Establish Predatory Alliance

Given the failure of legal mechanisms to re-examine the 1965 events, discrimination against the victims and those labelled communists continues to take place. Any attempt to reveal the truth would be considered to indicate the rebirth of the communist movement and would be a target of persecution by the state repressive apparatus and the gangs. More importantly, it would reinforce the communist spectre (see Kudus 2017) by providing political–economic actors, including civilian militias, with a narrative to silence political opponents.

It was during Jokowi's first presidential term that the politicisation of the communist spectre began being widely used by predatory elites, Islamic militias and the criminal gangs to attack political opponents (see Setiawan 2015, 2016). The number of cases of intimidation, violent attacks and forced cancellations targeting public gatherings, discussions, movie screenings and art exhibitions on left-wing ideas increased significantly compared with during the SBY administration (Mudhoffir 2016a). A human rights NGO, the Institute for Policy Reform and

Advocacy (Elsam), recorded 27 incidents of persecution that used the anti-communist narrative in 2015 (*Jakarta Post*, 15 March 2016). According to a report by the Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (2018), 65 cases of intimidation and forced cancellations carried out by local authorities, local police, military officials and gangs in many different regions targeted public discussions, seminars, movie screenings and art exhibitions between 2015 and 2017. Of those cases, around 28 incidents involved non-state violence organisations such as the Islamic Defender Front (*Front Pembela Islam*, FPI), the Front for Islamic Ummah (*Forum Umat Islam*, FUI), the Kaaba Youth Movement (*Gerakan Pemuda Ka'bah*, GPK), the Indonesian Islamic Youth Movement (*Gerakan Pemuda Islam Indonesia*, GPII), the Multipurposes Ansor Brigade (*Barisan Serbaguna Ansor*, Banser), Pancasila Youth (*Pemuda Pancasila*) and the FKPPI (see Table 1).

This trend shows that this narrative became one of the most effective means of political mobilisation during the 2014 presidential election. During Yudhoyono's administration, reports of violations against freedom of expression mostly related to discrimination against religious minority groups such as Ahmadi, Shiite, Christians and adherents of many local beliefs (*Tempo*, 11 December 2018). This was a consequence of the way Yudhoyono favoured the interests of conservative Muslims to maintain their political support. In contrast, since the 2014 presidential election, Jokowi and his political allies were inclined to detach themselves from Muslim organisations considered radical and intolerant, including Islamic militias. His political allies have instead mobilised support from other Muslim organisations that advocate moderate and pluralist views of Islam, such as the NU.

Consequently, during the 2014 electoral competition, various Islamic militias (e.g., FPI and FUI) aligned with Prabowo Subianto's camp accused Jokowi of being of Chinese–Christian descent and a communist (*Time*, 8 July 2014). The Subianto team also spread a rumour that Jokowi was a PKI member and that his candidacy was supported by communist sympathisers (Hearman 2014). The Indonesian Anti-Communist Front (*Front Anti-Komunis Indonesia*, FAKI) organised similar organisations, such as the Anti-Communist Front (*Front Anti-Komunis*, FAK) in East Java, the Anti-Communist Society Alliance (*Aliansi Masyarakat Anti-Komunis*) in West Java and the Indonesian Patriot National Movement in Jakarta, to support Subianto's candidacy (*Tempo*, 23 April 2014).

Table 5.1: Violence against Alleged Communists by *Preman* Groups

No.	Date	Event	Organiser	Venue	Action	Perpetrators
1	13-Jan-15	Movie screening of *Senyap*	Faculty of Sharia, State Institute for Islamic Studies (*Institut Agama Islam Negeri*, IAIN) Surakarta	Solo, Central Java	Prohibition	Local police, gangs (FPI, FUI, GPK) and officials of the campus
2	14-Feb-15	Movie screening of *Senyap*	Student Press Association (*Lembaga Pers Mahasiswa*, LPM) of Natas Universitas Sanata Dharma	Yogyakarta	Intimidation	Local military and gangs (FPI, FUI, GPK)
3	22-Feb-15	Meeting of the 1965 Victims and Survivors	YPKP, Witness and Victim Protection Institution (*Lembaga Perlindungan Saksi dan Korban*, LPSK) and Komnas Perempuan	Bukittinggi, West Sumatra	Intimidation, forced cancellation, sweeping	Local police, military and local community
4	24-Feb-15	Meeting of the 1965 Victims and Survivors	YPKP, LPSK and Komnas Perempuan	Solo, Central Java	Forced cancellation	Local police and gangs (FPI, FUI, GPK)
5	15-Mar-15	Movie screening of *Senyap*	LPM UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta	Yogyakarta	Intimidation, raid, forced cancellation	Gangs (FPI, FUI, GPK) and officials of the campus
6	30-Jul-15	Celebration of the 30 September event	Local community in Blitar, East Java	Blitar, East Java	Intimidation	Islamic militia (Banser NU)
7	11-Mar-15	Movie screening and discussion of *IPT 1965*	Social Movement Indonesia (SMI) Yogyakarta	Yogyakarta	Intimidation	Local military and gangs (FPI, FUI, GPK)
8	18-Feb-16	Movie screening and discussion of *IPT 1965*	IPT 65, LPM Rhetor, SMI, Democratic Struggle Front (*Front Perjuangan Demokrasi*, FPD) and Legal Aid Foundation (*Lembaga Bantuan Hukum*, LBH) of Yogyakarta	Yogyakarta	Forced cancellation	Local military, gangs (FPI, FUI, GPK) and officials of the campus
9	27-Feb-16	Turn Left Festival	Cultural centre of Ismail Marzuki Park	Jakarta	Intimidation and forced cancellation	Local police and gangs (FPI, GPII, Jakarta Activist Front, Duta Legal Aid Institute)
10	08-Mar-16	Book discussion of *Memoar Pulau Buru* by Hersri Setiawan	Togamas bookstore	Yogyakarta	Intimidation	Local gangs (FPI, FUI, GPK)
11	23-Mar-16	Theatre performance of *Tan Malaka*	Satunama Theatre	Bandung, West Java	Intimidation and forced cancelation	Local police and gangs (FPI, FUI, GPK)

No.	Date	Event	Organiser	Venue	Action	Perpetrators
12	14-Apr-16	Meeting to organise the 1965 National Symposium	YPKP	Bogor, West Java	Forced cancellation	Local police and gangs (FPI, FUI, *Pemuda Pancasila*, FKPPI)
13	18-Apr-16	1965 National Symposium	Reconciliation committee, Indonesian Government	Jakarta	Intimidation	Gangs (Front Pancasila, FPI)
14	26-Apr-16	1965 Symposium	MAP Corner Klub MKP, Gajah Mada University (UGM)	Yogyakarta	Intimidation	Local gangs (*Pemuda Pancasila*, FKPPI)
15	27-Apr-16	Movie screening of *Pulau Buru: Tanah Air Beta karya Rahung Nasution*	Faculty of Law, UGM	Yogyakarta	Intimidation	Local gangs (*Pemuda Pancasila*, FKPPI)
16	05-Mar-16	World Press Freedom 2016 and movie screening of *Buru Tanah Air Beta*	Alliance of Indonesian Journalists (*Aliansi JJurnalis Independen*, AJI) of Yogyakarta	Yogyakarta	Forced cancellation	Local police and gangs (*Pemuda Pancasila*, FKPPI)
17	05-May-16	ASEAN Literary Festival 2016	Yayasan Muara	Jakarta	Intimidation and forced cancellation	Local police and gangs (FPI, FUI, GPK)
18	10-May-16	Public discussion of *Memahami Seni Lewat Pemikiran Karl Marx* (*Understanding Art through Karl Marx Thought*)	LPM Daunjati Institut Seni Budaya Indonesia (ISBI) Bandung	Bandung, West Java	Intimidation	Local police and gangs (FPI, FUI, GPK)
19	18-May-16	Public discussion of *Penciptaan Teater Berdasarkan Pemikiran Karl Marx*	LPM Daunjati Institut Seni Budaya Indonesia (ISBI) Bandung	Bandung, West Java	Intimidation	Local gangs (FPI, FUI, GPK)
20	19-May-16	Seminar on 'Marxism as Science'	Student organisation of Faculty of Social and Political Science, Padjajaran University, Bandung	Bandung, West Java	Forced cancellation	Local police and gangs (FPI, FUI, GPK)
21	27-May-16	Movie screening of *Pulau Buru: Tanah Air Beta*	Festival Film Purbalingga (Cinema Lovers Community)	Purbalingga, Central Java	Intimidation	Local military and gangs (FPI, FUI, *Pemuda Pancasila*, FKPPI
22	26-May-16	Revealing the 1998 Tragedy in Solo	Commission for the 'Disappeared and Victims' of Violence (*Komisi untuk Orang Hilang dan Korban Tindak*	Solo, Central Java	Intimidation and forced cancellation	Local police and gangs

No.	Date	Event	Organiser	Venue	Action	Perpetrators
			Kekerasan, KontraS)			
23	30-May-16	Public discussion on 'National Awakening and the Political Co-optation of the Javanese Feudalism in the Time of Revolution'	Kelana Siwi	Kendal, Central Java	Intimidation	Local police and gangs (*Pemuda Pancasila*, FKPPI)
24	20-Aug-16	Book discussion on *Aidit and Indonesian Revolution*	Indie Book Corner	Yogyakarta	Intimidation and forced cancellation	Local police and gangs (FPI, FUI, *Pemuda Pancasila*, FKPPI)
25	05-Jan-17	Liberating art exhibition on *Tribute to Widji Thukul by Andreas Iswinarto*	Committee of the art exhibition	Semarang, Central Java	Intimidation and forced cancellation	Local gangs (FPI, FUI, GPK)
26	05-Aug-17	Art exhibition by Andreas Iswinarto on *Aku Masih Utuh dan Kata-Kata Belum Binasa*	Centre for Human Rights Studies at the Islamic University of Indonesia (*Pusat Studi Hak Asasi Manusia Universitas Islam Indonesia*, PUSHAM UII)	Yogyakarta	Intimidation, raid, forced cancellation	Local police and gangs (*Pemuda Pancasila*, FKPPI)
27	16-Sep-17	Seminar on 1965: 'Revealing the Truth on the 1965/66 Events'	LBH Jakarta	Jakarta	Intimidation, raid, forced cancellation	Local police and gangs (FPI, FUI, Banser, Front Pancasila, *Pemuda Pancasila*, FKPPI)
28	17-Sep-17	Art exhibition on *Asik Asik Aksi: Indonesia Darurat Demokrasi*	Indonesia Legal Aid Foundation (*Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia*, YLBHI)	Jakarta	Intimidation, raid, forced cancellation	Local police and gangs (FPI, FUI, Banser, Front Pancasila, *Pemuda Pancasila*, FKPPI)

Source: Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (2018); secondary data (2019)

Although Jokowi won the 2014 election, attacks on his Islamic credentials and his alleged link to PKI continued to be launched by Subianto's supporters, especially Islamist groups, to undermine his administration (see Miller 2018). The attacks contributed to an increasing number of threats against public events that were allegedly spreading communist thought. At the same time, irritated by the calumnies, Jokowi repeatedly made statements to refute the accusations against him. He has ignored raids carried out by various vigilante groups on public events that are believed to be spreading communism to prove that his government also acts

against the ideology. Jokowi has also allowed many local authorities, local military commands and campuses (see Table 1) to ban events aimed at reconstructing the 1965 history to show that his administration is committed to preventing an alleged resurgence of communism. This has reinforced the anti-communist narrative and paved the way for a rising number of violence cases against public gatherings and discussions of left-wing ideas and the 1965 massacre.

In 2014, screenings of the films *The Act of Killing* (2012) and *The Look of Silence* (2014), directed by Joshua Oppenheimer as an anti-thesis to New Order propaganda, were cancelled in several cities, including Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Malang, Bandung, Solo and Bali, after protests by the gangs. In 2015, the Ubud Writers and Readers Festival (UWRF) was forced to cancel an event linked to 1965 (see Setiawan 2015; Miller 2018). Local authorities, supported by the local police and military commands as well as local communities, banned the festival from discussing the 1965 massacre. The committee then cancelled the panel discussion, a screening of the film *The Look of Silence*, an art exhibition and book launch titled *The Act of Living* (*Jakarta Post*, 23 October 2015). The founder and director of UWRF, Janet DeNeefe, commented that this was the first time in 12 years that an event discussing the 1965 massacre had been cancelled (*Jakarta Post*, 23 October 2015). Another event, The Turn Left Festival (*Belok Kiri Fest*), which focused on a critical reconstruction of the 1965 massacre, was also cancelled after threats from the local police and various non-state violence organisations (Setiawan 2016). The festival was scheduled to be held from 27 February to 5 March 2016 in the cultural centre of Ismail Marzuki Park (*Taman Islamil Marzuki*, TIM), but it was then moved to the LBH Jakarta Legal Aid Foundation (*Lembaga Bantuan Hukum*, LBH) with a significant cut to the program.

Further, Jokowi's agenda in organising the 1965 National Symposium provided another weapon for his opponents to launch attacks using anti-communist sentiments. Although the symposium still advocates the predominant conservative view of the 1965 purge, as explained above, various Islamic vigilante groups viewed the event as confirming their allegation that Jokowi's government was supported by communist sympathisers (*Jakarta Post*, 22 June 2016). Several days before the symposium was held on 18–19 April 2016, some violent groups mobilised demonstrations to reject the event and intimidate the victims. A YPKP meeting in Bogor to prepare the symposium was attacked by the FPI and PP. These groups, accompanied by the police and the civil police (Satpol PP), raided and disbanded the meeting, inducing 60 elderly YPKP members to leave Bogor to seek protection at the office of the Jakarta Legal Aid

Institute (*Lembaga Bantuan Hukum,* LBH) (*Merdeka*, 14 April 2016). The so-called Front Pancasila also mobilised a protest in front of the venue where the symposium was to be held (*CNN Indonesia*, 17 April 2016). The spokesman of this violent organisation, Alfian Tanjung, a Muslim preacher and former lecturer, demanded that the government stop the symposium because it would be used to disseminate communist ideas and to force the government to apologise to PKI members (*Tirto*, 18 April 2016).

In response to the 1965 Symposium, some retired army generals and violent organisations such as the FPI, FUI, Indonesian Islamic Propagation Council (*Dewan Dakwal Islamiyah Indonesia*, DDII), Banser, *Pemuda Pancasila,* Panca Marga Youth (*Pemuda Panca Marga*) and FKPPI held a competing symposium entitled 'The Threat of the PKI and Other Ideologies' (*BBC Indonesia*, 31 May 2016). The symposium was coordinated by retired army general Kiki Syahnakri and supported by the defence minister and retired army general Ryamizard Ryacudu. In an interview with *BBC Indonesia* (1 June 2016), Ryacudu claimed that the 1965 Symposium was inclined to accommodate the interests of the communists who wanted the government to apologise to the victims. For that reason, he decided to support those who were disappointed by organising another symposium to offer another perspective to the government—namely, that the PKI should not be forgiven and that reconciliation should not be made without acknowledging the pre-1965 violence (*BBC Indonesia*, 1 June 2016). In his opening remarks, Syahnakri stated that the symposium was held to defend Pancasila as the national ideology from communist threats. Rizieq Shihab, the leader of FPI, was one of the key speakers. He pointed out that the 1965 Symposium was an indicator of the resurgence of the communists (*BBC Indonesia*, 1 June 2016). However, in an interview on 28 September 2016, Syahnakri said that 'it is bullshit that the communists will revive':

> What we can see in our society is the demands from the children and families of those who had been killed or imprisoned in Buru Island to revenge to the state. Honestly, we should admit that our reaction at that time might be too much. Yet, such a revenge has been used and politicised by liberals—those who advocate human rights issues—to promote their interests. We knew those who funded the IPT 1965 in Den Haag like Todung Mulya Lubis and Nursyahbani Katjasungkana are liberals. And it was held in a Western country. I knew that they were aware of the reaction from society and the military to the questioning of the 1965 events. And this is their aim, to create disorder in our society so that Western countries can exploit our natural resources. (Interview with retired army general Kiki Syahnakri, the anti-PKI symposium coordinator, 28 September 2016).

Syahnakri's explanation is another version of the narrative that aims to silence any attempts to uncover the truth of the 1965 atrocities and to maintain the impunity of the perpetrators. In fact, the predominant view in responding to the 1965 Symposium was to prevent the resurgence of communism. The anti-PKI symposium had indeed emboldened such a belief and even accused the government of supporting the communists. After the symposium, various organised violence groups staged a rally together with retired armies to force the government to stop favouring the interests of the communists (*Kompas*, 4 June 2016).

The narrative that the government was supporting communists was reproduced by the FPI and other Islamic vigilante groups as a way of strengthening their alliance with political elites in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election. Many scholars (see Hadiz 2017; Fealy 2016) considered this local election the most divisive electoral competition since the Reformasi because it blatantly mobilised religious sentiments and anti-communist narratives. During this local election, Shihab often claimed that the government had made more investment deals with China than with other countries, which was an indication that Jokowi was paving the way for the resurgence of communism in Indonesia. Shihab also spread hoaxes about the arrival of migrant workers and military and police officers from China to claim that Jokowi favoured the interests of the communist country in developing Indonesia's economy. The new Indonesian rupiah notes issued in 2016 were also falsely claimed by Shihab to have an image resembling a communist symbol, namely, the hammer and sickle (*Jakarta Post*, 23 January 2017). He repeated the claim from the 2014 presidential election that Jokowi was a communist and that his administration was supported by many communist party members.

Hurt once again by the same accusations, Jokowi then took part in the game of using the communist spectre as an instrument to consolidate political support. Jokowi repeatedly made statements to refute the accusations and instead declared that he would clobber (*gebug*) the communists if they showed themselves to him (*Tempo*, 23 November 2018). He also supported raids by local authorities, local police and military commands, and local communities on several bookstores that were believed to be spreading communist thought. From 2016 to 2019, there were six raids on booksellers who were allegedly selling communist material in different regions (see Table 5.2). This goes against the 2010 Constitutional Court decision that only prosecutors with court approval can carry out confiscations of books (*Jakarta Post*, 10 January 2019).

Table 5.2: Raids on Bookshops Allegedly Spreading Communist Thought

No.	Date	Incidents	Location	Actors
1	10-May-16	Confiscation of several books published by Narasi publisher, Yogyakarta	Narasi Publisher, Yogyakarta	Local police
2	11-May-16	Confiscation of 7 books after a report from local communities	Grobokan, Central Java	Local police and local community
3	12-May-16	Confiscation of the book *The Missing Link G 30 S: Misteri Sjam Kamarruzzaman & Biro Chusus PKI*	Sukoharjo, Central Java	Local police
4	26-12-18	Confiscation of 149 books allegedly spreading communism	3 bookstores in Kediri, East Java	Local community and local military commands
5	08-Jan-19	Confiscation of 3 books allegedly spreading communism	Bookstore in Padang, West Sumatera	Local police, military commands and persecutors
6	09-Jan-19	Confiscation of hundreds of books allegedly spreading communism after a report from the Gramedia bookstore security officer	Gramedia bookstore, Tarakan, North Kalimantan	Local military commands

Source: Secondary data (2019)

Following the 2019 presidential election, the Jokowi administration became more aggressive in countering the narrative that accused him of being affiliated with PKI. He mobilised the military and local government leaders who supported him in the election to counter the narrative, and he instructed soldiers at the village level (*Babinsa*) to stop spreading hoaxes related to the communist accusations. In January 2019, the Attorney General's Office and the Indonesian military declared a war against left-wing literature (*Jakarta Post*, 25 January 2019). In a meeting with the House of Representative in January 2019, Attorney General Prasetyo reportedly stated that he would conduct a massive crackdown on books 'containing things related to the PKI' (*Jakarta Globe*, 24 January 2019). This move emboldened various non-state violence organisations to mobilise anti-communist sentiments to either attack political opponents or suppress civil society movements.

For example, anti-mining activist Budi Pego was accused of spreading communism in his campaign to reject gold mining by PT BSI in Tumpang Pitu Mountain in Banyuwangi East Java. Unlike Jokowi, the communist accusations against Pego led to his imprisonment (Mudhoffir and Robet 2019). Many conglomerate owners and politicians in Jokowi's government, as well as those that supported his rivals, are shareholders in PT BSI. From this perspective, it makes sense that the government would maintain the narrative and play the game of making communist accusations. This is because the anti-communist narrative provides a

useful instrument for contending politico-business elites to silence any challenges to the interests of private capital accumulation, which is made possible by preserving the official story of the 1965 massacres. Various non-state violence groups have become the frontline agents that reproduce and mobilise the narrative, as shown in the above cases, to establish and maintain their alliance with predatory elites.

5.3 Mobilising Political Support

The survival of non-state violence is also made possible by the way gangster organisations act as agent provocateurs that can mobilise identity politics in the service of predatory elites in power contests. They not only use violence and intimidation, but also articulate primordial sentiments for political mobilisation. As will be explained in Chapter 6, the degree of using violence in electoral competitions has been decreasing in the democratic era, but this has not been mirrored in the economic field, where conflicts over natural resources continue to rise. Yet, the decreasing tendency to use violence in electoral contests has been replaced by the escalation of identity politics and various forms of clientelism. This has been made possible by the absence of class-based politics since 1965 while an attempt to establish reform has been continuously blocked by the predominant predatory interests. Against this backdrop, the gangs articulate various forms of identities to mobilise popular support. According to Buehler (2014), the mobilisation of ethno-religious identities in power contests is an instrument for contending political elites to find support from society. This allegedly demonstrates that political elites have become more dependent on society compared with the authoritarian period (Buehler 2014; see also Fukuoka and Djani 2018). However, as will be explained below, gangsters also mobilise ethno-religious identities to create alliances with established predatory elites for their own survival. This illustrates that gangsters have been more dependent on contending elites rather than vice versa.

5.3.1 Mobilising Ethic Sentiments

Cases in Kalimantan, especially in the western, eastern and central parts of the island, best illustrate the mobilisation of ethnic identity by non-state violence groups to help them develop alliances with politico-business elites. The experience of these natural resource–rich regions in bloody communal conflicts in the early years of the Reformasi helped to establish ethnicity as the most important basis for political mobilisation today. Intense contestation among politico-business elites has made the use of ethnic identity politics more pervasive, paving the way for

non-state violence groups to find a niche for themselves in mobilising ethnic sentiments. Additionally, the 'local son' (*putra daerah*) narrative limits the right to run for local office to individuals who are perceived to be 'indigenous', which opens the door to ethnicised violent groups. This narrative emerged as a response to the historical experience during the authoritarian era, whereby the New Order centralised control over territories and populations by appointing local leaders mostly from among Javanese military officers.

For example, in East Kalimantan, some Dayak paramilitary groups, including the Kalimantan Indigenous Youth Movement (*Gerakan Pemuda Asli Kalimantan*, Gepak) and Dayak Indigenous Defence Command of East Kalimantan (*Pertahanan Adat Dayak Kaltim*, PADK), asked the local general election commission to postpone the first direct gubernatorial election of 2008 because there was no Dayak ethnic candidate. According to Abaraham Ingan, the chairman of Gepak, many Dayak figures had been nominated by political parties, but all of them failed (*Kompas*, 2 February 2008). Ingan believed that it was because most of them lacked financial support (*Kompas*, 2 February 2008). The commander of PADK, Yulianus Henock, asserted that in the decentralised context, *putra daerah* should be prioritised to lead the local administration to establish a conducive political situation (*Kompas*, 2 February 2008). Yet, many political parties favoured candidates with abundant financial resources. In response, the Dayak paramilitary groups proclaimed that they would boycott the local elections. Another Dayak organisation, Dayak Indigenous Defence Organisation of Kutai (*Lembaga Ketahanan Adat Dayak Kutai*, LKA-Dayaku) declared that it would create anarchy if the elected governor was not from the Dayak ethnic group, and not long afterwards, the Dayak organisation did in fact attack and destroy the local offices of Golkar and PDIP (*Merdeka*, 1 March 2008). However, Dayak ethnic groups continue to be under-represented in the local government office because they only constitute around 20–30% of the total population (Ananta et al. 2015, 101). Most of the population are Javanese, Buginese and Banjarese as a result of the long history of migration since the colonial period.

In provinces where Dayak communities are dominant, such as Central Kalimantan (see Ananta et al. 2015, 108), the mobilisation of Dayak ethnic sentiment has been more successful in bringing Dayak politicians to the governorship. Since the first direct gubernatorial election in 2005, the governor of Central Kalimantan has been from the Dayak ethnic group. The victory of Agustin Teras Narang, a major Dayak ethnic figure, in the 2005 gubernatorial election, was made possible partly by the mobilisation of ethnic sentiment carried out not only by the

politicians, but also by violent groups like the Dayak Youth Movement (*Gerakan Pemuda Dayak Kalimantan Tengah*, *Gerdayak*). To bolster political support from the Dayak community, Narang established MADN (*Majelis Adat Dayak Nasional*, National Dayak Customary Council) in 2008 (*Inilah*, 16 October 2011). The Gerdayak led by Yansen Binti also actively supported Narang during his two periods in power. Given that the Dayak ethnic group is associated with Christianity, the articulation of such an identity also involved making a distinction with Malays and Javanese who are associated with Islam. Not surprisingly, Gerdayak was the main actor who supported Narang in rejecting the attempt to establish a local FPI office in this province (*Tempo*, 12 Feburary 2012).

In February 2012, more than one thousand Dayak people organised a demonstration at Tjilik Riwut Airport, Palangkaraya, by bringing traditional weapons to reject the arrival of some FPI figures who planned to launch a new representative office in Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan (*Gatra*, 14 August 2013). According to Narang, the rejection was meant to maintain social order because the FPI was associated with violence. Previously, the masses had burnt the tent and destroyed the house that was believed to be the place where FPI figures would stay (*Liputan6*, 14 February 2012). According to the FPI, the rejection was related to Narang's concern regarding the FPI's agenda to advocate for victims of agrarian conflicts. Shihab claimed that he would help a member of local parliament from the National Awakening Party (*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa*, PKB), Budiardi, who assisted the Dayak Seruyan community in defending their land from being grabbed by local authorities (*BeritaSatu*, 13 February 2012). The FPI also claimed that it would establish an anti-corruption watchdog to uncover corruption cases related to land grabbing (*Okezone*, 13 Februry 2012). Yet, a year after this rejection, the Corruption Eradication Commission (*Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi*, KPK) arrested Budiarti and other local parliamentary members receiving a bribe from local businessmen related to a land project (*Detik*, 25 December 2013).

Binti, one of the main actors behind the rejection of the FPI and a member of the Central Kalimantan parliament from the Gerindra party, was also caught in a criminal offense in 2017 (*Merdeka*, 11 September 2017) when he protested against the governor, Sugianto Sabran (2016–2021) by burning seven primary school buildings (*Tempo*, 10 September 2017). In court, Binti confessed that he did it to attract attention from the governor so that he would be given government projects (*Tempo*, 10 September 2017). Binti was the vice chairman of the campaign team for Sugianto Sabran during the 2015–2016 gubernatorial election who actively

mobilised Dayak sentiment. Yet, a year after Sabran was in office, Binti was disappointed because he had never received a project from the government. He thought that burning and destroying school buildings would intimidate the government into giving him projects because he was the parliamentary member responsible for education affairs (*Tempo,* 10 September 2017). Binti then ordered 11 members of Gerdayak to execute the plan.

Binti was appointed as the general secretary of the Dayak Customary Council (*Dewan Adat Dayak*, DAD) during Sabran's administration (*Borneonews*, 18 December 2016). This organisation had been used to strengthen cultural legitimation and maintain support from Dayak communities for Sabran. His brother, Agustiar Sabran, who was also the chairman of the Mining Company Association (*Asosiasi Perusahaan Tambang*, APTA) of Central Kalimantan, was appointed as the chairman of the DAD (*Borneonews*, 18 December 2016). Sugianto Sabran was also known as a *preman* figure connected to palm oil businesses in Central Kalimantan. According to Berenschot (2015), his biggest asset was his uncle Abdul Rasyid, 'a fabulously wealthy businessman with a notorious reputation for intimidation and cunning, who built a conglomerate spanning logging, shipping, media and very large palm oil plantations'. Sugianto Sabran was the executor who terrorised and tortured journalists and activists who reported on the illegal logging activities of his uncle's corporation in the early 2000s (*Tempo*, 29 January 2018; *Majalah Detik*, 26 January to 1 February 2015). He also reported KPK member Bambang Widjojanto to the police during the conflict between the KPK and the police in 2015 for allegedly giving false testimony under oath in the Constitutional Court in 2010 regarding the result of the local election in West Kotawaringin, Central Kalimantan (*Majalah Detik*, 26 January to 1 February 2015).

Non-state violence groups in West Kalimantan, such as the Dayak Youth Forum (*Forum Pemuda Dayak*, FPD) also mobilised Dayak sentiment during the 2018 gubernatorial election. Some observers noted that the local elections in this province were among the most divisive in the country (see Setijadi 2018; Arifianto and Chen 2018; IPAC 2018). The Indonesian Electoral Monitoring Agency (*Badan Pengawas Pemilu, Bawaslu*) also identified the province as one of the most likely hotspots for 'amplified Islamist and nativist rhetoric that could result in communal conflict' (Setijadi 2018, 2). Indeed, the use of identity politics during the election was heightened because non-Dayak candidates had been more consolidated to oppose their rival from the Dayak ethnic group by mobilising ethno-religious sentiment influenced by the growing Islamic movement after the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election. During this election,

three candidates were nominated to compete for gubernatorial office: Karolin Natasa and Milton Crosby, who represented the Dayak communities, and Sutardmiji from the Malay Muslim group. The main rivalry was between Natasa and Sutardmiji because Crosby's candidacy was only aimed at diffusing Dayak support for Natasa (Setijadi 2018).

Black campaigns and ethno-religious-themed attacks were used by both candidates (Setijadi 2018). The IPAC (2018, 4) observed that while Natasa 'had played up ethnicity (Dayak) and played down religion in hopes of attracting Dayak Muslims […] Sutardmiji […] had played up religion and played down ethnicity in hopes of attracting non-Malay Muslim, Javanese, Madurese and Muslim Dayak'. For example, Sutardmiji's supporters used social media to urge Muslims not to vote for a Christian. They also mobilised anti-Dayak and anti-political dynasty sentiments because Natasa was the daughter of the outgoing governor Cornelis. Cornelis had ruled West Kalimantan for two terms since 2007 and had made 'aggressive pro-Dayak policies' that marginalised the interests of 'Malay elites, the Javanese and local Muslim groups' (Setijadi 2018, 4). His policies had even created tension among Dayaks, especially those 'who felt that Cornelis was consolidating too much power around his own family and personal networks' (Setijadi 2018, 4). Crosby was one of the Dayak figures who was disappointed with Cornelis, particularly because of the proposed creation of a new province of Kapuas Hulu. According to Setijadi (2018, 6), there was a rumour that Crosby then agreed 'to be a puppet candidate to ensure Sutardmiji of victory'. Through this, a proposal to create the new province could be realised, which would then make Crosby its governor.

At the same time, to consolidate support from the Dayak and Christian communities, Natasa's campaign team mobilised anti-Muslim sentiment (IPAC 2018). For example, the DAD of the Sintang regency held a demonstration equipped with traditional weapons to reject the arrival of MUI leader Tengku Zulkarnain at Susilo Airport, Sintang West Kalimantan, for his involvement in the anti-Ahok movement. In the demonstration, they also demanded the disbandment of the FPI. At a Dayak event, Cornelis also made a statement describing Malay and Muslim communities as the colonisers of the Dayak people. This speech went viral on social media and was used by Sutardmiji's supporters to report Natasa to the police for allegedly blaspheming Islam. Following this, Natasa's supporters countered by reporting the people who uploaded her speech (IPAC 2018). The FPD of the Landak regency actively followed up this case and mobilised its supporters to attend the trials. When the quick count

result showed the victory of Sutardmiji, members of the FPD staged a demonstration and planned to start a riot by accusing Sutardmiji of hate speech due to his provocative campaign.

5.3.2 Mobilising Religious Identity

The case of the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election best illustrates how non-state violence groups mobilised religious sentiment to establish an alliance with politico-business elites (see Mudhoffir 2017; Hadiz and Rakhmani 2018). In this local election, the incumbent candidate Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, popularly known as Ahok, was the target of attacks by Islamic vigilante groups like the FPI and FUI for a statement he made during the campaign that was considered blasphemous (A'yun 2017, 2018). Further, the attack on Ahok was targeted at his double minority status as a Christian and a Chinese, especially after he was appointed as the new governor replacing Jokowi, who had left office in 2014 to campaign for the presidency. At that time, the FPI held several demonstrations that promoted an anti-non-Muslim leader narrative (*Kompas*, 17 October 2014). The FPI considered Ahok a *kafir* (enemy of Islam) leader for his religious background and urged Muslims not to acknowledge him as the governor of Jakarta. The FPI even appointed one of its own figures, Fahrurozzi, as the 'real' Jakarta governor (*Tempo,* 3 December 2014). The FBR also supported Fahrurozzi and stated that Ahok had no authority to govern the city (*Kompas*, 1 December 2014).

The resistance from vigilante groups to Ahok's administration was a result of the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial election, when many of them had supported Jokowi–Ahok's rival, the incumbent governor Fauzi Bowo. During Bowo's administration, many vigilante groups enjoyed financial support from the local government budget disguised as social donations (*Kompas,* 18 September 2012). However, Jokowi and Ahok stopped allocating funds to these groups (*Kompas*, 29 September 2014). During the 2012 election, the FPI also mobilised religious sentiment against the Jokowi–Ahok ticket, citing the latter politician as a non-Muslim leader (*Inilah*, 14 August 2012).

During the 2017 election, the same narrative was increasingly mobilised by the FPI to build a political alliance with Ahok's rivals. Protests against Ahok's administration by the FPI initially received little support from the public or from politicians, including in regard to his blasphemy case (Mudhoffir 2016b). For example, the PKS was concerned with expanding its political support base beyond conservative Muslims because it did not want to be associated with violent and intolerant groups like the FPI. Yet, when their demonstrations, known as 'defending Islam

actions' (*Aksi Bela Islam*), gained broader public support not only in Jakarta but also in other regions, politicians started to approach the anti-Ahok masses (Hadiz 2018). This was viewed by Ahok's camp as an indication of increasing Islamic radicalism and religious intolerance and a threat to social harmony. In response, they promoted a moderate Islam narrative and stated that any political views should be in line with the national ideology of Pancasila. Ansor and Banser, the paramilitary wings of Nahdlatul Ulama, one of the biggest Muslim organisations, were the frontline agents that mobilised this narrative. However, as in many other blasphemy cases, law enforcement had to give up because of the intensity of public pressure (A'yun 2018). In the end, Ahok was sent to jail soon after his rival, Anies Baswedan, won the election.

The central government had been so worried about this *Aksi Bela Islam* movement that President Jokowi issued a regulation to disband organisations that were believed to be against Pancasila. Soon, HTI, which was involved in the movement, found itself on the receiving end of Jokowi's crackdown. The HTI was banned in a move that was also meant to gain support from the NU, whose narrative of moderation was being undermined by the HTI, especially in East Java. Strong support from the NU was calculated to bolster Jokowi's Islamic credentials. Indeed, Ansor and Banser actively defended Jokowi against conservative Muslims during the 2019 presidential election.

This is not a new phenomenon. Islamic vigilante groups have mobilised religious sentiments to establish patronage relationships with politicians since the advent of the decentralisation era. This can be observed in the enactment of Islamic bylaws in many regions (Buehler 2016). The demands made by the Islamic vigilante groups were a tactic to build predatory alliance with local politicians. As shown by many studies (Buehler 2016, 2008; Bush 2008), the politicians who promoted and issued such regulations were mostly from non-religious parties, which was meant to seek support from conservative Muslims.

In the 2018 simultaneous local elections,[14] the same narrative that attacked the religious background of the contending politicians was also used by vigilante groups. As explained in the discussion of the West Kalimantan case, some Islamic vigilante groups attacked the Dayak candidate by urging Muslims not to vote for a Christian leader. In the 2018 North Sumatera gubernatorial election, the PP mobilised an anti-non-Muslim leader narrative to attack the

[14] The 2018 regional elections were the third local elections held simultaneously in Indonesia since 2015. They took place in one day, 'despite differences regarding the end of each region's office term' (*Jakarta Post*, 27 June 2018). In 2018, more than half of the Indonesian population chose new local leaders in 17 provinces, 115 regencies and 39 cities.

Christian candidate. The same tactic was also used in the 2018 Bekasi mayoral election, when the FPI of Bekasi reported the incumbent candidate Rahmat Effendi for a statement that was considered insulting to the Aksi Bela Islam movement (Mudhoffir and A'yun 2018). Effendi's statement was also meant to consolidate his political alliance with a faction of 'moderate Islam', including with vigilante groups associated with the NU, like Ansor and Banser. In this power contest, in which both candidates were Muslims, different factions of Islamic vigilante groups competed against each other to claim that they were representing the true Islam (Mudhoffir and A'yun 2018).

Likewise, in Bali, where most of the population are adherents of Hinduism and all candidates in the local elections have the same religious background, the contest between the gangs concerned who was the true defender of traditional culture and religion in Bali, known as *ajeg* Bali (Scarpello 2015). Competition between Laskar Bali and Baladika, two of the main gangster organisations in Bali, were also associated with their political alliance, linked to historical rivalries between traditional royal families in Denpasar (Scarpello 2015). Laskar Bali has close ties with the Puri Pemecutan, a royal family in Denpasar that was historically loyal to the Golkar party. Meanwhile, Baladika, the offshoot of Laskar Bali, was close to the PDIP and the Puri Satria royal family, 'the historical rival of the Puri Pemecutan' (Scarpello 2015, 175). Yet, the pattern of conflict and coalition between the political parties shapes the relationship between these two main gangster organisations. To some extent, it confirms that gangsters in Bali articulate a cultural and religious identity to establish alliances with politico-business elites and formal policing actors through which they could extract money from illegal economic activities. In the first direct gubernatorial election in 2008, Laskar Bali and Baladika supported the same candidate from the coalition between Golkar and the PDIP. This political alliance had contributed to reducing tensions between the two gangster organisations. Yet, in the 2013 gubernatorial election, when the incumbent candidate supported by Golkar competed with the vice governor supported by the PDIP, tensions and conflicts between Laskar Bali and Baladika intensified (see Scarpello 2015). In the business competition, the same two gangs were also hired by opposing sides, thereby worsening the violent conflict between them (Bachelard 2014). In regard to the government's plan to develop reclamation islets in Benoa Bay linked to the Indonesian tycoon Tommy Winata, the gangsters also took an oppositional stance. Laskar Bali supported the plan, while Baladika took the same position as environmental activists in rejecting the reclamation project (*Tribun Bali*, 10 January 2016). This conflict continued into the 2018 gubernatorial election.

5.4 Protecting Business Interests

As explained above, the gangsters continue to survive in democratic Indonesia because of their political–economic functions. In addition to reproducing anti-communist propaganda to help shield predatory alliances from political challenges and serving politicians in the electoral contest through the mobilisation of ethno-religious sentiments, non-state violence organisations also make themselves useful for business interests. Businesspersons executing governmental development projects continually hire *preman* groups to insulate their business activities from extortion. In some regions, like North Sumatra and Solo, Central Java, local businesspeople can only access government projects by establishing networks with *preman* figures linked to local government leaders (interview with Bimo Putranto, *preman* figure in Solo, Central Java and PDIP politician, 23 October 2016; interview with Utop, *pemuda Pancasila* local leader in North Sumatra, 20 November 2016; see Hadiz 2010). This has led to the increasing use of physical threats exercised by non-state violence groups to protect business activities.

Corporations and businesspersons continue to hire non-state violence organisations to protect their business interests from threats that might come from their rivals or from challenges posed by civil society organisations. This is because, in the democratic context, the mobilisation of formal coercive institutions for business interests has been limited by regulations that are concerned with human rights protection, while the role of the military has been reduced in civilian affairs. For example, Law No. 34/2004 on Indonesian Armed Forces (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*, TNI) defines the main role of the TNI, which is to maintain national defence and security from external and domestic threats. This law might allow the TNI to undertake military operations other than war, but it can only be done through a political decision by the government and the parliament. Yet, this clause has often been ignored to extend the military's role into civilian affairs, including protecting business interests for the sake of maintaining national security and resolving social conflicts. This has involved memorandums of understanding (MoUs) on cooperation with civilian institutions that clearly contradict the TNI Law. For example, the MoU that was made with the police in 2013 and renewed in 2018 strengthens the position of the military to be involved in handling social disturbances as a pretext for repressing labour strikes and protecting the interests of investors. There have been 33 MoUs established since 2000 (with 25 made during the first and second years of Jokowi's

administration), which were meant to consolidate support from the military given Jokowi's weak alliance with the political parties in parliament at that time (*Jakarta Post*, 25 May 2015).

Hiring police officers for the same purpose is also against the law, because the main function of the police is to maintain security and social order without taking the side of conflicting parties. However, with Law No. 7/2002 on social conflict management, as well as the MoU made between the military and the police, these formal coercive institutions can still be mobilised by business actors to handle threats of social disturbance from labour strikes or any other civil society movements (*BBC Indonesia*, 2 February 2018). Many industries have requested the government to define their industrial firms and industrial estates as part of the strategic national assets known as industrial sector national vital objects (OVNI), through which they could legally deploy the military and the police to secure their premises. By 2018, there were 72 industrial firms and 19 industrial estates certified by the Ministry of Industry as OVNI (*Antara*, 6 February 2018). Under this scheme, the government has attempted to create a climate that will make Indonesia more attractive to investors (*Jakarta Post*, 3 September 2014).

To some extent, *preman* groups are more useful than formal coercive institutions, especially in confronting the labour movement. They can not only use violence for union busting, but also threaten labour communities and their families in their neighbourhoods and intimidate members and leaders of the unions in the factories (interview with Rohmat, FSPMI member and victim of an attack, 4 October 2015). *Preman* groups are concerned with ensuring the security and continuity of the business activities of the factories in their area, where they can obtain projects or social donations or outsource their members and local communities to be part of an unskilled labour force. That is, *preman* groups consider factories a source of income where they can extort money from both workers and businesspeople. In many cases, *preman* groups engage in violent conflicts with each other over contested turf.

In metal-producing industries, *preman* groups can be a significant actor in influencing industrial relations. This type of manufacturing produces industrial waste like scrap material that is easily accessed or bought and resold by *preman* figures cum local businesspersons. *Preman* groups often organise themselves within the Aspelindo (*Asosiasi Pengusaha Limbah Industri Indonesia*, Indonesian Industrial Waste Business Association) for this purpose. Aspelindo are often sponsored thugs that repress labour strikes and intimidate union members who take part in actions against their companies. The organisation also proactively deploys

members of *preman* groups to secure factory premises from the threat of labour strikes (interview with Rohmat, FSPMI member and victim of an attack, 4 October 2015; interview with Budi, FSPMI member, 4 October 2015). Indeed, the establishment of Aspelindo in 2013 was a response to the rising labour movement.

5.4.1 Weakening Labour Consolidation

Some scholars (Ford 2013; Caraway and Ford 2014, 2017; Juliawan 2011) have noted that the organised labour movement in Indonesia has become more promising since the Reformasi, not only in industrial relations matters but also in broader issues like universal healthcare services. Labour protests, road blockades, factory convoys and picketing are the main tools used by unions to force the government and companies to fulfil their demands. Juliawan (2011, 349) argued that 'the proliferation of protests among workers' has forced the state to reconsider workers' demands, and that this has contributed to the institutionalisation of protests as 'an acceptable part of politics in Indonesia'. This in turn 'represents an embryo of a movement society'. For Caraway and Ford (2017), democracy might provide a broader space for workers to establish various unions as a vehicle to struggle in their interests at the factory level, but it has also led to movement fragmentation. However, they argue that although labour unions have been fragmented, tripartite wage-setting institutions have 'facilitated cooperation in achieving collective goals and fostered the development of local and regional networks of unions that helped Indonesia's fragmented labour movement to become surprisingly effective in the policy domain' (Caraway and Ford 2017, 456). In turn, this has contributed to sustaining their political mobilisation, especially since 2009, which has 'resulted in numerous policy victories for organised labour' (Caraway and Ford 2014, 139). For Caraway and Ford (2014, 141), this confirms that labour mobilisations can significantly influence the political constellation.

This optimistic view makes sense particularly if we observe the dynamics of the labour movement until 2012–2013, which saw the culmination of a wave of labour strikes (see Panimbang 2018). However, the political mobilisation of labour unions has been continuously in decline since then. Several factors have contributed to this decline, including constant repression and intimidation by *preman* groups, which has significantly weakened the consolidation of the movement. Violent attacks by *preman* groups to repress labour protests have been a common practice since the Reformasi. Yet, when street mobilisations were being used by labour unions as their main strategy to force the government and employers to fulfil their demands, violent repression by *preman* also became more intense. For example, in an

industrial dispute at PT Intan Pertiwi Industri in Tangerang, Banten province in 2012, *preman* were used to attack striking workers in their workplace, resulting in five workers being wounded. In this case, the *preman* not only attacked workers in their workplace, but also intimidated them and their families in their homes 'if they did not desist their disruptive behaviour' (Ford 2013, 233). Similarly, at PT SC Enterprises in Central Java in 2012, 'dozens of *preman* employed to break a strike arrived at workers' homes' (Ford 2013, 233).

However, in Bekasi, various *preman* groups involved in influencing industrial relations have affected the consolidation of labour organisations not only at the factory and regional levels, but also nationally. This was made possible because in Bekasi there are seven industrial parks and 2,125 factories from 25 different countries. It is the largest industrial estate in Southeast Asia and one of the main strongholds of the labour movement in Indonesia (*Detik*, 29 August 2017). The most influential *preman* groups operating in this industrial estate are the Initiative Union of Siliwangi Children Troops (*Gabungan Insiatif Barisan Anak Siliwangi*, GIBAS), the PP, the Indonesian Lower Class Movement (*Gerakan Masyarakat Bawah Indonesia*, GMBI) and the Local Sons Association (*Ikatan Putra Daerah*, Ikapud) (Rinn 2013; interview with Budi, FSPMI member, 4 October 2015).

Some of them have established alliances, like the Bekasi People Movement (*Masyarakat Bekasi Bergerak*, MBI), which operates in the Jababeka industrial estate, and the Investor Concern Society (*Masyarakat Peduli Investor*, MPI), which operates in the MM2100 industrial area (Rinn 2013). Rinn (2013) noted that in the Jababeka industrial estate, PT Fregoglas employs 20 Gibas members in every work shift to secure the premises, while PT Starlink employs Ambonese *preman* as their security and PT Yohzu mobilises the GMBI. On 29 October 2012, PT Samsung deployed 400 *preman* from various organisations equipped with weapons to dismiss a labour demonstration that demanded the company reject outsourcing. They also destroyed the House of Labour (*Saung Buruh*), the place used by workers from the largest and most consolidated union, Indonesian Metal Workers Union Federation (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Metal Indonesia*, FSPMI), for consolidation and education, and they violently attacked the workers who lived there. After this, the *preman* group occupied *Saung Buruh* for a day, and thousands of FSPMI members regained the house and forced the *preman* to back off. After this attack, a peace agreement (*perjanjian harmoni*) was made between the employers, local government, labour unions and *preman* on 8 November 2012. One of the main points of the agreement was to stop factory picketing and workers' convoys to maintain

peaceful industrial relations (Habibi 2013). After this agreement was made, street mobilisation through factory picketing and inter-factory solidarity convoys declined.

Figure 5.1: Anti-Labour Movement Banner Made by *Preman* in 2013 (FSPMI)

This agreement provides stronger legitimacy for *preman* to attack labour mobilisations in Bekasi industrial estates. In Februari 2013, the MPI built a tent in an open field in the MM2100 industrial estate and deployed members to ensure the security of the area. They also erected a banner stating 'MPI is a friend to employers and an enemy to anarchist workers' (Habibi 2013, 212). The violent attacks and intimidation carried out by *preman* groups intensified in response to a plan made by unions to organise a second nationwide strike from 28 October to 1 November 2013. Several days before the planned strike, on 24 October 2013, Aspelindo arrived at *Saung Buruh* to distribute intimidating letters to the workers. One Aspelindo member said that the organisation together with the Bekasi community would fight the workers if they continued to stage a national strike (FSPMI, 12 November 2013). The letter stated:

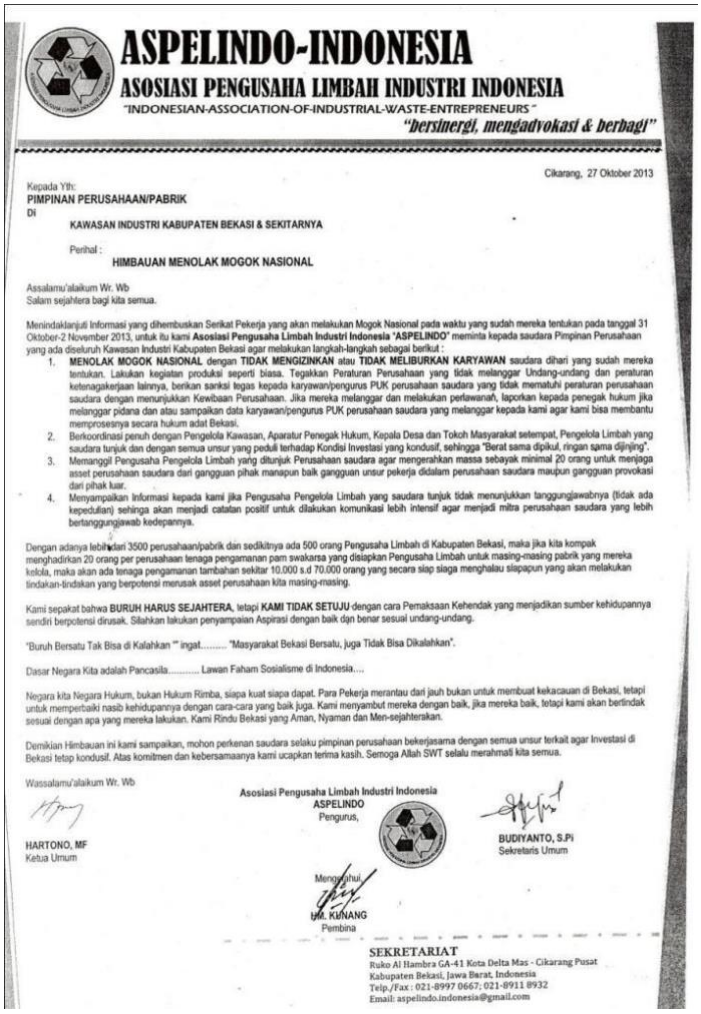
> Do not let yourself be manipulated by rogue (*oknum*) union members who collect money from your work, from the company where you work. And they turn out to indirectly destroy your place of work.
>
> Your prosperity and the wealth of the union are also our hope. But this should not be achieved by forceful and destructive ways. Or are you yourself tired of working in Bekasi?
>
> We will not let rough union members destroy Bekasi and we will fight anyone whoever they are that try to do that. Don't ever try to destroy Bekasi, it's better for you to leave our area.

Aspelindo also sent a letter of support on 27 October 2012 to factories, stating that it would protect industrial estates from labour strikes. The letter suggested that the employers should

not let workers leave their workplace for demonstrations. It also informed the companies that it had organised all industrial waste businesspersons to deploy 20 people to each factory to ensure their security. The Aspelindo also stated that employers should not give industrial waste business projects to members of the Aspelindo who were non-compliant in this act. A day before the strike, it also distributed flyers to factories in the industrial areas of Bekasi. The flyer stated that (FSPMI, 8 November 2013; see also Figure 5.2):

> The employee should not leave their work on the date of the national strike scheduled by the union. Employees are your company's asset, and the community is also with you.
>
> If the union forces to organise a factory picketing and other heroic actions in Bekasi, let us be with the people of Bekasi who will give them a lesson. We, together with the people of Bekasi, will deal with them.
>
> We also knew the instigators who will not take responsibility and can do nothing if their friends are fired by their companies. They are pretending to be heroes that would sacrifice many things with a myriad of personal political interests and international interests that wants Indonesia as the world's largest Muslim country to go bankrupt and abandoned by Investors.

The local government, local police and military, as well as industrial estate management and Aspelindo, held a meeting at the Grand Zurry Hotel, Bekasi, West Java, to anticipate the national labour strike. The meeting produced an agreement with the representative of the labour unions stating that the workers should not participate in the strike. On 31 October 2013, the FSPMI organised the second national strike around the MM2100 industrial estates, but hundreds of *preman* had already blockaded the road. Some *preman* declared that they represented the Bekasi people who would like to secure an investment. They also erected a banner stating that 'Demonstrations create riots, disturbances and traffic congestion as well as hinders the rights of the people to work: indigenous people will act' (FSPMI, 9 November 2013; see Figure 5.1). Anti-riot police forces were also in the area to secure the demonstration, but they did nothing when hundreds of *preman* from the *Pemuda Pancasila*, Ikapud and Aspelindo, equipped with machetes and swords, started to attack the workers. As a result, around 29 workers were wounded—many of them stabbed by machetes—while others were beaten and dragged using motorbikes. One of the victims was in a coma after his skull was cracked by an axle. After this attack, the *preman* continued to intimidate workers' families in their homes, threatening to murder them if the workers still organised the demonstration (interview with Rohmat, FSPMI member and victim of the attack, 4 October 2015).



ASPELINDO-INDONESIA
ASOSIASI PENGUSAHA LIMBAH INDUSTRI INDONESIA
"INDONESIAN-ASSOCIATION-OF-INDUSTRIAL-WASTE-ENTREPRENEURS"
"bersinergi, mengadvokasi & berbagi"

Cikarang, 27 Oktober 2013

Kepada Yth:
PIMPINAN PERUSAHAAN/PABRIK
Di
KAWASAN INDUSTRI KABUPATEN BEKASI & SEKITARNYA

Perihal :
HIMBAUAN MENOLAK MOGOK NASIONAL

Assalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb
Salam sejahtera bagi kita semua.

Menindaklanjuti Informasi yang dihembuskan Serikat Pekerja yang akan melakukan Mogok Nasional pada waktu yang sudah mereka tentukan pada tanggal 31 Oktober-2 November 2013, untuk itu kami **Asosiasi Pengusaha Limbah Industri Indonesia "ASPELINDO"** meminta kepada saudara Pimpinan Perusahaan yang ada diseluruh Kawasan Industri Kabupaten Bekasi agar melakukan langkah-langkah sebagai berikut :

1. **MENOLAK MOGOK NASIONAL** dengan **TIDAK MENGIZINKAN** atau **TIDAK MELIBURKAN KARYAWAN** saudara dihari yang sudah mereka tentukan. Lakukan kegiatan produksi seperti biasa. Tegakkan Peraturan Perusahaan yang tidak melanggar Undang-undang dan peraturan ketenagakerjaan lainnya, berikan sanksi tegas kepada karyawan/pengurus PUK perusahaan saudara yang tidak mematuhi peraturan perusahaan saudara dengan menunjukkan Kewibaan Perusahaan. Jika mereka melanggar dan melakukan perbuatan, laporkan kepada penegak hukum jika melanggar pidana dan atau sampaikan data karyawan/pengurus PUK perusahaan saudara yang melanggar kepada kami agar kami bisa membantu memprosesnya secara hukum adat Bekasi.
2. Berkoordinasi penuh dengan Pengelola Kawasan, Aparatur Penegak Hukum, Kepala Desa dan Tokoh Masyarakat setempat, Pengelola Limbah yang saudara tunjuk dan dengan semua unsur yang peduli terhadap Kondisi Investasi yang kondusif, sehingga "Berat sama dipikul, ringan sama dijinjing".
3. Memanggil Pengusaha Pengelola Limbah yang ditunjuk Perusahaan saudara agar mengerahkan massa sebayak minimal 20 orang untuk menjaga asset perusahaan saudara dari gangguan pihak manapun baik gangguan unsur pekerja didalam perusahaan saudara maupun gangguan provokasi dari pihak luar.
4. Menyampaikan Informasi kepada kami jika Pengusaha Pengelola Limbah yang saudara tunjuk tidak menunjukkan tanggungjawabnya (tidak ada kepedulianj sehinga akan menjadi catatan positif untuk dilakukan komunikasi lebih intensif agar menjadi mitra perusahaan saudara yang lebih bertanggungjawab kedepannya.

Dengan adanya lebih dari 3500 perusahaan/pabrik dan sedikitnya ada 500 orang Pengusaha Limbah di Kabupaten Bekasi, maka jika kita kompak menghadirkan 20 orang per perusahaan tenaga pengamanan pam swakarsa yang disiapkan Pengusaha Limbah untuk masing-masing pabrik yang mereka kelola, maka akan ada tenaga pengamanan tambahan sekitar 10.000 s.d 70.000 orang yang secara siap siaga menghalau siapapun yang akan melakukan tindakan-tindakan yang berpotensi merusak asset perusahaan kita masing-masing.

Kami sepakat bahwa **BURUH HARUS SEJAHTERA**, tetapi **KAMI TIDAK SETUJU** dengan cara Pemaksaan Kehendak yang menjadikan sumber kehidupannya sendiri berpotensi dirusak. Silahkan lakukan penyampaian Aspirasi dengan baik dan benar sesuai undang-undang.

"Buruh Bersatu Tak Bisa di Kalahkan " ingat..... "Masyarakat Bekasi Bersatu, juga Tidak Bisa Dikalahkan".

Dasar Negara Kita adalah Pancasila..... Lawan Faham Sosialisme di Indonesia....

Negara kita Negara Hukum, bukan Hukum Rimba, siapa kuat siapa dapat. Para Pekerja merantau dari jauh bukan untuk membuat kekacauan di Bekasi, tetapi untuk memperbaiki nasib kehidupannya dengan cara-cara yang baik juga. Kami menyambut mereka dengan baik, jika mereka baik, tetapi kami akan bertindak sesuai dengan apa yang mereka lakukan. Kami Rindu Bekasi yang Aman, Nyaman dan Men-sejahterakan.

Demikian Himbauan ini kami sampaikan, mohon perkenan saudara selaku pimpinan perusahaan bekerjasama dengan semua unsur terkait agar Investasi di Bekasi tetap kondusif. Atas komitmen dan kebersamaanya kami ucapkan terima kasih. Semoga Allah SWT selalu merahmati kita semua.

Wassalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb

Asosiasi Pengusaha Limbah Industri Indonesia
ASPELINDO
Pengurus,

HARTONO, MF
Ketua Umum

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Figure 5.2: Letter from Aspelindo to Industrial Estates in Bekasi (FSPMI)

This case affected the consolidation of the labour movement, especially those organised by the FSPMI. Members of the FSPMI and other unions were disappointed by Said Iqbal, the president of the FSPMI, when he agreed not to follow up the criminal case of the attack (Rinn 2015). Many FSPMI members were also traumatised by the attack. In response to the strike, the national government granted the East Jakarta Industrial Park (EJIP) and MM2100—the two main locations of the attacks—status as strategic national assets in the 2014 Industrial Ministry Regulation of Indonesian Republic (466/2014) and 2017 Industrial Ministry Regulation of Indonesian Republic (805/2017) respectively. This means that they can mobilise the police and the military to secure their premises. As discussed above, in 2013, the police also signed an MoU with the military to take action in handling social disturbances.

Figure 5.3: Flyer 'Go! Politics' Labour (FSPMI 2013)

These developments have contributed to changing the strategy preferred by the unions, especially the FSPMI, which has turned towards engaging in politics and making political contracts with candidates in electoral contests instead of improving their capacity to mobilise workers. For example, in the 2014 presidential election, the FSPMI, which is part of the Indonesian Labour Union Confederation (*Konfederasi Serikat Pekerja Indonesia*, KSPI) declared its support for Prabowo Subianto by signing a political contract.[15] Under the terms, FSPMI leader Iqbal would be appointed the manpower minister after a Prabowo victory in return for the union's support (*Detik*, 3 May 2018). However, other confederations supported Widodo, thus showing the fragmented nature of the labour movement (*Tirto*, 8 May 2017). This strategy was part of the 'Workers Go to Politics' campaign that was conducted by the FSMI because negotiations and street protests were no longer considered the best way to achieve its political demands. Obon Tabroni, the deputy president of the FSPMI and one of the central figures in the 2012–2013 nationwide labour strikes, actively campaigned to bring

[15] The same contract between Iqbal and Prabowo was remade in the 2019 presidential election.

workers to be involved directly in political contests. On the FSPMI website (2013; see also Figure 5.3), Tabroni wrote:

> if we choose to not participate in the election … we will be the loser because the election will only produce politicians that do not represent our interests and not understand our problems. […] this is our choice to start undertaking the new movement strategy as the negotiation and street mobilisation have yet brought us to gain maximum achievement for our demands. In this election, we should declare our new strategy to choose the candidates nominated by us, from us and able be controlled by us.

Given that the federation is no longer concerned with the street mobilisation strategy, 'union solidarity activists and educators for FSPMI' such as Danial Indrakusuma and Sherr Rinn, who had been 'consistently supporting militant and progressive educational material and policies', were expelled in 2013 (Lane 2014a). The FSPMI then selected nine candidates to run for the parliamentary local election in Bekasi regency and district, and at the West Java provincial level. Tabroni also ran for the 2017 Bekasi regent election. According to Lane (2014b, 99), these candidates were initially 'to be elected from within the FSPMI, but in the end, they were appointed by the FSPMI leadership' and were then successfully nominated by five different political parties. The decision to support Prabowo was also made at the leadership level 'with no membership discussion', reflecting a more bureaucratic approach (Lane 2014a). As a result, of the five FSPMI candidates in the 2014 legislative election of the Bekasi regency, only two were successfully elected. Meanwhile, Tabroni was unsuccessful in the 2017 Bekasi regent race, receiving less than half of the total number of votes (496,000) from workers living in Bekasi regency (*Tirto*, 8 May 2017). Tabroni's loss was partly because the FSPMI local legislative candidates were not able to bring their supporters to vote for him because they had given up on the party he represented. Hence, instead of consolidating the labour movement, the workers' strategy of direct involvement in politics further fragmented the unions. Many union members were also disappointed by the leaders of their organisations, who were perceived as being trapped in the game of transactional politics. Data from the Manpower Ministry showed that the number of union members decreased significantly from 3.7 million in 2014 to 2.4 million in 2017 (*Metro TV News*, 1 May 2017).

5.5 Conclusion

It is important to reinforce the point that the survival of non-state violence organisations in the democratic context is made possible by their political economic functions, which facilitate the

interests of predatory elites, instead of their perceived social function of serving the interests of the local communities, as stated by Migdalian scholars. As explained above, the usefulness of *preman* groups in Indonesian democracy is observed in their role in reproducing an anti-communist narrative as an instrument of the predatory regime to maintain their ascendency and repress any political challenges. The violent groups are also useful for politicians in mobilising support using ethno-religious sentiments in electoral contests. This is made possible by the absence of class-based politics as a result of the reproduction of anti-communist propaganda. Pervasive mobilisation of identity politics by gangsters is also substituting the declining use of violence and intimidation in power contests. More importantly, it also helps gangsters to establish alliances with predatory elites through which they will continue to survive.

In the economic field, *preman* groups also provide a handy tool for businesspersons to secure their business interests. The democratic context provides a greater opportunity for them to be hired by investors as an effective repressive instrument to suppress the labour movement and intimidate union members to weaken their consolidation. The predatory state might attempt to bring back the mobilisation of formal coercive institutions to secure the interests of investors from labour strikes. However, such mobilisation is still limited to the industrial estates that have been certified as strategic national assets. Formal coercive institutions can secure industrial areas and factory premises but cannot reach out to intimidate members of labour unions at the neighbourhood level. That role can only be undertaken by *preman*. In turn, the political economic functions of non-state violence organisations contribute to sustaining the predatory form of Indonesian democracy.

Chapter 6:
Gangsters, Local Politics and Rural Land Grabbing in North Sumatra

6.1 Introduction

Some scholars claim that political gangsterism in Indonesia has been in decline since the early 2000s. Wilson (2010, 200) asserts that this is a result of the 'increasing institutionalisation of the democratic process'. Drawing from their Medan case study, Aspinall et al. (2011, 33) state that the power of gangsters has diminished as a result of 'increased police crackdowns' and the 'internal conflict within *preman* groups'. For Hadiz (2010), the decline in political violence has been caused by the increasing use of money politics. Others believe that it is a result of the increasing influence of programmatic politics, whereby electoral accountability is defined by programs offered by politicians (Aspinall and Mas'udi 2017) and 'the performance of elected politicians' (Fossati 2018) instead of through intimidation and other forms of clientelism. In the political arena, the use of violence and intimidation by non-state actors is weakening in most regions. However, in the rural context, where capitalist expansion has been conspicuous, violent land grabbing has increased, thereby contributing to the rising number of agrarian conflicts (KPA 2017). In many parts of North Sumatra, *preman* organisations still carry out acts of intimidation and violence to mobilise political support during electoral competitions (Amin 2013). Further, in 2017, the number of agrarian conflicts—that is, those involving criminal gangs—was the second highest (after East Java) among the Indonesian provinces (KPA 2017). This confirms that non-state violence remains important to the workings of capitalist development in Indonesia. The question is: Why has the use of non-state violence tended to decline in the political arena, but increased in the economic field?

The increasing use of non-state violence in the economic field has been made possible by the rising number of agrarian conflicts in post-authoritarian Indonesia. In these conflicts, local state actors and businesspeople regularly use organised gangsters together with the formal repressive apparatus to suppress local communities that attempt to defend or reclaim their agrarian properties. Some scholars argue that this trend is part of the global phenomenon of land grabbing in response to the crisis of capitalism. According to Harvey (2003, 149), the crisis is mainly caused by over-accumulation, where surplus capital that lies 'idle with no profitable

outlets' is released by seizing assets (i.e., land) and transforming them for profitable use. However, large-scale land grabbing is not solely the result of the expansion of global plantation industries; it is also the result of actions by domestic corporations supported by local state actors that are part of the 'extractive predatory regimes' (Gellert 2010, 36). This predatory practice of resource extraction maintains the uncertainty of land management through which land redistribution interests are always marginalised, thereby paving the way for land reclamation, which generates violent agrarian conflicts. Hence, it is argued here that the increasing use of violence in the economic field is part of an accumulation process that is intrinsically tied to the imperatives of electoral competition fuelled by money politics.

While the practice of money politics might contribute to the declining use of violence and intimidation for vote gathering, it requires business expansion, including through land acquisitions, which often entail the use of violence. This is especially the case in regions that are rich in natural resources, where local leaders often exploit their position to issue policies, permits, contracts and licences to corporations in return for campaign support funds. This is illustrated in the case of North Sumatra, where 'land mafias' dominate economic and political activities. Many of them mobilise gangsters to grab land, and the mafias then use their economic capital to influence state policies to facilitate their interests in expanding their businesses, while others use coercive capital as gang leaders to mediate on behalf of big capital. Meanwhile, politicians and policymakers surrender to the interests of land mafias to maintain their power. An example is the Shah family, which not only uses its economic capital, but also dominates gangster organisations and attempts to directly hold public offices in pursuit of further capital accumulation, making them the most influential land mafia in North Sumatra.

This chapter is presented in four parts. Section 6.1 explains why land grabbing is a global phenomenon that has been increasing, primarily since the 2008 global financial crisis. It also discusses the Indonesian context to show that the trend has been in evidence since the 1980s, primarily because of the predominant extractive predatory regime. Section 6.2 explains the case of land management in North Sumatra, which is defined by the state of uncertainty through which the extractive predatory regime is inevitable, excluding the interests of land redistribution for landless farmers. Consequently, land occupation becomes the only weapon of landless farmers to access and reclaim agrarian property. Although the decentralised democratic context now makes farmers more courageous in claiming their rights, the use of violence and repression against them by state actors and corporations is also increasing. Section

6.3 explains how land mafias in North Sumatra mobilise gangsters to grab land for private capital accumulation. It also discusses the case of the Shah family, which could mobilise violence while dominating the most influential gangster organisation, Pancasila Youth (*Pemuda Pancasila*), to facilitate the family's land-based business expansion. Section 6.4 discusses how the Shah family accumulates not only economic and coercive capital, but also political power through the direct control of public offices.

6.2 Land Grabbing as Primitive Accumulation

The development of capitalist social relations is marked by changes in rural land use, as common property is transformed into private goods that are integrated into the market system. As explained in Chapter 2, the process of land conversion has always been followed by the use of extra-economic means to separate direct producers from their means of production. Hall et al. (2013; see also Hall 2011) identify four main powers that create this separation: regulation, the market, force and legitimation. Regulations are the rules that identify how land can be acquired, whereas the market system works through pricing that defines who can afford and access land. In terms of force, people are prevented from accessing their land through violence and intimidation. They may also be excluded from their land by legitimation, which is 'the ways in which land may, may not and must be governed, allocated and used' (Hall 2011, 839). According to Hall et al. (2013), these categories capture the complexities of how access to land is defined, and the authors emphasise that the process of exclusion does not necessarily take place in one direction. Environmentalist NGOs, local communities and smallholders can also act on their own behalf to enclose land and dispossess others (Hall et al. 2013). However, as will be explained below, in term of scale, massive land enclosures mostly serve the interests of state actors and businesses rather than local communities. This process has created conflicts in which non-state violent actors are mobilised to defend the interests of powerful actors. In rural North Sumatra, gangs such as PP and the Association of Functional Group Youths (*Ikatan Pemuda Karya*, IPK) are commonly hired by local businesspersons and state agents to secure land for large-scale plantations, real estate and infrastructure projects. In some cases, gangster organisations' leaders also become direct participants in land grabbing to develop their own businesses.

6.2.1 Global Land Grabbing

Some studies have shown that the recent rapid expansion of global land grabs has occurred in response to the food, energy and financial crises in 2007–2008, which resulted in the continued 'uneven expansion of global commodity chains to various regions' (Gellert 2015, 67; see also Borras et al. 2011; Hall 2013; Fairbairn 2013; Daniel 2012; McMichael 2012). These crises have driven 'a dramatic revaluation of land ownership' whereby powerful state and business actors—both transnational and domestic—seek out 'empty land often in distant countries that can serve as sites for fuel and food production' (Borras et al. 2011, 209). The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) (von Braun and Meinzen-Dick 2009) states that from 2005 to 2009, about 20 million hectares of arable land around the world have been leased, purchased or requested for a new deal through various investment schemes, including public–public, private–public and private–private partnerships. In these land deals, developing countries had been targeted because investment costs are much lower and land availability is higher. However, investors are not always from the Global North; in fact, many actors from the South have also been investors to secure food and bioenergy supplies. China, South Korea and India are among the non-North countries with 'large populations and food security concerns' that seek opportunities overseas (von Braun and Meinzen-Dick 2009, 1). For example, Daewoo Logistics Corporation in South Korea proposed leasing 1.3 million hectares for maize and oil palm in Madagascar, and this reportedly played a role in overthrowing the government in 2009 (von Braun and Meinzen-Dick 2009).

According to GRAIN (2008), an international NGO, Indonesia is also a target of the global land grab for food and energy security. For example, in the energy sector, private firms from India and Saudi Arabia have been purchasing oil palm plantations in Indonesia. In August 2008, the Qatar Investment Authority (GRAIN 2008, 6) 'set up a US$1 billion fund to invest' in energy, infrastructure and agriculture in Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia's Bin Laden Group signed an agreement to invest US$4.3 billion to develop 500,000 hectares of rice land in Indonesia. However, the largest expansion of land acquisitions over the past two decades has been in the palm oil sector, where large-scale plantations have increased more than six-fold, from 0.9924 million hectares in 1995 to 6.7 million hectares in 2015 (BPS 2017). The number of large-estate crop companies in this sector increased from 693 in 2000 to 1,592 firms in 2016. This has contributed to making Indonesia the largest palm oil producer in the world, overtaking Malaysia's position since 2005/06 (Pichler 2015, 517). Indonesia now produces 60% of the

world's palm oil (Li 2017, 2). According to Pichler (2015, 517; see also Casson 2000), 'land scarcity and rising labour costs in Malaysia' have resulted in that country's capital moving to Indonesia.

In 2011–2012, four Malaysian companies held almost 7,000 hectares of oil palm plantations in Indonesia. Other foreign companies that controlled a considerable amount of oil palm plantation land (around 400,000 ha) in the same period were Wilmar and First Resources from Singapore. Meanwhile, the total plantation area controlled by Indonesian private firms was more than 2 million hectares. This was dominated by major tycoons with close ties to the Soeharto regime, including Salim Group, Sinar Mas Group, Astra International Group, Raja Garuda Mas, Sampoerna Agro and Bakrie Group (see Casson 2000; Pichler 2015). The rest of the total oil palm plantation area, which was around 7 million hectares, was still dominated by state-owned enterprises (PT Perkebunan Nusantara, PTPN) during 2011–2012. The total land area taken up by this sector has continued to increase over the past five years, from around 10 million hectares in 2012 to around 14 million hectares in 2017 (BPS 2017).

6.2.2 Indonesia's Extractive Regime

Some studies argue that the rapid expansion of oil palm plantation is a response to the 2008 crisis; however, in Indonesia, there has been evidence of this trend since economic liberalisation in the 1980s. Crude palm oil (CPO) has been in demand globally since the 1960s; however, the increasing domestic consumption of palm oil cooking in Indonesia since the 1980s has contributed more to the expansion of plantations than global demand (Gaskell 2015). In 1986, domestic consumption was 0.66 million tonnes, which increased four-fold to 2.8 million tonnes by 1997 (Casson 2000). According to Casson (2000, 6), this sharp increase in CPO consumption in Indonesia resulted from the rising population and income per capita. However, according to Gaskell (2015, 29), the increasing consumption was attributable to the cooking oil substitution from coconut oil to palm oil, which was 'facilitated by the government policies on technology, pricing, distribution and trade', including massive forest land conversion. That is, demand was historically created through 'a range of state policies and elite political practices' (Gellert 2015, 79).

These government policies were also supported by contract farming programs (*Perkebunan Inti Rakyat*, PIR) promoted by the World Bank, which lists oil palm as 'a development crop that could assist in growth and poverty alleviation' (Gellert 2015, 80). According to the World

Bank, the contract farming scheme provides economic opportunities to the rural poor because it supports cooperation between corporations and smallholders (McCarthy 2010). However, many studies show that the expansion of oil palm plantations, including through contract farming, induces violent land grabbing on a massive scale that threatens the lives and livelihoods of the rural poor (Gellert 2015; Gaskell 2015; Borras et al. 2011). The scheme was designed to exclude subsistence farming and at the same time include smallholders in large-scale oil palm plantations, through which expansion was made possible (Li 2011; Pichler 2015). According to Li (2017, 1), the expansion of the plantation sector has intensified the predatory tendency 'for channelling and capturing plantation wealth'. These practices reflect what Gellert has dubbed the extractive predatory regime, which is characterised by the extraction of natural resources for private accumulation.

The extraction of various natural resources such as oil, gas, minerals and timber has been a foundation of Indonesia's economic development since the country achieved independence. It has contributed not only to state revenue but also to rent-seeking by the predatory elites that helped Suharto to rule for 32 years. Petroleum was the main resource extracted by the New Order state during the oil boom in the 1970s, with PT Pertamina contributing to the consolidation of the authoritarian regime. The forestry sector—especially timber—also made an 'important contribution to the material wealth of the regime and its foreign and domestic supporters', leading to a logging boom in the 1970s (Gellert 2010, 44). Suharto 'allocated 20-year logging concessions to loyalist military officers and military organisations and some foreign firms' (Gellert 2010, 44). However, the increasing degradation of forested areas caused by the logging and plywood industries led the state to undertake reforestation 'to avoid a collapse of Indonesian forestry exports' through plantations of fast-growing pulp trees and oil palms (Gellert 2010, 48). In the long run, oil palm industries multiplied and contributed to the economy as one of the most important export commodities; however, at the same time, violent land grabbing intensified. The workings of the extractive predatory regime have endured in the post-Suharto era, resulting in the continued expansion of land grabbing in the oil palm sector.

6.3 Land Conflicts in North Sumatra

In North Sumatra, as in many other regions, uncertainty regarding how the state has managed the land—primarily since 1965—has facilitated the extractive predatory regime. While this uncertainty is sustained by the state, predatory interests define the way the land is distributed. In this situation, 'illegal' occupation is the only weapon for landless farmers to gain access to

the land, but this simultaneously creates a confrontation with state agents and corporations. Land conflicts escalate in the democratic context because land reclamation is intensifying and the demand for land for large-scale plantations is also increasing.

6.3.1 Historical Background of the Land Conflicts in North Sumatra

Most of the agrarian conflicts in North Sumatra are in the ex-plantation areas of the state-owned enterprise (SOE) PT Perkebunan Nusantara (PTPN) II. The area lies around the city of Medan, including the districts of Deli Serdang, Serdang Bedagai, Langkat and Binjai. Data compiled by Kaputra et al. (2014, 62–63) in 2011 show that there were 39 land disputes between local communities and PTPN II. This represents almost 40% of the total number of agrarian conflicts in North Sumatra (see Table 6.1). The problems are rooted in conflicts that occurred at the beginning of the national independence era. Since colonial times, there has been uncertainty because the state has given different land entitlements according to different political regimes. This has ensured that rural communities—particularly those of landless farmers—are constantly excluded by the state and corporations and are politically repressed.

Table 6.1: Number of Agrarian Conflicts by Plantation Companies in North Sumatra, 2011

Region	PTPN II	PTPN III	PTPN IV	Other Parties	Total
Deli Serdang	25	1	0	2	28
Serdang Bedagai	1	1	2	2	6
Langkat	12	0	0	3	15
Labuhanbatu	0	4	0	16	20
Simalungun	0	3	10	4	17
Asahan	0	0	0	4	4
Medan	1	0	0	3	4
South Tapanuli	0	0	0	2	2
Toba Samosir	0	0	0	2	2
Dairi	0	0	0	1	1
Total	**39**	**9**	**12**	**39**	**99**
Percentage	**39%**	**9%**	**12%**	**39%**	**100%**

Source: Kaputra et al. (2011)

The law on agrarian reform (Basic Agrarian Law), which was issued in 1960, forced the state to redistribute the land; however, because the plantation firms were mostly controlled by the military as a result of the nationalisation policy in 1958/59, agrarian reform never took place. Moreover, the anti-communist massacre in 1965 cancelled all programs related to land redistribution. Indeed, some plantation lands that were supposed to be allocated to landless farmers, indigenous local communities (the Malay) and plantation workers remained in the control of SOEs or were given to private corporations that had close ties to Suharto. Any attempts to reclaim the land were stigmatised as being part of a communist plot, and the instigators were persecuted by the state repressive apparatus.

Under Reformasi, which constitutionally protects freedom of association, many landless farmers and local communities have become more courageous in reclaiming their agrarian rights. This has resulted in a rising number of land disputes, which has paved the way for the increasing use of criminal gangs to protect private accumulation. This tendency is illustrated in cases of agrarian conflicts related to PTPN II and in other land disputes in North Sumatra.

6.3.2 PTPN II

PTPN II was established in 1996 as a result of a merger between former PT Perkebunan (PTP) IX and PTP II (PTPN II 2019). The extent of the plantation area controlled by these SOEs has changed considerably since 1951 in response to demands for land distribution, but demands to redistribute the land to the people had always been ignored. PTP IX was formerly a Dutch-owned private plantation firm that focused on developing tobacco plants in Deli (see Ikhsan 2016; Allen and Donnithorne 2003), and its product is widely known as Deli tobacco. The company cultivated the land—a total of around 250,000 hectares—which belonged to the Sultan of Deli and was rented by the Dutch firm under a land concession permit. In 1877, the Dutch East Indies made a new standard land contract that was to be in effect for 75 years (Ikhsan 2016). Although the lease period was quite long, it created uncertainty for the Dutch because it represented personal rights in nature. Further, under this land entitlement, there were more taxes levied by the Sultan on plantation products, which reduced the profits that could be gained by the Dutch firm. For this reason, the Dutch attempted to push another form of land entitlement that relied on material rights, such as land leases (*erfpacht* lease or *Hak Guna Usaha*, HGU) for 25 years (Ikhsan 2015, 2016).

During colonial times, about 90% of the land was possessed on the basis of concessions to plantations (see Allen and Donnithorne 2003). This was common outside Java, where the Dutch governed the regions through indirect rule. Hence, through land concessions, the Dutch acknowledged the sovereignty of the native rulers and adat/local customary law. This implied the existence of legal dualism in leasing the land, which was based on the authority of the Sultan and the Dutch East Indies government. Meanwhile, *erfpacht* leases were mainly used in Java Island, where the authority to grant land leases was in the hands of the Dutch East Indies government. However, when the Dutch issued the Agrarian Law in 1870, *erfpacht* was enforced as the major land title for plantation enterprises, although this effort was not applied in East Sumatra (now known as North Sumatra). Allen and Donnithorne (2003, 69) point out that tobacco planting in Deli uses concession land that has been obtained from the ruler of Deli since 1863.

As least four contracts were entered into and renewed between the Sultan of Deli and Dutch plantation enterprises in 1877, 1878, 1884 and 1892 respectively (see Allen and Donnithorne 2003; Ikhsan 2015). The contracts regulated how the concession land could be used, including allowing local communities to cultivate the former tobacco area for replantation. The rights obtained by 'indigenous' Malay communities as regulated in the contract were known as *jaluran* lands (Ikhsan 2015). Using this right, every household received a certain amount of *jaluran* lands (0.6 hectares of fertile land or 2.5 hectares of land that still had bushes) for one year of cultivation, usually for rice or corn. Malay communities have claimed the collective right to use the land of 250,000 hectares until the present (Ikhsan 2015). However, during the Japanese occupation, the contract was ignored while the plantation was abandoned. Japanese colonial authorities also preferred to use the land for agricultural crops to support their logistics during the war. After 1945, Dutch enterprises were back to cultivate their concession land, but in 1951 the Indonesian government deducted half of the total 250,000 hectares of land for the purposes of food security. However, the redistribution of 125,000 hectares of land did not take place transparently. Ikhsan (2015) argues that the main targets of this land distribution were the landless farmers and plantation workers who were mostly from Java Island. This practice ignored the communal rights of the Malay people to own and cultivate the land. The tension between indigenous Malay people and farmers began as a result of this and was mostly affiliated with the communist plantation labour union called the Indonesian Estate Workers Trade Union (*Sarekat Buruh Perkebunan Republik Indonesia*, Sarbupri).

After the nationalisation policy in 1958–1959, the Indonesian Government took over ownership of the Dutch plantation enterprises, and the 125,000 hectares of land in East Sumatra was controlled by PTP IX, which was mainly under the management of the military. In 1965, the agrarian minister issued decree No. 24/HGU/1965 to grant PTP IX an HGU lease on 59,000 hectares of land. Thus, the concession entitlement was totally removed, preventing the Malay communities from claiming their *jaluran* land. Instead, 66,000 hectares of land were once again distributed to the farmers as part of the implementation of the 1960 Basic Agrarian Law. This policy illustrates the influence of the communists in enforcing land redistribution. Yet, land redistribution was disrupted by the anti-communist massacres that targeted plantation workers—and particularly members of Sarbupri.

6.3.3 Uncertainty of Land Distribution

In the early New Order, the uncertainty of land distribution for public interests increased because the land was allocated mostly to SOEs and private companies as the main source of predatory accumulation. Several policies were issued to reallocate and renew the area of HGU land for PTP IX. Some areas had been excluded in 1981 and 1984 (see Table 6.2) for farmers after being occupied for several years, although, in practice, the redistribution of the land did not take place according to clear guidelines. Farmers who occupied and reclaimed the land—primarily indigenous Malay communities—were continually terrorised by the state repressive apparatus.

Table 6.2: Land Reduction of the Plantation Area Owned by Ex-PTP IX

No.	Legal Basis	Total Land Area (ha)	Total Land Excluded (ha)	Remaining Land (ha)
1.	Concession NV. VDM 1870	250,000.00	—	—
2.	The Decree of Minister of Interior (SK MDN) No. 12/5/14 year 1951	250,000.00	125,000.00	125,000.00
3.	The Decree of Agrarian Minister No. 24/HGU/1965	125,000.00	66,000.00	59,000.00
4.	Given to PTP II in 1979	59,000.00	2,373.07	56,626.92
5.	SK MDN No. 44/DJA/1981	56,626.92	9,085.00	47,541.92
6.	SK MDN No. 85/DJA/1984	47,541.92	1,229.40	46,312.50
7.	Allocated to government institutions in 1984	46,312.50	777.84	45,534.66

8.	Allocated to the third parties in 1988–1997	45,534.66	2,370.40	43,164.26

Source: PTPN II 2012

Thus, from 1951 to 1997, the total plantation area of ex-PTP IX decreased significantly from 125,000 hectares to 43,164.26 hectares (see Table 6.2). In 1996, ex-PTP IX lands merged with those of ex-PTP II, which had possessed 63,073.31 hectares of HGU land in North Sumatra. After this merger, the total area of HGU land owned by PTPN II in North Sumatra was 106,237.57 hectares. In 2000, when the HGU lease period expired, the new lease did not cover 5,873.06 hectares. According to the decree of North Sumatra's governor in 2000, these hectares would be re-allocated according to six different categories:

4. people's demand (*tuntutan rakyat*): 1,377.12 ha
5. cultivated land (*garapan rakyat*): 546.12 ha
6. 'indigenous' Malay people: 450.00 ha
7. retired plantation workers: 558.35 ha
8. urban development plan (RUTRWK): 2,641.47 ha
9. University of North Sumatra (USU): 300.00 ha

However, the definition of the parties that could be included in each category, as well as the boundaries of the land, remain unclear, leading to unresolved agrarian conflicts. In fact, uncertainty in the allocation and redistribution of land since 1965 has benefited those who have control over the land for the purposes of private accumulation. Moreover, after the HGU land distribution in 2000, the remaining plantation area owned by PTPN II in North Sumatra should be 100,364.51 hectares. However, based on its 2015 annual report, PTPN II possessed 117,169.47 hectares of plantation land. Meanwhile, data collected by BPS in 2011 from all plantation estates of PTPN II show that the total plantation area of the company was 176,176.11 hectares (see Table 6.3), which slightly decreased from 2005, when it stood at 178,536.64 hectares (BPS 2005). These substantial anomalies in the recorded data are indicative of the workings of the extractive predatory regime.

Table 6.3: Total Plantation Area of PTPN II by Commodity in 2005 and 2011

No.	Commodity	Plantation Area (ha)	
		2005	2011
1.	Oil palm	132,901.79	138,470.40

2.	Rubber	19,160.70	19,592.41
3.	Sugar cane	20,133.25	11,076.60
4.	Tobacco	2,512	3,207.80
5.	Cacao	3,796.58	3,796.58
6.	Teak	32.32	32.32
	Total	178,536.64	176,176.11

Source: BPS 2005, 2011

The long and almost fruitless struggle carried out by landless farmers and indigenous Malay people since independence to reclaim their land confirms their marginality in land management policymaking. The farmers might claim certain areas as part of the land distribution by the state, but in many cases, corporations can ignore such claims, as well as the legal basis used to distribute the land. The state's policy on the land distribution itself is usually enacted after the landless farmers occupy certain areas of the land for many years and after being terrorised for trying to reclaim their rights. However, how the land is distributed has never been clear, and the farmers that occupy the land are still considered illegal. Compensation might be given to farmers in the form of money, but in amounts that do not represent the value of their property (see Lucas and Warren 2003). The farmers might accept the compensation money because they are powerless to defend their property from the intimidation of the military, the police and gangsters. In many cases, evictions for urban development or large-scale plantations are executed without compensation.

6.3.4 Use of Violence in Land Exclusion

Land conflicts on the ex-HGU of PTPN II and on other plantations in North Sumatra show the predominance of violence in land grabbing practices. As has been explained above, these conflicts were made possible by land acquisitions carried out by landless farmers for many years without having a strong legal basis in the form of land certification issued by the national land agency (*Badan Pertanahan Nasional*, BPN). However, their recklessness in occupying the land 'illegally' is not without cause. Generally, these practices were carried out because the redistribution of the land to the broader community was never undertaken seriously by the state. The movement of indigenous Malay people gathered in the Organisation for the Struggle of the Guardian of the Land in Indonesia (*Badan Perjuangan Rakyat Penunggu Indonesia*, BPRPI) since independence is an example of an attempt to occupy the land by using the historical narrative of land redistribution. Other people—mostly landless farmers—demanded

their right to the land on the basis of an agrarian reform program that has never been completed by the state, particularly since the events of 1965. For them, land occupation as a technique to take back their property is not illegal. However, state agencies and private firms view this practice differently, although the Indonesian Basic Agrarian Law holds that land occupied for more than 25 years can be legally claimed and owned individually. This has caused plantation firms and the state to use violence, including hiring thugs, in an effort to expand plantation areas and urban development. The numerous gangster organisations in North Sumatra are instruments used to intimidate and suppress local communities.

For instance, the construction of the new Kuala Namu International Airport in Deli Serdang Regency on 1,300 hectares involved mobilising the *preman* group PP to evict 71 households living on the construction site (Kaputra et al. 2015). Violence was carried out by the developer because the local communities refused to be relocated with unfair compensation. The location of the dispute was in ex-HGU of PTPN II, covering an area of 831 hectares (Kaputra et al. 2015). The residents had lived in this area since colonial times as contract coolies—mostly brought from Java Island—of the Dutch plantation company. After independence, the Indonesian Government acknowledged their existence by forming an administrative village named Pasar Village (Kampung Pasar). Some public facilities, including a primary school, were also established at that location. In 1997, when the central government started to plan the new airport, the life of the local community changed quickly. The government offered compensation only for workers and retirees of around 2–4 million rupiahs,[16] but not for the heirs of the workers. For all residents, the compensation scheme was considered inadequate to finance a new life (interview with Iswan Kaputra, activist of local NGO Bitra who assisted the survivors, 12 November 2016), and they insisted on proper compensation. Based on the National Commission on Human Rights letter to the president of Indonesia, which attempted to mediate the conflict, in 2009, 40 families still stood against the government and sought to claim their rights, while others had fled without receiving any compensation after facing various intimidation and terror tactics from the developers. The peak of the government's eviction attempts occurred in 2012, when various coercive institutions were mobilised, including organised thugs (interview with Iswan Kaputra, activist of local NGO Bitra who assisted the survivors, 12 November 2016). Since then, all residents have been successfully

[16] The compensation standard for a displaced person differs from one case to another, but it usually consists of a 3–6-month living stipend, an evacuation allowance and a compensation fee for the evicted house and land.

evicted, although not all of them have received compensation. In 2013, the new Kuala Namu International Airport began operating.

Violent groups were also deployed by the private palm oil plantation company PT London Sumatra (Lonsum), which is owned by the huge Salim business group and located in the Pergulaan Village, Serdang Bedagai Regency (see Kaputra et al. 2011). The location of the conflict was on the border of the village and the plantation area, which is around 355.8 hectares in size. The company had been operating since the colonial era in what was formerly known as East Sumatra. It was originally named Harrisons & Crosfield Ltd and was owned by a British businessperson. Since 1965, the company had received several additional HGU lands.

The addition of HGU areas created a conflict with the villagers of Pergulaan. In 1968, PT Lonsum obtained an additional HGU area of around 4,000 hectares, including land claimed by the community. From the 1970s until the end of the HGU lease, the company continued to seize local communities' lands to expand the oil palm plantations. In total, 165.6 hectares of land owned by 517 families had been seized by PT Lonsum since the New Order era (see Kaputra et al. 2015, 81). In 1997, the company—which had since been acquired by the Salim group, which was close to Suharto—obtained a HGU extension that authorised the seizure of land belonging to the villagers of Pergulaan. The village was originally a wilderness area that was opened and inhabited by contract coolies—most of whom came from Java—of the Dutch rubber plantation companies in 1939. In 1954, the area was administratively registered as Pergulaan Village in Sei-Rempah District, which had been part of Deli Serdang Regency before the subdivision (*pemekaran*). In the following years, the villagers registered their land rights with the head district (*wedana*) of Sei-Rempah by acquiring a KTPPT (land use registration certificate), a land certificate that was legally acknowledged by Emergency Law No. 8 of 1954. In 2011, the village was inhabited by 1,040 families, most of whom were retired workers, farmers and casual labourers of the plantation companies. The large number of casual workers (33%) were highly dependent on the availability of jobs in the plantations and on many occasions were unemployed. This was caused by the village's land enclosure by PT Lonsum since the New Order.

In the post-authoritarian era, land conflicts in the Pergulaan village became more widespread because the villagers were more courageous in expressing their resistance. It was also an expression of disappointment in various parties, especially the state, which has been unable to mediate and resolve the land problems for many years, even in the democratic context. In many

cases, the government has tended to facilitate the interests of companies, as seen in the expansion of oil palm plantation areas owned by major firms in North Sumatra (see Table 6.4). Consequently, oppression and violence towards villagers also increased, including by mobilising *Pemuda Pancasila* and other gangster organisations (see Kaputra et al. 2015). Land occupation was the only method the villagers were able to use to resist the company's land grabbing. They reclaimed the land that the company had previously seized by occupying it, planting it with various crops and installing signposts stating the legal basis of the land reclamation. Shortly after, the company expelled the villagers using various means, including violence, destroyed their crops and replaced the signposts with ones that prohibited entrance to the plantation area. This reciprocal action was carried out from June 1998 until the biggest conflict occurred in 2006, when 11 villagers were arrested by the police and prosecuted (Kaputra et al. 2015). Since then, people's resistance has weakened because their energy and logistics have mostly been used to defend detained villagers and their families.

Table 6.4: Total Oil Palm Plantation Area Owned by Major Firms in North Sumatra in 2005 and 2011

Oil Palm Company	Total Plantation Area (Ha)	
	2005	2011
London Sumatra (Salim Group)	14,013.27	22,213.36
SMART (Sinar Mas Group)	13,543	15,853.00
Socfin (Belgia)	5,110.01	20,916.00
Bakrie	—	7,587.00
PTPN II	132,901.79	138,470.40
PTPN III	78,377.49	90,183.81
PTPN IV	114,328.65	131,373.40

Source: BPS (2005, 2011)

When the second reclamation movement occurred in December 1998, PT Lonsum used the mobile police brigade (*Brigade Mobil*, Brimob) to remove the stakes that had been placed by villagers to mark the land boundaries in an area of 4 hectares. Physical clashes were unavoidable. Some villagers were injured by rubber bullets, and the company's heavy equipment was burned by mobs. The company soon responded by deploying 300 security personnel to damage villagers' houses, plants and crops. In the third reclamation action, 500 villagers returned to occupy 20 hectares of land. In turn, the company deployed 60 members

of Brimob, 600 security personnel and 200 members of *Pemuda Pancasila* (Kaputra et al. 2015). However, physical clashes were avoided after mediation by a member of North Sumatra's House of Representatives (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah, DPRD), even though the company had already engaged in several acts of intimidation.

Since 1996, the mobilisation of *Pemuda Pancasila* has also been carried out by the real estate company PT Mestika Mandala Perdana in the ex-HGU of PTPN II. The company is listed as a recipient of more than 200 hectares of ex-HGU land transferred by PTPN II to third parties between 1988 and 1997 (see Table 6.2). One of the company directors, Benny Basri, is a member of the so-called land mafias, which often use intimidation and violence to seize people's land (Ikhsan 2015). There were 99 cases of land disputes in North Sumatra as recorded by Bakumsu in 2011 (see Table 6.1), many of which involved mobilising groups of thugs to expel residents and seize land. The head of North Sumatra's National Land Agency (*Badan Pertanahan Nasional*, BPN) stated that the plantation companies usually establish relationships with thugs for protection and to intimidate local communities that illegally occupy land (interview with Saiful, North Sumatra's BPN, 15 November 2016). A commissioner of PTPN IV also admitted that it often hired *preman* groups to secure land and expel local communities that undertook illegal land occupation (interview with Irwansyah, commissioner of PTPN IV, 20 November 2016). The use of thugs is a common practice for BPN officials, especially when measuring and executing land (interview with Irwansyah, 20 November 2016; interview with Saiful, North Sumatra's BPN, 15 November 2016). The commissioner of PTPN IV also explained that the hiring of thugs is illegal and has never been allowed by the company, but it is part of the discretionary authority of the company's officials at the lower level: 'We, the directors and the commissionaires, just pretend that we do not know about hiring the thugs' (interview with Irwansyah, commissioner of PTPN IV, 20 November 2016).

6.4 Land Mafia and Gangsters in North Sumatra

In addition to large corporations, the land mafia is another key actor that takes advantage of the uncertainty and obscurity of the state's land management and claims certain areas of land for its own private accumulation or as part of the brokerage to serve the interests of big capital. Abdon Nababan, former head of Indonesia's Indigenous People Alliance (AMAN) who ran in the 2018 gubernatorial election as an independent candidate in his home province of North Sumatra, admitted that he was offered US$21 million by a political broker to secure his

candidacy (Mongabay, 21 June 2018). The political broker was linked to the most influential land mafia in North Sumatra. As quoted by Mongabay (21 June 2018), Nababan explained:

> There is a group of a few families in Medan [the provincial capital] that control land transactions. They work with the youth community organizations [*Organisasi Kemasyarakatan Pemuda*, OKP], the civilian paramilitaries. Almost all mafia are connected with these organizations. They control the market and they control the bureaucracy related to land. They control the systems of land transfer from communities, even from the state, to become real estate or industrial special zones and so forth. They are criminal organizations.

There are several influential land mafias in North Sumatra, including the Shah family, which also controls *Pemuda Pancasila*, the most powerful gangster organisation in contemporary North Sumatra, and Benny Basri, Alex Ketaren, Anto Keling, Isac Charley and DL Sitorus. Unlike the Shah family, these land mafias do not have direct/structural control of gangster organisations. Before the Shah family came to power in the underworld, the late Olo Panggabean of the IPK was the most powerful gang and land mafia leader. There are around five dominant *preman* groups in North Sumatra: *Pemuda Pancasila*, IPK, Indonesian Youth Renewal Generation (*Angkatan Muda Pembaruan Indonesia*, AMPI), Communication Forum for the Children of Retired Military Officers (Forum Komunikasi Putra-Putri Purnawirawan ABRI,[17] FKPPI) and Pancasila Society of Indonesia (*Masyarakat Pancasila Indonesia*, MPI).

Anif Shah's family has been in charge of *Pemuda Pancasila* at the provincial and regency levels since the 1990s. Meanwhile, the late Olo used his illegal earnings to influence local officials in the police, military and bureaucratic institutions. However, after the police cracked down on his gambling business in 2005, *Pemuda Pancasila* and the Shah family took over the patronage networks with local officials to secure their businesses, mostly associated with land acquisition. Olo did not focus as much on developing illegal land-related businesses as the Shah family, but his position as the most influential thug at that time was often used by conglomerates or large corporations that wanted to develop businesses in North Sumatra.

In the early 2000s, the construction of Simalem Resort Park above Lake Toba in an area that is part of the protected forest zone is an example of how thugs who are also land mafia worked as brokers to serve the interests of conglomerates and large corporations to open and use

[17] *Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia* (Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia), changed to the National Army of Indonesia (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*, TNI) and the National Police of Indonesia (*Polisi Republik Indonesia*, Polri).

forested land illegally (interview with Saurlin, director of local NGO HaRI, *Hutan Rakyat Institut*, 19 November 2016). Local residents at that time knew that Olo had cleared 206 hectares of the land in the Mount Sibuaten protected forest area. At the start of the resort development, local residents also believed that the owner of that project was Olo, so they suspected that no parties would dare to challenge the construction in the illegal area (interview with Saurlin, director of local NGO HaRI, *Hutan Rakyat Institut*, 19 November 2016). However, after the construction was completed and the resort was opened in 2006 as a luxurious tourist spot, Olo's name was no longer heard; thus, they were wrong in assuming he was behind it. The owner of the resort is PT Merak Indah Lestari (MIL), a subsidiary of Lestari Group, which collaborates with a Singapore-based company Nexus Investment Pte Ltd. This shows that one of the functions of the thugs is facilitating illegal land clearing. Based on Forestry Ministry Decree No. 44 of 2005, the resort is in the Register 3 Sibuaten protected forest area. According to a member of North Sumatra DPRD, Astrayuda Bangun, the North Sumatra provincial government stated that PT MIL's operations violated the law on spatial plans and did not hold building permits (MedanTribunnews, 18 April 2015). Syamsul Hilal, a North Sumatran PDIP politician who is also the chair of the local NGO agrarian revolution committee (*Komite Revolusi Agraria*, KRA) explained how one of the land mafia figures, Anto Keling, worked for the large-scale plantation firms (interview with Syamsul Hilal, 15 November 2016):

> Anto Keling is a land mafia [figure] who also uses thugs. There was a case when PTPN II had sold its land of 72 hectares to Anto Keling. The area was already occupied by the landless farmers. To expel the people, Anto Keling then hired police and thugs from *Pemuda Pancasila* and IPK. People can still defend the land because we [the KRA] backed them up. They are one of our assisted communities and my political base. PTPN II had sold the land which had been excluded from its HGU and already occupied by the people. Responding to this problem, I proposed to organise a hearing meeting with the local police chief, Bambang Hendarso. In the meeting, I asked him to arrest Suwandi, the president director of PTPN II. Soon, the president director was arrested and sentenced to 2 years in prison. But, he had never been in prison. Everyone uses money. Meanwhile, some of the land are still controlled by Anto Keling because he uses thugs and the police to secure the land. But, the land is still empty. There is no construction or anything. In fact, Anto Keling is actually just a pawn, a broker, for two Chinese businessmen. One of them is Tommy Winata [big tycoon linked to the military and the New Order]. If I am not mistaken, this name is stated on the case document of Suwandi. Indeed, North Sumatra is dominated by Tommy Winata. Large area

> of land owned by the people were robbed by PTPN II and many of them were given to the conglomerates.

Another method used by the land mafia is to mobilise groups of landless farmers using indigenous people's identity. These groups have proliferated in North Sumatra since Reformasi, mainly in response to the release of around 5 hectares of ex-HGU of PTPN II. These groups are not connected with the struggle of the indigenous Malay people or BPRPI since independence, who demand their collective land rights. Some organisations that use *adat* claims include: Deli Indigenous People (BKMAD), Serdang Customary Law Unit (KMHAS), Indigenous Land Struggle Forum for Malay Deli Farmers Community (Umat Map Forum), United People's Forum (FRB) and Agrarian Revolution Committee (Ikhsan 2015; interview with Saurlin, director of local NGO HaRI, *Hutan Rakyat Institut,* 19 November 2016). According to Edy Ikhsan (2015, 262), a member of the BPRPI advisory board, the first three organisations were formed by the government. Meanwhile, the other two groups are land mafia–formed organisations that politicised traditional identities and groups of landless farmers (interview with Saurlin, director of local NGO HaRI, *Hutan Rakyat Institut,* 19 November 2016). The leaders of these organisations use these claims for their own benefit to broker land deals for third parties. The recipients of the 5 hectares of land of ex-HGU of PTPN II under category number 1 (people's demands) and 2 (people's land) are allegedly related to these land mafia groups.

According to Ikhsan (2015), the brokerage practices of taking land using *adat* claims and selling it to third parties are carried out by the BPRPI. Ikhsan (2015) found that indigenous Malay people who occupied the ex-HGU of PTPN II often sold several parcels of land to third parties. One reason for this was to fund the indigenous people's movement. However, the findings presented by Ikhsan were considered to have hurt BPRPI's struggle. According to the leader of BPRPI, Ikhsan's writings were slanderous and should not have been put forward by someone who was also on the organisation's advisory board (interview with Harun Nuh, the leader of BPRPI, 17 November 2016). Ikhsan was then fired from his position as a board member. According to Ikhsan, his writings are only a form of criticism of an organisation that has increasingly deviated from its initial aims, and this is no different from the land mafias that broker land illegally (interview with Edy Ikhsan, former member of BPRPI advisory board, 11 November 2016).

6.4.1 Anif Shah, the Godfather

Of all land mafias in North Sumatra, Musanif—publicly known as Anif Shah—seems to be the most astute in exploiting uncertainties in the state's land management. He is regarded as 'the Godfather' because he manages to control the most influential gangster organisation, *Pemuda Pancasila*, not only to facilitate his family's businesses, but also to help them establish domination over the political arena. Anif is of Afghan descent and is the first child of 16 siblings. He had been known as *preman* since he was a teenager. Armed with extensive networks among government officials, the military, police, businesspeople and members of *Pemuda Pancasila*, he developed his businesses based on land, such as oil palm plantations, real estate and swallow nest breeding. His family's businesses were mostly developed using illegal means, including by grabbing land through force, manipulating permits and mobilising violent groups. However, in various ways, he also attempted to build a positive image of his businesses and wealth by describing himself as a philanthropist, as Olo had done before him. Anif has 20 fleets of mosque-cleaning cars, which clean around 1,500 mosques for free in and around Medan every month. He also donates large amounts of money to campuses in North Sumatra—such as North Sumatra University (*Universitas Sumatra Utara*, USU), North Sumatra's State Islamic University (*Universitas Islam Negeri*, UIN) and the State University of Medan (*Universitas Negeri Medan*, Unimed)—and built multi-purpose buildings named after him in those campuses.

Some *Pemuda Pancasila* members who are part of Anif's inner circle explained that he has tried to build influence for a long time for the benefit of his family's wealth by dividing roles between them. For example, Anif's first younger brother, Rahmat Shah, played a role in establishing influence in Islamic organisations such as Alwasliyah and Muhammadiyah and maintaining networks within the military (interview with Sugiat, chairman of the Medan's Indonesian National Youth Council [*Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia*, KNPI] and right-hand man of the Shah family, 16 November 2016). He developed his business in the plantation sector after working in the 1980s with PT Ika Diesel, owned by Surya Paloh—a media mogul and the founder of the National Democratic party. In 1999, he was a member of the MPR, and in 2009 he became a North Sumatra senator (DPD). He is now the chairman of North Sumatra's Indonesian Red Cross (PMI) and the chairman of the Indonesian Zoo Association. Other brothers, such as Ajib Shah, Barkat Shah (Akat) and Anuar Shah (Aweng), hold strategic positions in *Pemuda Pancasila*. They built their careers from regular street thugs until they

became bosses. Ajib was the chairman of North Sumatra's *Pemuda Pancasila* from 1996 to the early 2000s, and he was the chairman of North Sumatra's Golkar party. He is also known as a political lobbyist who played a major role in Syamsul Arifin's successful campaign for North Sumatra's governorship in 2008–2013 by mobilising a coalition of small parties (interview with Ajib Shah, North Sumatra's *Pemuda Pancasila* key figure, 7 December 2016). Ajib's last position was as chairman of North Sumatra's DPRD in 2009–2014.

A brother of Anif, Akat, was the deputy chairman of *Pemuda Pancasila* in Pematangsiantar Regency in 1981–1986 and the chairman in Simalungun Regency during 1986–2002. These positions have made him one of the most influential *Pemuda Pancasila* figures. He began his career as a contractor for a state-owned plantation company. He was the chairman of the working partner association of the PTPN IV in 2002–2004. He holds high positions in many violent and youth-related organisations such as the North Sumatran TAKO Karate-do College, the Indonesian Amateur Boxing Association (Pertina), the Indonesian Target Shooting and Hunting Association (Perbakin), the Indonesian National Sport Association (KONI) and the Indonesian Motorcycle Association (IMI) (Waspada, 17 November 2016). Meanwhile, Aweng is known as a charismatic *Pemuda Pancasila* figure who was the chairman of the North Sumatra chapter from 2007. He was also a member of the North Sumatra honorary council of Indonesian Football Federation (PSSI) and a sponsor of the PSMS Medan football club (Sumutpos, 1 May 2011). After he died in 2016, the leadership of North Sumatra's *Pemuda Pancasila* was held by another one of Anif's younger brothers, Kodrat Shah. According to Sugiat (interview, chairman of the Medan's KNPI and right-hand man of the Shah family, 16 November 2016; interview with Sastra, North Sumatra's *Pemuda Pancasila* figure, 21 November 2016), chairman of the Medan's KNPI and right-hand man of the Shah family, Kodrat has no experience in managing the *preman* and members of *Pemuda Pancasila*. Instead, he focuses on maintaining business relations with Chinese entrepreneurs. However, he is also the chairman of the PSMS Medan football club, the North Sumatra football association (*TribunMedan*, 8 August 2017) and North Sumatra's Hanura party. Maherban Shah is yet another one of Anif's younger brothers and is now the chairman of a *preman* group, the Indonesian Pancasila Community (Masyarakat Pancasila Indonesia, MPI).

The second generation of the Shah family also holds important positions in various organisations, business activities and political offices. For example, Akat's son, El Adrian Shah, has been the chairman of the Indonesian Youth National Committee (KNPI) of Medan

since 2014. Iqbal Hanafi Hasibuan, the son of Aweng, was the chairman of *Pemuda Pancasila*'s Student Association (*Sapma Pemuda Pancasila*) of North Sumatra in 2011–2017. Other members of the Shah family, Rahmadian Shah and Firman Shah, are the chairmen of *Sapma Pemuda Pancasila* in North Sumatra and Medan, respectively. Meanwhile, Musa Rajeckshah (widely known as Ijeck), Anif's son, was elected in 2018 as the deputy governor of North Sumatra. He is also the chairman of the Indonesian Motor Association (*Ikatan Motor Indonesia*, IMI) of North Sumatra, North Sumatra's Harley Davidson Club Indonesia (HDCI), TAKO North Sumatra and PMI North Sumatra, and the president director of PT Anugrah Langkat Makmur (ALM), his father's oil palm company that has operated since the 1980s. Ijeck's brother Musa Ichwanshah (Iwan) is the president director of PT Anugrah Sawindo, another of Anif's oil palm companies. Iwan married the daughter of a senior figure of the United Development Party (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*, PPP) who was then vice president of Indonesia, Hamzah Haz, in Mecca. On this occasion, he leased a Garuda Indonesia airplane for about 100 people, including North Sumatran officials and Hamzah Haz's[18] relatives (Nainggolan 2018). In 2009, Iwan became a member of the Indonesian parliament (DPR RI) from PPP.

6.4.2 Expanding Business through Violence

Anif's biography (Nainggolan 2018) states that Anif began his business career as a young broker of land disputes ordered by the government, local police and military officials, and by his business acquaintances such as conglomerate owners Sutanto Tanoto and Surya Paloh. They were the customers of the car repair shop owned by Anif's father in the 1970s. As mentioned above, Anif's reputation as a thug grew after joining *Pemuda Pancasila* in the 1960s, and through his informal networks with state officials and security forces. In the 1980s, he successfully developed his own businesses based on land, such as oil palm plantations in Langkat Regency and Mandailing Natal Regency, swallow nest breeding in Mandailing Natal Regency and Cemara Asri luxurious housing in Deli Serdang Regency. He grabbed land for his business expansion from local people and from those that had unclear titles by manipulating permits and mobilising thugs, and through other coercive methods.

The oil palm plantation in Sei Lepan District, Regency of Langkat, which is run by PT ALM, began to operate in 1989 through a contract farming scheme. Asia Watch (1993), a human

[18] Hamzah Haz was the chairman of the PPP (1998–2007) and the ninth vice-president of Indonesia (2001–2004).

rights monitoring institution in Asia, stated that this scheme was a pretext to grab more than 1,000 hectares of land owned by 500 local transmigrants. In 1982, these local transmigrants were placed on the disputed site of ex-HGU of PTP IX (now is PTPN II) to curb unofficial land occupation in Sei Lepan. Through this transmigration program, the government promised 2 hectares of workable land for each family, along with a house and a monthly salary. However, four years later, the promises had not been fulfilled by the government. By 1989, the transmigrants had not obtained their official land certificates. In the midst of that uncertainty, 135 families chose to temporarily leave their homes to find another job.

In January 1989, the land promised to the transmigrants was handed over to PT ALM, 'operating in collusion with the local government and military' (Asia Watch Report 1993, 10). In July 1989, PT ALM began to destroy the crops planted by the transmigrants, including rubber trees and coconut trees, to start oil palm plantations. In 1991, the company increased the amount of land bulldozed for the plantation area after previously manipulating the residents' signatures to approve the operation of the project, and as a guarantee of bank credit. The 135 houses that were left behind were also destroyed to extend the plantation area.

The people's resistance to the acts of PT ALM resulted in the imprisonment of 198 transmigrants in 1993. This was triggered by the arrest of two villagers detained in the Pangkalan Brandan police station. They were arrested for taking the company's oil palm products as a form of protest over the company's existence and in response to the food shortage caused by the prohibition of planting agricultural crops. Rumours circulated that the detained residents had been killed and their bodies dumped in the Aceh river. Shortly after, 200 villagers arrived at the police station and attacked a police guard and destroyed three motorcycles. The next day, 'some 100 troops from subdistrict military command (Koramil) and the military police (CPM)' arrested 198 villagers, including 43 women and 13 children (Asia Watch 1993, 12). Some of the children were under the age of five.

Since then, the location of the plantation, including access to Sei Lepan village, has been tightly guarded by military personnel and *Pemuda Pancasila* members. Those whose families were involved in the riots at the police station were expelled from their homes. The wives of the arrested villagers were also reported to have been persecuted and raped (Asia Watch 1993). PT ALM also destroyed more than 100 houses owned by those related to the riots. Some other houses were inhabited by foreigners who were suspected of being Anif's men. In his biography, which describes a very different version of the Sei Lepan case, Anif said that he entrusted his

brother Kodrat to face the conflict with the villagers, while Anif approached government and security officials. According to the Asia Watch Report (1993), representatives of Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (LBH), which collected facts regarding the Sei Lepan case, believed that Anif was an ordinary civilian who had extraordinary authority over the military apparatus.

This case was won by Anif. The police forbade LBH lawyers from providing legal assistance, and the suspects were intimidated into accepting the indictments and were sent to prison. PT ALM' oil palm plantation in Sei Lepan, which is managed by Ijeck, now cultivates an area of 1,500 hectares of land (Sumutpos, 23 March 2013). Tens of thousands of hectares of other oil palm lands are also managed by Anif's other children in Mandailing Natal and Deli Serdang of North Sumatra province, as well as in Riau Province (Nainggolan 2018, 35).

In Mandailing Natal Regency, PT ALM's oil palm plantation also caused conflicts as a result of overlapping land ownership. The company had several disputes not only with local communities, but also with another plantation company, PT Magna Mintara Jaya (MMJ). There was also a case against PT ALM for taking over land controlled by PT MMJ.[19] However, it was not surprising that PT ALM won the case given Anif's extensive networks among politicians and law enforcers at the local and national levels, which allowed them to intervene with law enforcement.[20]

The boundaries of PT ALM's plantation permit covering an area of 20,000 hectares were also questioned by the residents of Suka Makmur village, Muara Batang Gadis District. They claimed that PT ALM had taken over the land owned by the residents, especially in the village's

[19] This case began with the issuance of a plantation business permit by the Regent of Mandailing Natal for an area of 20,000 hectares to PT ALM in 2006. However, the land given to PT ALM had been part of the right of plantation permits owned by PT MMJ that were being submitted for HGU applications. PT MMJ's plantation business permit was issued in 1993 and covered an area of 40,000 hectares. PT MMJ then filed a lawsuit with PT ALM in the Mandailing Natal court. However, the Supreme Court judges in 2013 decided that PT ALM was legally entitled to the disputed land. According to Sitepu's study (2013), the judges' decisions were irrelevant because they recognised PT MMJ as having a legal position on the disputed land, but they also refused to recognise that right.

[20] It is worth noting that the disputed land in Mandailing Natal was previously forest concession (HPH) land owned by a fugitive North Sumatran timber businessman, Adelin Lis (Gatra, 8 January 2008). Lis's HPH concession in this regency was 58,000 hectares, which included the forested area of the national park. Lis is a suspect in a case of illegal logging carried out by his company Mujur Timber Group. After the establishment of Lis as a suspect in a legal case in 2004, the Ministry of Forestry issued a decree in 2005 to convert the HPH concession into HPL (other use rights) concession for oil palm plantations. On that basis, the Mandailing Natal District Head determined that around 40,000 hectares of ex-HPH concessions were distributed to 12 companies. Among those were PT Rimba Mujur Mahkota, a subsidiary of Mujur Timber Group, which obtained 10,000 hectares of land. PT ALM obtained the largest share, which was half of the ex-HPH concession land distributed by the Regent of Mandailing Natal. Given the history of this division of the land, cases of overlapping plantation permits have occurred between PT MMJ and Lis's HPH. In addition, PT MMJ's plantation permit, which was issued in 1993, is also problematic because it includes a national park area.

border areas (Beritasore, 20 December 2011). In the aftermath of this dispute, residents burned the base camp and heavy equipment owned by PT ALM's subcontractors. Shortly after, five people who were considered provocateurs were arrested by the police. Hundreds of residents then visited the DPRD and stayed overnight, demanding the settlement of the cases and the release of the detained residents. The investigation team formed by the DPRD later found anomalies in the case of PT ALM's burning camp. According to the team's findings, the main actor behind the case was the village head and the fake activist who provoked the villagers to seize the company's land for their own interests (Beritasore, 27 December 2011).

Similar disputes are also found on other lands controlled by the Shah family. The appropriation of swallow nest caves in Mandailing Natal in the 1990s was allegedly carried out by manipulating permits from the local government. The land used for the construction of Cemara Asri luxurious housing in Deli Serdang on the area of ex-HGU of PTPN II in 1996 was also allegedly problematic in relation to the transferring rights (Siantarnews, 8 January 2016). In addition to the alleged discrepancies between the NJOP and the area being auctioned, the process of expelling residents who had occupied the area was also carried out by mobilising violence and intimidation by *Pemuda Pancasila* (interview with Saurlin, director of local NGO HaRI, *Hutan Rakyat Institut*, 19 November 2016; interview with Ruri, activist of local anti-corruption NGO the Indonesian Forum for Budget Transparency [*Forum Indonesia untuk Transparansi Anggaran*, Fitra], 20 November 2016). An attempt to expand the land for Cemara Asri was also suspected of involving bribes to the former governor of North Sumatra, Gatot Pujo Nugroho. Anif's business partner who manages this real estate project, Mujianto, is now a fugitive in a Rp 3.5 billion fraud case related to land.

6.5 Establishing Domination over Social and Political Arena

6.5.1 Domination of Shah Family and Conflicts among Gangsters

Various non-state violence groups in North Sumatra have been competing with each other to establish domination over the social and political arena. This competition is by no means a new phenomenon. Conflict among *preman* groups—especially between the rank and file members of *Pemuda Pancasila* and IPK—also took place during the New Order period. However, these conflicts have intensified in the decentralised democratic context as a result of changing patronage relationships whereby control over gangsters is no longer centralised. In this new political setting, organised violence groups have been forced 'to seek new strategies of

survival', including aligning themselves with competing politico-business alliances. Gangster organisations have also been attached to political parties as a way of bolstering their position within predatory alliances. As a result, internal conflicts within *preman* organisations have reflected broader competition among political-economic elites rather than illustrating the declining power of violent groups as argued by Aspinall et al. (2011).

Internal conflicts within North Sumatra's *Pemuda Pancasila* have been evident since the late 1990s, resulting in a split within the organisation. Many *Pemuda Pancasila* key figures believe that these conflicts have been caused by the domination of the Shah family, which is inclined to use the organisation for its own political and economic purposes. This opinion, as will be described below, is commonly stated by those who are excluded because of the way the family has concentrated economic resources and political power on itself. Since 1995, after the succession of Juki, *Pemuda Pancasila*'s North Sumatra leader, members of the Shah family have held the organisation's top positions at the provincial and sub-provincial levels. This enables them to expand their business activities, primarily related to land acquisitions. They also actively participate in local elections by competing for positions in the parliament and in local government or simply by endorsing candidates in electoral contests.

Rudi Hartawan Tampubolon, one of the key figures of North Sumatra's *Pemuda Pancasila* who is dissatisfied with the domination of the Shah family, established a new organisation called Pancasila Youth 1959 (*Pemuda Pancasila 1959*) in 2011 (interview with Rudi Hartawan Tampubolon, 22 November 2016). Rudi was a former chairperson of *Pemuda Pancasila*'s Medan branch when Kodrat Shah was the chairperson at the provincial level. They used to have a close relationship but then clashed because of a land dispute (interview with Sastra, North Sumatra's *Pemuda Pancasila* figure, 21 November 2016). In 2017, *Pemuda Pancasila* 1959 had expanded its membership in several regions of North Sumatra, such as in Medan, Siantar, Simalungun and Batubara. Many other members and leaders of *Pemuda Pancasila* who are disappointed with the Shah family remain in the organisation because they receive economic benefits from the family, while others have resigned. Ridho is another *Pemuda Pancasila* figure who chose to leave the organisation as a result of discontent with the domination of the Shah family. He claimed that the family is ruining many youth organisations—not only *Pemuda Pancasila*, but also the Indonesian Youth National Committee (*Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia*, KNPI), an organisation in which he was the chairman of the North Sumatra branch: 'North Sumatra's KNPI is now broken. There are forces

that try to use the excessive power. They use their wealth and violence to control the organisation as they want' (interview with Ridho, 17 November 2016).

Donald Sidabalok is another key *Pemuda Pancasila* figure who attempted to fight against the Shah family's domination. He was the vice chairperson of North Sumatra's *Pemuda Pancasila* when Ajib Shah became the chairman in 1995. When Ajib submitted his resignation in 2001 as chairman, Donald took his position and used it to reduce the domination of the Shah family. Yet, in the 2005 North Sumatra *Pemuda Pancasila* regional meeting to elect a new leader, Donald was defeated by Anuar Shah because the Shah family received solid support from most of the PP leaders as a result of their abundant economic resources. However, the Shah family began to exclude almost all senior figures of *Pemuda Pancasila*, who were accused of disloyalty to the family. The Shah family preferred to recruit new young members into their inner circle. They also bribed many local *Pemuda Pancasila* leaders and members to maintain their support (interview with Ridho, North Sumatra's *Pemuda Pancasila* figure, 17 November 2016).

The dismissal of critical figures marked the Shah family's new strategy of establishing domination over social and political life. However, this was also made possible by the declining influence of IPK in the underworld after police crackdowns on Olo's illegal gambling business from 2005 to 2007. Since then, *Pemuda Pancasila*, especially the Shah family faction, has become more dominant in controlling the North Sumatran underbelly. This was achieved not only by control over major youth organisations and business activities, but also by entering the political arena.

6.5.2 Establishing Domination over the Political Arena to Further Capitalist Expansion

The active support provided by *Pemuda Pancasila* to Syamsul Arifin's candidacy in the 2008 North Sumatra governor election shows that land mafias not only seek to influence political power, but also attempt to directly establish domination over the political arena to support their business interests. The influence of violent groups in North Sumatra among youths has also been used to mobilise support in electoral contests in various districts since the era of decentralisation. However, even though being a *preman* figure is useful in mobilising political support, the mafias still depend on the various established political parties. While *Pemuda Pancasila* established its own Patriot Party at the beginning of the Reformasi era, this vehicle was ineffective, including in North Sumatra, *Pemuda Pancasila*'s strongest base. *Pemuda*

Pancasila leaders acknowledged that the Patriot Party's association with the gangs had a negative effect on vote gathering. Since 2004, the party no longer meets the electoral threshold to participate in electoral contests. The failure of this experiment led many *preman* to enter various established political parties.

The Shah family has also used this strategy to expand its influence in the political arena. For example, Ajib was the chairman of the North Sumatra Golkar party, while Kodrat had just been elected as the chairman of North Sumatra's Hanura party. Another Shah family member, Rahmat, was a member of MPR in 1999–2004 and then became a senator from 2009 to 2014. Other *preman* figures in *Pemuda Pancasila,* IPK, FKPP and AMPI also become cadres and officials in various political parties in North Sumatra. Many of them have succeeded in becoming local government leaders or members of DPRD. Data from North Sumatra's *Pemuda Pancasila* (see Table 6.5) show that, up to 2008, around 30% of all local government leaders were members of *Pemuda Pancasila*. In the same year, as many as 103 *Pemuda Pancasila* leaders became members of DPRD in various regions of North Sumatra. Further, members of other *preman* organisations hold positions in political parties as local government leaders and then become local legislators.

Table 6.5: Members of *Pemuda Pancasila* as Local Executives in North Sumatra, 2008

Name	Position in the Organisation	Executive Position
Amri Tambunan	Advisory council *Pemuda Pancasila* North Sumatra	Regent of Deli Serdang
T. Erry Nuradi	Advisory council *Pemuda Pancasila* North Sumatra	Regent of Serdang Bedagai
Tuani Lumbang Tobin	Advisory council *Pemuda Pancasila* North Sumatra	Regent of South Tapanuli
Aldinz Rapolo Siregar	Chairman of advisory council *Pemuda Pancasila* South Tapanuli	Vice-regent of South Tapanuli
Bahrumsyah Harahap	Advisory council *Pemuda Pancasila* North Sumatra	Regent of North Padang Lawas
Rahudman	Advisory council *Pemuda Pancasila* North Sumatra	Acting mayor of Medan
Taufan Gama Simatupang	Advisory council *Pemuda Pancasila* Asahan	Vice-regent of Asahan
Basrah Lubis	Advisory council *Pemuda Pancasila* Padang Lawas	Regent of Padang Lawas

Sutan Oloan Harahap	Advisory council *Pemuda Pancasila* Padang Lawas	Vice-regent of Padang Lawas
Anhar A. Monel	Vice-chairman of Advisory council *Pemuda Pancasila* Binjai	Vice-mayor of Binjai
Tolo'aru Hulu	Advisory council *Pemuda Pancasila* Nias	Acting regent of North Nias
Ngogesa Sitepu	Chairman of advisory council *Pemuda Pancasila* Langkat	Regent of Langkat
Imal Raya Harahap	Chairman of advisory council *Pemuda Pancasila* Siantar	Vice-mayor of Siantar

Source: PP North Sumatra (2010)

However, the large number of *preman* group members in the government office in various regions does not mean that they represent a solid political force. The success of holding a public office is also supported by vehicles from different political parties that compete with each other. *Preman* figures can compete with each other in electoral contests even though they come from the same organisation, as seen in the Medan mayoral election in 2010. In this election, the incumbent Rahudman, who was an advisory council member of North Sumatra's *Pemuda Pancasila*, competed with Ajib Shah, former chairman of North Sumatra's *Pemuda Pancasila*. Although Ajib's position was higher and more senior than Rahudman in the *preman* organisation, Rahudman won the election and gathered many more votes than Ajib in Medan, but not at the provincial level. Thus, there is no strict command line in a *preman* organisation such as *Pemuda Pancasila*. The loyalty of the members is usually more determined by the extent to which the *preman* figures are able to support their members' material needs. Supported by various businesses, the Shah family has been able to maintain patronage relationships with most *Pemuda Pancasila* members, making them the most powerful gangsters in contemporary North Sumatra.

The economic and coercive capital centralised on the Shah family in North Sumatra also enabled them to establish domination in the political arena. During the 2008 North Sumatra gubernatorial election, this was done by distributing support to each competing candidate (interview with Sugiat, chairman of the Medan's KNPI and right-hand man of the Shah family, 16 November 2016; see also Amin 2015). Anif and Ajib supported Syamsul Arifin since the beginning of his candidacy. Ajib was one of the most instrumental figures in Syamsul's campaign, having put together a coalition of small parties to meet the nomination requirements. Anif also allegedly provided financial assistance to Syamsul of 7–11 billion rupiahs (Amin

2015). In addition, Anuar Shah, who at that time was the chairman of North Sumatra's *Pemuda Pancasila*, supported Syamsul despite a dispute with his success team (*tim sukses*) leader, Darwin Nasution, who was also a member of *Pemuda Pancasila* and at the same time the chairman of North Sumatra's Patriot Party. However, Anif's brother Rahmat Shah supported Wahab Dalimunthe, while Kodrat Shah supported Tri Tamtomo and Maherban Shah backed Ali Umri's candidacy. Rahmat Shah also entered the 2013 North Sumatran gubernatorial contest, even though the family supported the incumbent, Gatot Pujo Nugroho. In the 2018 gubernatorial election, the Shah family gave full support to Anif's son Ijeck as vice governor in a pairing with Edy Rachmayadi, the former commander (*Pangkodam*) of the Bukit Barisan military command, who was also supported by major parties. Edy-Ijeck's competitors, Djarot (former Jakarta governor) and Sihar Sitorus (son of land mafia figure DL Sitorus) was supported by PDIP. Given that both paired candidates represented the interests of different land mafia groups, this contest was not only about political office, but also access to economic resources, primarily those related to land.

One of the contested economic resources is an area of 47,000 hectares in Padang Lawas Regency, for which a plantation permit was originally owned by DL Sitorus's company PT Torganda for oil palm plantations. In 2005, this land was declared by the forestry minister as part of Register 40, the forested area that was not designated as plantation industry (*Tempo*, 6 August 2017). In 2007, the Supreme Court decision number 2642 K/PID/2006, 2 February 2007, decided that the land controlled by DL Sitorus's company must be returned to the state. However, this decision was not carried out, even when DL Sitorus died in 2016. Execution efforts were always obstructed by demonstrations carried out by the farmers who claimed to be the owners of the customary rights to the land, although oil palm plantations were still in production (Mongabay, 14 January 2015).

Surya Paloh, chairman of National Democratic Party, appears to be one of those who were interested in the ex-HGU land owned by Sitorus for oil palm plantations (*Tempo*, 2 November 2015). A corruption case that ensnared former North Sumatra governor Gatot Pujo Nugroho, according to various sources (cited by *Tempo*, 2 November 2015), was part of a scenario to smoothen Paloh's plan. Gatot was considered less cooperative in facilitating Paloh's business interests in North Sumatra when he was the governor, while his deputy Tengku Erry Nuradi, who was the chairman of North Sumatra's Nasdem party, was powerless to intervene on Paloh's behalf. Several of Nasdem's high-ranking politicians involved in the corruption cases

of Gatot, who had been named a suspect of a bribery scandal, also indicates Paloh's business interests in obtaining the conflicting land in Padang Lawas Regency, North Sumatra. Those politicians include the party's secretary general, Patrice Rio Capella, and a famous lawyer who is also the party's official OC Kaligis (*Tempo*, 5 October 2015). Capella was involved in mediating communication with the Attorney General—also a cadre of Nasdem—M. Prasetyo for taking over Gatot's case from the Medan administrative court in order to stop it. This case led to the resignation of Capella. Meanwhile, Kaligis, who had acted as the legal advocate for Gatot and his wife, was involved in bribing judges of the Medan administrative court to stop the examination of Gatot's case. This was another corruption case that was related to the misuse of social assistance (*bantuan social*, *bansos*) funds for Gatot's election campaign in 2013. In 2015, Gatot was dismissed as governor after being named a suspect, and he was replaced by Erry Nuradi. However, until the end of Erry's term as North Sumatra governor in 2018, the ex-HGU land of Sitorus had yet to be handed over to the state. Since 2017, Attorney General Prasetyo and the Minister of Environment and Forestry, Siti Nurbaya, who are both Nasdem politicians, have urged the execution of the legal decision.

This induced Paloh's party to support Sitorus's political rival in the 2018 election. At first, Nasdem brought Erry[21] as an incumbent who was also a party cadre, but then the party changed its support to the Edy–Ijeck pairing, which was already supported by major parties and had prepared its candidacy two years earlier. The victory of the pair again paved the way for Paloh to smooth out his business interests in North Sumatra. The close relationship between the Paloh family and the Shah family can be used to further Paloh's interests. However, Ijeck's road to becoming a high-ranking official in North Sumatra was hampered by a case related to corruption that had previously ensnared Gatot. This case could have obstructed both Paloh's efforts and the Shah family's use of access to power in smoothing their business interests.

This case shows that access to public office and political power to further business interests has been a feature of the Shah family's operations, especially since they succeeded in delivering Syamsul Arifin to the position of governor of North Sumatra. Realising the efforts of the Shah's family to control his power, Arifin in many instances chose to resist and did not facilitate their interests. This caused tension between Rahmat Shah and Arifin in the form of a land dispute

[21] *Tempo* (5 October 2015) also stated that Erry Nuradi was suspected of reporting the *bansos* case to the police, the North Sumatra's attorney office and the attorney general. He also allegedly held a meeting to discuss the plan to overthrow Gatot, financed the interpellation of the DPRD members and mobilised several demonstrations demanding the investigation of the *bansos* case (*Tempo*, 2 November 2015).

when Rahmat attempted to obtain the governor's approval to take the land in Medan City for the Shah family's[22] business interests. The conflict climaxed when 'Rahmat came to meet Syamsul in his office and brandished a gun as a means to threaten Syamsul' (Permana 2017, 143). Arifin's unwillingness to facilitate Rahmat's interests also induced MPI—Maherban Shah's *preman* organisation—to report Arifin to the KPK for corruption when he was serving as Regent of Langkat. Soon afterwards, Arifin was named a suspect and received a six-year prison sentence. The failure to use their access to Arifin's power seems to have encouraged the Shah family to assert more direct control over the highest political offices in North Sumatra to facilitate the expansion of their businesses. However, these efforts have not yet been secured considering the threat from the Gatot corruption case that would probably entrap Ijeck and thus prematurely end his tenure as vice governor. Rumours circulated that the Ijeck case could be a means of negotiating the interests of the authorities at the national level to secure votes in the 2019 presidential election, although PDIP politicians in North Sumatra firmly denied the rumours (interview with Ruri, activist of local anti-corruption NGO Fitra, 8 August 2018).

6.6 Conclusion

Some scholars have extensively discussed the decline of political gangsterism in Indonesian politics. Most of them agree that the institutionalisation of democracy has helped to gradually eliminate aspects of illegality, especially those related to the use of violence and intimidation in mobilising votes during elections. Others have claimed that the pervasiveness of vote buying during electoral contests eliminates the need for violence. These observations cannot be dismissed, but they disregard the fact that the use of violence in the economic field is increasing, and this fact cannot be separated from broader political contestations. As has been discussed, the mobilisation of coercive capital is needed to facilitate private resource accumulation, while economic capital is used to secure and maintain access to power that facilitates further capitalist expansion.

The increasing use of non-state violence in the economic field is made possible by the rising trend of agrarian conflicts in post-authoritarian Indonesia. Many factors contribute to this tendency and are not only related to the global demands of the capitalist expansion, as many

[22] The scandal involving bribes from Gatot to dozens of North Sumatra DPRD members to stop the use of interpellation rights related to budget management also sent Ajib Shah, chairman of the North Sumatra DPRD, to jail for four years. Another case is still being investigated (at the moment when this thesis was written) by the Corruption Eradication Commission (*Komisi Pemberantas Korupsi*, KPK) in relation to the 5 billion rupiahs loaned by Anif to Gatot through Ijeck for the approval of the 2014 local budget (Detik, 23 April 2018).

agrarian studies have explained, but are also the result of the continuing existence of the extractive predatory regime, which helps to maintain the uncertainty of the state's land management. The state of uncertainty and obscurity itself is needed to further the interests of private capitalist accumulation, but at the same time marginalising attempts to redistribute land to landless farmers. In this situation, land reclamation is the only method available for farmers to access the land, thereby generating violent agrarian conflicts. In the democratic context, landless farmers are more courageous in reclaiming their agrarian rights; however, this contributes to escalating violent conflicts over land use. This is especially the case in regions that are rich in natural resources, where local leaders often exploit their position to issue policies, permits, contracts and licences for business expansions. The case of North Sumatra has shown that the domination of land mafias is inevitable in regulating economic and political activities given the broader political and economic contexts. Most of them mobilise criminal gangs to grab land and use their economic capital to influence state policies to further their own interests. In this regard, the mobilisation of coercive capital in the economic field cannot be neglected as an aspect that defines not only contestation over political power, but also the making of state policies.

Chapter 7:
The Islamisation of Non-State Violence in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia

7.1 Introduction

One of the most prominent features of non-state violence providers in post-authoritarian Indonesia is that many of them define themselves as groups that are concerned with Islamic values. At the street level, this identification is manifested in attempts to enforce Islamic morality and implement the Quranic edict of combating vice (*nahi munkar*) by targeting nightclubs, bars, massage parlours and other entertainment venues that are considered sources of sin. This is done by creating a rhetorical definition of social problems in which moral decadence is caused by the increasing influence of Western values such as liberalism, secularism and communism. By defining these ideas as threats to society, Islamic vigilante groups declare themselves as forefront agents in restoring and maintaining a virtuous society. This rationale has legitimised their policing practices, which include the use of violence and intimidation in public life. However, in many cases, the practice of enforcing Islamic morality is only a pretext to extort money from particular hotspots as part of vigilante groups' racketeering operations. In formal politics, as discussed in Chapter 5, Islamic militias have also helped contending politico-business elites to advance their agendas by mobilising religious sentiment to gain support in electoral competitions. This differs from the previous authoritarian order, in which defending the predatory state and its ideology (i.e., Pancasila) was the dominant discourse employed by *preman* groups. However, this does not mean that non-state violence groups that use state discourse have diminished, even if groups like *Pemuda Pancasila* no longer enjoy the privilege of being the only proxy of the repressive state apparatus. The question is whether this trend reflects the individual's transformation from street gang member to militant Muslim or whether it illustrates the evolution of non-state violence. Specifically, this chapter explores why and for what purposes non-state violence actors use Islamic rhetoric and identity.

This chapter argues that because non-state violence is endemic within state practices—particularly in the context of predatory capitalism—the use of certain forms of cultural identity in mobilising physical force relies on the effectiveness of that identity to be utilised by

dominant social or political forces. In this context, the Islamisation of non-state violence is possible when Islamic identity becomes a cultural source of mobilisation (Hadiz 2016) in contests over power and material resources. Hence, the form of identity mobilised by civilian militias is intrinsically contingent on the interests of key elites. This is not because democracy and the decentralisation of power have made non-state violence providers more autonomous, thereby allowing them to find new sources of legitimacy—in this case, by mobilising Islamic rhetoric—as believed by Migdalian scholars (see Wilson 2015; Aspinall van Klinken 2010; van Klinken and Barker 2009; Kingsley and Telle 2016, 2009). Instead, the adoption of Islamic identity is a tactic employed by criminal gangs to establish and maintain alliances with predatory elites. For non-state violence organisations, employing the Islamic rhetoric could enhance the degree of threat and intimidation in racketeering as it relates to violence and Islamic militancy.

These arguments contrast with predominant explanations from the cultural perspective and security-oriented analyses that view the Islamisation of non-state violence as an indication of the rise of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia (see Jones 2011; Fealy 2016; Wildan 2013). For example, Jones (2011) points out that the proliferation of Islamic vigilantism is part of the trend of transformation from criminal to pious and militant Muslims at the individual level. Jones (2016; ICG 2012) also argues that Islamic vigilante groups have become a fertile ground for jihadists who want a clandestine movement to form an Islamic state. However, because Islam in this context is an instrument used by non-state violence groups to enhance their prowess and build alliances with predatory elites to mobilise support from an increasingly Islamised society, the Islamisation of criminal gangs is far from being an indicator of the rise of Islamism.

This chapter is also a response to scholars (see Hadiz 2016, Chapter 5, 2018; Sidel 2007) who argue that the existence of Islamic vigilantism and other forms of violence (e.g., terrorism) conducted by Islamist agencies is a symptom of the weakness, marginalisation, fragmentation and incoherence of Islamist politics. In fact, in other Muslim-majority countries where Islamist politics dominate the state (e.g., Turkey and Iran), Islamic vigilantism is also apparent, showing that it has little to do with this feature of Islamic political alliances. These cases show that Islamic vigilantism appears in response not only to the marginalisation of Islamist politics, but also to fractures within Islamist political regimes, thereby confirming the incompleteness of Islamic hegemony. Both the actors and their functions in relation to the state are different depending on the relationship between Islam, non-state violence and capitalism. In Turkey,

Islamic vigilantism was mobilised by the Islamist ruling party—namely, the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP)—to consolidate the political–economic power of ruling elites by fostering an Islamic agenda and promoting Islamic conservatism in society. The state also uses Islamic vigilantism to attack opposition, including from Gulenists and Kemalists (Tugal 2016; BBC 1 February 2018; *Turkish Minute* 29 December 2017). In Iran, Islamic militias have been accompanying the development of the state since the Islamic Revolution in 1979 (Clawson and Rubin 2005; Golkar 2016). Basij and *Hezbollahis* (Party of God), the most popular state-sponsored militias in Iran, often patrol streets to enforce the Islamic dress code and attack minority groups (Golkar 2011) as part of the tasks of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp (IRGC). These militias also protect the supreme leader and conservative clerics in return for access to state material resources. Thus, the claims of Islamic vigilante groups regarding the defence of Islam are mere rhetoric to shield their attempts to defend predatory interests. This is the case not only for an Islamic alliance that is fragmented and marginalised, as is the case in Indonesia, but also in contexts where Islamist politics dominate state power, as observed in Turkey and Iran.

In simple terms, both of the major explanations for the proliferation of Islamic vigilantism in Indonesia's democratic context disregard the nature of the state and capitalism in relation to violence. This chapter analyses Iran and Turkey to shed light on the Islamisation of non-state violence in post-authoritarian Indonesia. The first part of the chapter discusses how different models of the relationship between Islam, the state and primitive accumulation in Indonesia, Turkey and Iran have resulted in different historical trajectories, constellations of power and interests, and differing natures of Islamic populist alliances in these countries. In Iran and Turkey, this alliance is more coherent than in Indonesia. The second part of this chapter explores the different characteristics of non-state violence, including the agents, functions and positions that reflect different models of such relationships. It argues that violence is endemic in all of these cases, although it might have slightly different functions in different contexts, and the social agents of violence may not be exactly the same. In Indonesia, Islamic non-state violence works to negotiate power, whereas in Turkey and Iran it is used to maintain Islamic ascendancy. However, in all cases, the narrative of defending Islam is part of a broader rhetoric to defend the position of predatory interests. The last part of this chapter examines the Indonesian case and explains a characteristic that is particular to non-state violence in Indonesia—primarily regarding how the Islamic identity is mobilised and its function in advancing predatory interests.

7.2 Islam, the State and Primitive Accumulation

As explained in Chapter 2, non-state violence is an inherent element within the predatory state. Indonesia, Turkey and Iran can be characterised as predatory states in which violence exerted by non-state actors is one of the extra-economic means used to accumulate and protect material resources and power. This section explains the predatory nature of the state and capital in those countries and explores their differing characteristics in regard to the relationship between the state, capital and Islam that produces the distinctive features of Islamic populist alliances—as will be discussed below—as well as the form and functions of Islamic vigilantism. In Iran and Turkey, the Islamic populist alliance is more coherent than that of Indonesia, as is evident in its capacity to win and dominate state power. In Indonesia, the Islamic populist alliance is fragmented, as shown in the diverse range of social groups that are able to mobilise Islamic identity politics with different and contradictory interests, and in the disconnection between rising Islamic conservatism at the societal level and the failure of Islamist political parties to win state power. This feature is also reflected in the ability of secular political elites to claim that they represent Islamic interests to gain support from segments of Muslim communities during electoral contests. Yet, increasing Islamic conservatism at the societal level has also contributed to shaping Islam as a powerful cultural resource pool for mobilisation, especially in the context in which the left is absent.

Contemporary Iran—primarily after 'the death of Ayatollah Khomeini and the program of post-war reconstruction under President Rafsanjani'—might have developed a 'post-Islamist' tendency of the kind stated by Bayat (2007, 19), whereby the orientation of the Islamist political agenda is no longer projected to formalise Islamic values within the political system, but to develop a secular democratic state without throwing away religious ethics in society. However, as mentioned by Matsunaga (2014), those who represent the kind of post-revivalist Islamic dissent that rejects the Islamic state and demands the separation of religion from state remain marginal in political life and suffer from political repression. In Turkey, the secularist orientation was also apparent in the first decade of the AKP's rule (2003–2011), but this reflected an attempt to consolidate the power of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the leader of the AKP. By the time he was elected for the third time as the prime minister of Turkey in 2011, Islamic conservatism had been embraced in the country's foreign policy, politics and education systems, steering the secular state towards an Islamic system (Cagaptay 2017; Tugal 2016). To support this agenda, the AKP has more recently mobilised Islamic vigilante groups (i.e., People

Special Force [HÖH] and Ottoman Hearts) to advocate the Islamisation of society and repress political opposition (Spencer 2018; *Weekly Standard* 6 March 2018; *Turkish Minute* 29 December 2017). In Iran, the existence of post-revivalist groups indicates the fissure within the Islamic Republic of Iran, which often calls for support from Islamic militias to discipline opponents of the regime. These cases show that the existence of Islamic vigilantism has little to do with incoherence or incompleteness of Islamic populist alliances as stated by some scholars (Hadiz 2018, 2016, Chapter 5; see also Sidel 2007). In fact, Islamic vigilantism also appears in countries where Islamic social movements are more coherent and have been victorious, such as in Turkey and Iran. As mentioned earlier, this phenomenon has more to do with the nature of the relationship between the state and capital, particularly in its predatory form.

7.2.1 State Formation and Predatory Capitalism in Turkey and Iran

Chapter 2 explained that predatory capitalism or primitive accumulation can be identified primarily from the fusion of political and economic forces as well as the use of extra-economic means in the accumulation of capital and power. Turkey and Iran may not have experienced direct colonial subjugation like Indonesia, but its interaction with Western countries, especially in trade and other economic activities, has created a situation that has shaped the domestic economy in a similar way to how post-colonial countries experienced late industrialisation. In the early twentieth century, Shah Pahlavi in Iran and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkey centralised their power within a modern state bureaucracy that held together authority over politics, the economy and the cultural sphere (Hadiz 2016). The fusion of political economic forces was particularly discernible in the context of an industrialisation process led by the state in a relationship with international capital.

The centrality of the state in Iran was essential to pursue rapid economic growth under the import substitution industrialisation (ISI) policy in the 1960s because the domestic bourgeoisie was weak while the state was dependent on foreign capital to provide financial support, technology and skilled labour to develop the local manufacturing industry (Mousavi 1996, 187). The increase in state revenue during the oil boom, which began in 1973, meant that the state could reduce its dependence on foreign capital and thus play a more dominant role in driving industrialisation by building infrastructure, providing loans and giving licences and contracts to a rising number of state-associated business groups, which ensured the weakening of the traditional *bazaari*. The state was a key agent of modernisation and economic

development in its early formation, as can be seen in Turkey, Indonesia and other late industrialised countries, mainly because of the lack of strong domestic bourgeoisie and historical dominance of foreign capital in the formal economy. Hadiz (2016, 64) argues that state-led development was obvious in Turkey in the 1930s when the new republican government nationalised 'foreign-owned enterprises, especially in railways and public services', similar to Indonesia during the Soekarno era, which was continued by the early Soeharto regime's ISI policy.

The absence of a large domestic bourgeoisie in Turkey can be traced back to the establishment of the new republic in the 1920s, when the main domestic capitalist class, which was dominated by Greeks and Armenians during the last years of the Ottoman Empire, was expelled from Western Anatolia's principle export outlet following the Greco-Turkish war (Keyder 1987, 92). Almost 200,000 Greeks fled (mostly merchants and commercial farmers), and Armenian farmers who attempted to return to Anatolia after the war faced resistance from civilian militias (Keyder 1987). Since then, Muslim traders—primarily from Balkan and Russia—who were then defined as Turks, took over the property in that area, replacing the position of the Christian bourgeoisie in Anatolia. However, at the same time and under export-oriented agriculture, foreign capital also replaced Anatolian capital, especially through the monopolisation of banking activities and export trade. The 1930s Great Depression also affected the Turkish economy, showing the state's dependence on foreign capital and highlighting the weakness of domestic capital. This paved the way for the rise of centralised state capitalism in Turkey, which went hand in hand with the process of further secularisation and political authoritarianism.

The centralised state capitalism in evidence in Turkey, Iran and Indonesia not only reflected the merging of political and economic forces, but also featured the state itself as the frontline agent of capitalist accumulation. Within this context, the bureaucracy and its various coercive institutions were the main instruments for consolidating political and economic power through both political accommodation and repression. While state policies were often used as a means for political accommodation and for rent-seeking, coercive institutions were employed to repress any political opposition. For example, Shah Pahlavi in Iran used the bureaucracy to extend control over civil society by co-opting a large number of political opponents, including more than 600 ex-members of the communist Tudeh Party, into bureaucratic and political positions (Abrahamian 1982). In Indonesia, the bureaucracy also became the key political

machine of the New Order that sustained the victory of the ruling party, *Golongan Karya* (Golkar), in every electoral competition. While bureaucratic functions in those countries were more directed towards political ends to maintain the ascendancy of state authority, they played a more dynamic role in Turkey in regulating both the political and economic spheres (Keyder 1978). This was especially related to the existence of a relative independent petty bourgeoisie.

Under the 1930s *etatism* in Turkey, the bureaucratic class had to build an alliance with the Anatolian petty bourgeoisie, although they were only allowed to privately control limited portions of the economy, primarily in regard to sustaining a domestic market based on agriculture (Keyder 1978, 125). The centralising economic activities of the bureaucracy then continued after the 1960 coup[23] under import-oriented industrialisation, which centralised economic decision-making and promoted the projects of the industrial bourgeoisie based mainly in Istanbul (Keyder 1978, 145). In Iran, the *Bazaari*, which mainly consisted of merchants and petty tradespeople, existed as a domestic capitalist class, but their position was always marginal during Shah Pahlavi's regime, primarily under ISI, which was projected to develop heavy industry and modern trade centres, although some of them were also co-opted by Shah Pahlavi's regime by involving them in state-sponsored industrial projects (see Skocpol 1982). Such political accommodations were also observed in Indonesia, primarily under ISI and oil-fuelled economic growth, in the favouring of a Chinese bourgeoisie that nevertheless suffered from cultural repression resulting from colonial-era legacies (Robison 2009).

Such political accommodations through the bureaucracy resulted in a lack of organised political opposition as well as a subservient domestic capitalist class. In turn, state–business relations relied mainly on clientelism and predation in which access to public institutions was essential to extract resources for private interests and political protection. The relative absence of political challenges from social organisations during the authoritarian regime was also made possible by repression undertaken by various coercive institutions, including non-state elements. However, the use of non-state violence in Indonesia and Turkey was more obvious than in Iran primarily before the Islamic populist alliance won state power in Iran. In the 1990s, the Turkish state often backed Hezbollah militia in violent conflicts with Kurdish separatist groups. In fact, during the Cold War era, especially when the left's power was growing as a

[23] This was the first coup in the Turkish Republic, which occurred after the ruling Democratic Party began to introduce religious affairs in public life, thereby loosening the Kemalist project of secularisation. This heightened the tension with the opposition Kemalist party, the Republican People's Party (CHP), which enabled the military to step in and topple the government (see Keyder 1978; Tugal 2007; Aljazeera 2016).

result of class transformation related to industrialisation under ISI in the 1970s, many hard-right militias and Islamic groups were employed by the secular state to oppress the left (Tugal 2007). The Islamic militia, particularly the Hezbollah, which was linked to Islami Harekat (Karmon 1997), continued to suppress the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which was associated with leftists and therefore with an assumed irreligiosity (see Hadiz 2016). This was reminiscent of what occurred during the bloody mass killing that targeted members and alleged sympathisers of the PKI in Indonesia in 1965, when the mobilisation of various civilian militias by the army, both secular–nationalist and Islamist, as in Turkey, marked the consolidation of capitalist development under an authoritarian bureaucratic state.

Meanwhile, the bureaucratic military regime of Shah Pahlavi in Iran preferred to use formal coercive forces to maintain his power and suppress political opponents. This was because of his obsession with developing strong armed forces, which was supported by burgeoning oil revenues in the 1970s (see Milani 2011). As stated by Mousavi (1996, 115), 'the size of the armed forces increased from 200,000 men in 1963 to 413,000 regular personnel, 300,000 reserves, and 74,000 paramilitary forces in 1978'. However, before Shah Pahlavi, civilian militias such as the National Socialist Iranian Workers (SUMKA) and the military wing of the Arya Party were often employed to suppress any internal opposition (Mousavi 1996, 115). The role of the paramilitaries was reduced after the establishment of the intelligence unit *Sazman-e Ettela 'at Va Amniyyat-e Keshvar* (SAVAK) in 1957 with the help of the Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, M16 and Mossad (Halliday 1979). The organisation 'penetrated all aspects of Iranian life', including infiltrating and controlling many organisations such as trade unions (Mousavi 1996, 125; Halliday 1978). SAVAK officials even had their own office in some factories, with the owners paying their salaries (Halliday 1978, 11). When SAVAK was unable to control anti-government movements, the military played the leading role. In addition, to prevent any challenges to his authority from the army, Shah Pahlavi also created a mechanism to control the army (see Graham 1978), primarily by making the army a privileged class by ensuring all material needs. Hence, different from Turkey and Indonesia, which mobilised formal and informal coercive institutions, the Iranian state preferred to use only the army to supress political challenges during the dictatorship.

However, in post-revolutionary Iran, following the end of the oil boom, civilian militias played an important role as a repressive state apparatus to ensure the Islamisation project of the whole of society, and as a reserve army during the war with Iraq. More importantly, they served the

interests of the supreme leader in controlling lucrative economic activities (see Golkar 2016). This was also the case in Turkey and Indonesia. In Turkey, Islamic vigilantism became more observable after the AKP gained enormous political support to suppress political opponents within the regime and to promote the Islamisation of society and the state (see Tugal 2016). Vigilante groups affiliated with Erdoğan and the AKP (e.g., the HÖH and Ottoman Hearts) defended the Islamic regime by controlling the economy in a way that favoured the interests of their supporters (Spencer 2018).

However, before this, and especially since the early 2000s, many civilian militias, such as *Kuvvai Milliye Dernegi* (KMD), the Association of Unions of Patriot Forces (*Vatansever Kuvvetler Güc Birligi*, VKGB) and the Association of Turkish Socialist Nations (*Türk Toplumcu Buduncu Dernegi*, TTBD), that were linked to the secular Kemalist party (the CHP) have proliferated to ensure the country is free 'from the scourge of imperialism, Kurdish nationalism and the AKP, who are perceived as puppets of the United States, the EU and Israel' (Dönmez 2008, 552). In Indonesia, Islamic vigilante groups proliferate in the democratic context. As discussed in Chapter 5, they participate in violent actions that marginalise religious minority groups and in political mobilisation during electoral contests by using sectarian sentiments to establish alliances with politico-business elites. The explanation for this is that non-state violence continues to be an important element in resource and power accumulation in all cases, even if the different features of Islamic populist alliances have produced different functions for Islamic non-state violence.

7.2.2 Different Features of Islamic Populist Alliances

Hadiz (2016, 3) argues that new Islamic populism is characterised by diverse social bases and merging the interests and grievances of difference segments of society, especially the urban poor, urban middle class and 'peripheralised segments of the bourgeoisie, in potentially powerful ways'. These features are different from the old version of Islamic populist alliances, which was rooted in the traditional and rural bourgeoisie that shapes contemporary Islamic politics. According to Hadiz (2018), in contemporary Indonesia, Islamic populist alliances have failed to mobilise support from different social classes under the banner of an imagined Muslim communities (*ummah*). An indication of this is the existence of Islamic vigilante groups. While Islamic political parties almost exclusively mobilise the urban middle class, the supporters of Islamic vigilante groups primarily come from the urban poor and precarious youth. Vigilante groups are considered a useful vehicle for addressing their subsistence needs such as access to

low-skilled jobs. According to Hadiz (2018), this is the characteristic that denotes the fragmentation of Islamic populist alliances in Indonesia.

Compared with its counterparts, the cross-class alliance under the banner of *ummah* in Turkey and Iran is more consolidated and coherent, as is shown in its ability to win and maintain the state's power and eliminate its violent characteristics. Hadiz (2016, 97) points out that the failure to develop cohesive multi-class alliances leads to a pathway 'characterised by the activity of a host of vehicles […] that can resort to acts of intimidation and violence, including to the extent of engaging in terrorist activity'. However, the Islamic identity can become appealing to non-state violence actors when Islamic forces dominate the political and social spheres. In this sense, non-state violence might present an Islamic face to claim an intent to defend the interests of the *ummah*.

According to Hadiz (2016), two aspects contribute to producing different features of Islamic populist alliances. The first factor is the relative absence of organised political challenges from the left and from the organised labour movement as a post-Cold War phenomenon in the south. The second factor is the social position of the interests of the capitalist class in Muslim-majority countries as a result of historical conflicts of interest that accompanied the process of state formation and capitalist development. Hadiz (2016; see also Hadiz and Robison 2012) argues that the relative absence of class-based social movements in Muslim-majority countries has formed a viable empty space for political mobilisation based on the Islamic identity. This resonates with what Colas (2004) notes from the Algerian case, whereby the elimination of the left, which was executed by Islamic forces and backed by the state to support Benjedid's economic liberalisation policies since the early 1980s, has meant that the interests of the most impoverished groups can only be channelled through Islamic populist alliances. For the precarious groups, aligning themselves with Islamic forces not only provides them with a political vehicle to voice their grievances, but also offers social and economic protections that the state has failed to deliver.

While the relative absence of the left in Muslim-majority countries has enabled Islamic politics to become organised, the social position of the capitalist class defines whether multi-class alliances under the banner of *ummah* can be more consolidated or fragmented. As noted by Skocpol (1982; see also Keyder 1978), the *bazaari* was one of the key elements in overthrowing the Shah Pahlavi regime. Previously, this group was marginalised by Shah Pahlavi, although many of the wealthiest still benefited from participating in state-sponsored

industries. However, as Skocpol (1982, 272) points out, Shah Pahlavi's economic policy in the mid 1970s, which attacked 'the traditional aspects of bazaar life' and brought 'self-regulating merchants' councils fully under state control', created opposition from this class that coincided with the interests of Islamic clergymen to oppose the regime because of the land reform policy, which then led to the Islamic Revolution.

Similarly, the Anatolian petty bourgeoisie in Turkey were one of the main supporters of the AKP. Since the 1980s, they had benefited and grown as a result of export-oriented industrialisation, which integrated Turkey's economy more closely with global markets. The AKP's economic orientation, which welcomed neoliberal globalisation, allowed it to align itself with Anatolian capitalists, which has contributed to its victories in electoral contests since the early 2000s. Support from Anatolian capitalists enabled the AKP to offer social services to the precarious lower class (see Hadiz 2016). The relatively independent and culturally Muslim domestic capitalist classes that are found in Turkey and Iran are absent in Indonesia because the big bourgeoisie is dominated by ethnic Chinese-owned businesses backed by the state. Further, different Islamic organisations have different and contradicting interests in Indonesia—from vigilantes, terrorists and political parties to apolitical groups—while the secular state could also represent the interests of the *ummah* by absorbing some of them from time to time, as in the case of the ICMI during the last decade of the Suharto era. These factors have contributed to producing a more fragmented Islamic populism in Indonesia.

7.3 Islamic Populist Alliances and Non-State Violence

Iran, Turkey and Indonesia have revealed the presence of vigilantism that mobilises the Islamic identity, even though the countries have different constellations of power within which Islam can be regarded as a social and political force. This indicates that the existence of Islamic vigilantism relates more to the dynamics of state power in relation to capitalist development than to the particular character of Islamic forces in each individual case. While the Islamic identity has become a cultural resource pool for social and political mobilisation in each country, non-state violence might appear with an Islamic face to be mobilised either to oppose the state or to defend the interests of the predatory elites in power. In these circumstances, Islamic vigilantism could emerge in the context in which Islamic forces are consolidated or fragmented, and in which Islamic populist alliances dominate state power or are politically marginalised. Despite the different relationships between Islamic forces and the state in Iran and Turkey, these countries' experiences highlight Islamic domination over state power,

whereas Indonesia presents a different situation. In Iran and Turkey, Islamic paramilitaries have been used by predatory elites as one of many instruments to consolidate state power and eliminate the opposition. This illustrates the fissures within the Islamic regime itself and depicts situations in which domination is never complete. In Indonesia, where Islamic forces are fragmented and marginalised among various political forces, Islamic militias establish alliances with predatory elites to negotiate power. As discussed above, Islamic vigilante groups continue to be instrumentalised in Indonesia because oligarchic elites do not organically arise from Islamic forces. In contrast, newer oligarchic elites in present-day Iran and nascent ones in Turkey have partly arisen from Islamic forces, making the mobilisation of Islamic non-state violence aimed at defending the existing political regime. The distinctive functions of Islamic vigilantism in these countries are an outcome of different historical trajectories in regard to the relationship between Islam, non-state violence and capitalism.

7.3.1 Defending Islam and Predatory Interests

Islamic forces in Iran and Turkey have had more opportunities to instrumentalise formal state institutions, including laws, to foster Islamic agendas. Yet, the Islamisation of agendas is not always related to the distribution of wealth. In both countries, resources and power are concentrated on political–economic elites, including religious leaders, for their own benefit, rather than distributed to the *ummah* and the public (see Golkar 2016). In Iran, Basij militia figures and members enjoy lucrative economic activities provided by the state. Together, and facilitated by the supreme leader, the Basij enjoys access to material resources from many government projects and is the beneficiary of the neoliberal privatisation of state-owned enterprises. The Basij has privileged access to public resources because it helps to maintain and secure the position of the supreme leader.

In Turkey, Erdoğan maintains support from his Islamist loyalists by privileging them in the 'allocation of lucrative construction and infrastructure contracts' (Erdemir and Lechner 2018). To defend the AKP's interests, Islamic vigilante groups target the AKP's political opponents with pro-Islamic rhetoric that has the effect of protecting the interests of Erdoğan and his allies. Thus, the Islamic narrative is articulated by predatory elites to mobilise popular support, with which they can accumulate and defend power and material resources. Hence, the narrative of defending Islam in Iran and Turkey, as in Indonesia, should be understood in relation to the defence of predatory interests, including the use of non-state violence. Given that Islamic populist alliances dominate state power in Iran and Turkey, non-state violence organisations

articulate the Islamic identity by claiming that they contribute to maintaining Islamic ascendancy but actually serving predatory interests. In Indonesia, where Islamic populism is fragmented, vigilante groups articulate the Islamic identity to enhance the degree of threat in extorting protection money and to establish alliances with predatory elites in the context of the increasingly Islamised society.

In Iran, Islamic rhetoric, which is predominantly propagated by Shi'i figures, has become the main discourse that has underpinned the political projects of the state since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The revolution was made possible by the mobilisation of Islamic forces as the major political vehicle against the autocratic power of Shah Pahlavi, which successfully obliterated the modernised and secularised monarchy by establishing an Islamic state, characterised by an Islamic ruler and the implementation of sharia (see Matsunaga 2014, 68). In turn, the revolution paved the way for an Islamisation project directed towards not only state institutions, but also society as a whole under the Islamic Republic of Iran. The project aims to Islamise society by enforcing religious morality and behaviour, including through violence conducted by non-state instruments. Basij, the most prominent non-state violence group (see Golkar 2016), was established by the leader of the Iranian Revolution, Ayatollah Khomaeni, in 1980 to guard the Islamic Revolution and support the army during the war with Iraq. Another Islamic militia, *Hezabollahis* (Party of God), was formed to assist the IRGC in consolidating power. Through these Islamic civilian militias, the new Islamic Republic of Iran suppressed social and political forces that were considered counter-revolutionary.

Within this context, Islamic dissent became the only form of political dissent that was allowed to be publicly aired in the first post-revolutionary decade (Matsunaga 2014). Other expressions of political dissent, such as from the left, experienced political repression. Pro-Khomeini forces actively purged leftist members from the Labour House (*Khane-ye Kargar*). The Islamic Republic also placed labour organisations under state control (Matsunaga 2014, 71). Using the banner of 'Cultural Revolution,' universities also became a target of state oppression, which was primarily directed towards faculty members who were considered liberal or leftist (Matsunaga 2014). As a result, the entire higher education system was closed by the regime for two years (1980–1982) and around half of the faculty members were purged or left their institution when the universities were reopened (Rahnema and Nomani 1990). Political forces opposing the post-revolutionary regime were also the subject of oppression, including the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran, the National Democratic Front, the Muslim People's

Republican Party and the People's Mojahedin Organisation. Further, many members of the regime-friendly Tudeh Party were arrested (Matsunaga 2014, 71).

Similarly, the AKP—which is portrayed by Hadiz as a political vehicle of the Islamic movement in Turkey that has successfully organised support from different sections of society, from the bourgeoisie and urban middle class to the urban and rural poor—has also mobilised Islamic vigilante groups, even when the party has grasped state power. This could be observed after Erdoğan was elected for the third time as the prime minister of Turkey in 2011. In this period, Erdoğan embraced an Islamic agenda that paved the way for the emergence of Islamic vigilantism in public life. Before this period, Kemalism—the secularist ideology—had greater influence in directing state policy by keeping religion away from state affairs, which defined Turkey as a Western country. However, since 2011, enjoying an overwhelming majority, Erdoğan has placed Islamic conservatism back into social and political life.[24]

The obvious manifestation of the shifting state direction can be observed in the increasing restrictions on human rights principles, especially regarding freedom of speech, freedom of the press and the right to free assembly. The Committee to Protect Journalists (2013), an international non-governmental organisation, reported that Turkey is 'the world's leading jailer of journalists, followed closely by Iran and China'. Further, military officers, academics and lawyers who were accused of plotting a movement, known as Ergenekon, against the government were arrested in 2010 (*The Guardian* 23 February 2010; *The Telegraph* 6 January 2012). In 2012, the Turkish parliament approved an education reform bill that strengthens Islamic elements in public schools to foster what Erdoğan called a 'pious generation'. In 2013, Turkey's parliament also passed a bill to curb the advertising and sale of alcohol (Yesil 2016, 312). In a bureaucracy, access to power, jobs and promotion has come to be increasingly linked to displays of individual religious piety.

Under these circumstances, Islamic vigilantism associated with the AKP emerged and was emboldened by the state. Subsequently, the shift towards authoritarianism and conservatism led to demonstrations against Turkey's government, triggered by an urban development plan

[24] Even when the AKP was defeated by the main opposition (the CHP) in Ankara, Istanbul and other cities in the 2019 local elections, 'Erdogan still has tremendous state resources at his disposal', meaning that he remains formidable (*Stratfor* 5 April 2019). The votes gained by the AKP and its main ally, the Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Harekat Partisi*, MHP), were in decline compared with the 2018 parliamentary election, from 26.3 million (53.6%) to 20.6 million (51.63%). However, the votes gained by the official oppositions—the CHP, IYI and the People's Democratic Party (*Halklarin Demokratik Partisi*, HDP)—also decreased from 22.1 million (44.3%) to 19.2 million (41.8%), meaning that the AKP and MHP remain powerful (Alizadeh 2019).

for Istanbul's Gezi Park in mid 2013, widely known as the Gezi Park protests. The negative trend of Turkey's economic growth since 2012 has increased the unemployment rate and elevated the level of public dissent. Importantly, the tendency of Erdoğan to centralise state power has also raised tensions with his main ally, Fethulah Gulen.[25] As a result of the rising tension with many of his opponents, in 2014, Erdoğan proposed a referendum to strengthen the position of the president as his route to centralise control over the state. However, the opposition remained strong, especially from the Gulen faction, which culminated in an attempted military coup in 2016. The failed coup has paved the way for Erdoğan to propose another referendum to expand his power and maintain his control over the country's economy. In April 2017, Erdoğan won the referendum, which moved the country further towards authoritarianism and Islamism.

This is the context that strengthens the position of Islamic vigilantism associated with the AKP. Similar to its counterparts, such as the Islamic Defender Front (*Front Pembela Islam*, FPI) in Indonesia and the Basij in Iran, Islamic vigilante groups in Turkey conduct raids against places they consider sinful for the sake of promoting Islamic morality. In particular, these actions take place during the month of Ramadan, when they attack citizens who publicly choose not to fast, and they target entertainment venues that serve alcohol (see Hitz 2016; Internet Haber 18 June 2015). More importantly, the failed coup provided a chance to mobilise a counter-reaction from society, the supporters of the AKP and the government. Initially mobilised as a tool of popular resistance against the military, such a counter-reaction from society was then transformed into 'a form of vigilante vengeance against anyone they deem to be traitors to the nation' (Hintz 2016). In this period, Islamic vigilantism reappeared not only to enforce Islamic morality, but also to defend the national identity as a pretext to attack Gulen's followers (Hintz 2016; Tugal 2016a, 2016b) and the Kemalist secularist idea. More importantly, Islamic vigilantism protects and facilitates Erdoğan's interests in centralising patronage relationships in the country.

When the masses gathered at the Turkish parliament against the coup, Prime Minister Binali Yildirim provoked them by saying that the work of the masses was not yet done. This encouraged the use of violent actions by civilian militias against Gulenists and Kemalists (Tugal 2016a). On 20 July 2016, five days after the failed coup, Turkey declared a state of

[25] In late 2013, a corruption investigation targeted Erdoğan's inner circle and family, who had enjoyed lucrative economic activities. While many of Gulen's followers had dominated high-level positions in the police and judiciary in Turkey, the massive imprisonment actions were a result of the tension between Erdoğan and Gulen. Claiming this scandal as an attempt by Gulen to remove him from power, Erdoğan removed several judicial officers to reduce Gulen's influence in the office, and he released all corruption suspects.

emergency for a period of three months, which was then extended for a sixth time (*Daily News* 18 January 2018). This declaration was followed by the issuance of a new state emergency decree number 696 on 24 December 2016. Article 121 of the decree grants immunity to civilians who participate in suppressing coup attempts. The prime minister insisted that 'the decree will only apply to those who took part in the July 15, 2016 coup attempt and the day after, July 16' (SCF 27 December 2017), but it paved the way for the proliferation of pro-government vigilantes and Islamic vigilante groups that 'could commit violent acts without ever facing justice' (BBC 1 February 2018; *Weekly Standard* 6 March 2018). Following the declaration of the state of emergency, the most prominent Islamic militia was HöH, which was established in November 2016. Chairman Fatih Kaya stated in an interview that his organisation had 7,000 members and 22 branches across Turkey (*Turkish Minute* 29 December 2017). As reported by the *Turkish Minute* (29 December 2017), Kaya said:

> We will not go into the streets unless amir al mu'minin [Erdoğan] orders it, like on July 15, 2016. Our state, military, police control everything. When the time comes, if we are needed we are always ready as an 80-million-strong nation.

The main opposition party—the CHP—rejected this new decree, which is deemed to pave the way for rising Islamic militarism and the legalisation of pro-state vigilantism. However, the same rhetoric and practices in regard to sponsoring civilian militias by way of defending the national identity had been embraced by the CHP in the early 2000s. As mentioned above, non-state violence groups like the KMD, VKGB and TTBD were linked to the Kemalist CHP that emerged (Dönmez 2008) in response to the rising recognition of Kurds after the AKP ruled the state in the early 2000s as a result of Turkey's attempts to integrate with the European community. Using the rhetoric of defending the national identity, the vigilante groups attacked the Kurds and the PKK. They also declared that they were protecting the secularist regime by controlling political–economic resources from its enemies, including the AKP government (Dönmez 2008). These neo-Kemalist vigilante groups believe that the AKP has undermined the nation with its Islamisation agenda, and they perceive the AKP as 'selling the country to the imperial powers through privatisation, the recognition of Kurdish identity and the Islamisation of the country' (Dönmez 2008, 566).

In Iran, the development of the state since the 1979 revolution has been accompanied by Islamic vigilante groups that are concerned with enforcing Islamic morality, which also serves the interests of the holders of state power, especially conservative clerics. Yet, the role of

revolutionary guards, including the Basij, in the political arena was reduced after the death of Khomaeni following the end of the Iran–Iraq War in 1989 and when Rafsanjani, a pro-market clergyman, came into power. Rafsanjani's policies of economic liberalisation threatened the interests of many conservative figures that received economic benefits from maintaining alliances with the IRGC and the Basij. These conservative figures claimed that neoliberal policies 'not only increased poverty and class cleavages but also led to the shunning of the revolutionaries and the Basiji' (Golkar 2016, 156).

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the successor to Khomaeni, increased government financial support to the Basij (Golkar 2016, 156). Since then, 'in 1991–92 the Basij Cooperative Foundation (BCF) was established to provide welfare support to the Basiji'. Through this company and its many subsidiaries, the Basij has been able to access government projects in various fields, including 'agriculture, transportation, mining, infrastructure, industry and the import and export sectors' (Golkar 2016, 158).

In 1997, when Khatami was elected president, his policy focused on bureaucratic reforms and strengthening an agenda to modernise and secularise the state at the same time. This period was known as the Reform Era. It not only attempted to keep vigilante groups on the fringe of formal politics, but also reduced the role of conservative clerics—associated with the statist and protectionist economy—in formal politics by strengthening the position of professional bureaucrats. The Basij and IRGC considered this new direction a threat to their economic activities. In fact, the Basij's economic activities slowed during Khatami's first term (1997–2001). Consequently, tension between President Khatami and Khamenei led to civil unrest, which culminated in student protests in 1999. The movement was meant to target the supreme leader, who was deemed to be hindering the reform agenda. Yet, this civil unrest gave the Basij a chance to re-emerge in the political economic arena. A new militia, Ansar-e-Hezbollah, was also created to defend the interests of the clerics, such as by attacking student protests that fostered the secularisation agenda in the late 1990s (Golkar 2016). The supreme leader's support for the Basij to participate in the economy was also meant 'as a strategy for buying their allegiance' in the face of the threat from the US (Golkar 2016, 158).

Thus, instead of successfully marginalising the vigilante groups, Khatami's pro-market economic agenda spurred conservative and revolutionary guard members in the bureaucracy to block reform agendas (see Glokar 2016). Their position was much stronger in politics and at the street level in enforcing Islamic morality during Ahmadinejad's (2005-2013)

administration because Ahmadinejad was a former member of the Basij. More importantly, during Ahmadinejad's administration, the Basij's involvement in municipal economic projects increased dramatically because the president's coalition included state companies that had been sidelined by the rise of private businesses under Rafsanjani and Khatami. However, when Rouhani was elected as president in 2013, the government renewed its efforts to reduce vigilantism and the position of revolutionary guards in politics.

The cases of Iran and Turkey show that Islamic vigilantism exists in countries where the Islamic movement has successfully seized state power and where Islamic conservatism has been mainstreamed in social and political life. This is the case because, as in Indonesia, predatory practices require non-state violence in the accumulation of power and resources. This observation refutes Hadiz's (2016, 2018) assessment of the relationship between Islamic populist alliances and the rise of Islamic vigilantism exerted by fringe organisations. For Hadiz (2018), the instrumentalisation of the Islamic rhetoric by vigilante groups is a result of the incoherence and incompleteness of Islamic populist alliances. In short, the failure of the Islamic movement in Indonesia to obtain support from different segments of society has provided an opportunity for vigilante groups to employ the Islamic rhetoric and mobilise support primarily from the lower class for their own pragmatic purposes, as well as serving predatory interests. As in Indonesia, violent actions carried out by Islamic militias in Turkey and Iran have facilitated the predatory elites in the accumulation and consolidation of power and material resources. Yet, unlike in Indonesia, where the Islamisation of non-state violence is part of the way criminal gangs negotiate power with predatory elites, the existence of Islamic vigilantism in Turkey and Iran indicates fissures within Islamic political power and the incompleteness of the Islamic hegemony through which non-state violence is used to maintain the ascendancy of the Islamic leader in power.

Hadiz's (2016) analysis focused primarily on the period when the AKP was still struggling to consolidate its power, although it had won several elections and dominated parliament since 2003. In this phase, the AKP still engaged with Kemalist secularist interests and thus supported the secularism required for integration with the European community while simultaneously continuing to exterminate the Kurds. In doing so, the AKP government favoured vigilantism employed by paramilitary groups associated with the Kemalists to suppress the Kurds. However, when Erdoğan expanded his influence and control over state institutions and the European project became less urgent and tenable, the AKP left the secularist agenda and shifted

towards the Islamisation of the state. Islamic vigilantism was thus mobilised by the state to enforce Islamic morality in public life and defend predatory interests in suppressing the opposition—in this case, Kemalists and Gulenists (see Tugal 2016a, 2016b).

Together with the case of Iran, Turkey underlines that the Islamisation of non-state violence in Indonesia relates less to the characteristic of its Islamic populist alliances and more to how contending predatory elites instrumentalise Islamic narratives and vigilantism to defend their interests and accumulate power and capital in a context where Islamic conservatism has been mainstreamed.

7.4 Islamisation of Criminal Gangsters in Indonesia

7.4.1 New Environment

Islam has become a powerful narrative for sociopolitical mobilisation in Indonesia, although the Islamic political movement remains fragmented and relatively marginal in the political arena. This has been evident for the past three decades, as observed in the increasing conservatism among Indonesian Muslims, described by some scholars as a conservative turn. According to van Bruinessen (2013), this conservative turn is a result of the ideological contestation between conservative and liberal factions in mainstream Islamic organisations in Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, as well as the emerging influence of transnational Islamic movements. Van Bruinessen (2013) argues that the character of Indonesian Islam is essentially tolerant and favours religious harmony, but that democracy has changed its expression to become more conservative. This conservative turn was indicated in 2005, when the MUI issued a controversial fatwa that declared secularism, pluralism and liberalism to be incompatible with Islam. According to van Bruinessen (2013), this was a result of the influence of radical Islamist groups that joined the MUI.

The dissemination of anti-pluralist ideas by the MUI since 2005 was made possible by the opportunity provided by the holders of state power, who aimed to gain support from conservative Muslims. Hence, it is misleading to conclude that the MUI has become independent from the state and serves the interests of the imaginary *ummah* instead of the state, as argued by van Bruinessen (2013). Since its establishment in 1975, the MUI has been an adviser to the state in regard to Islamic matters as part of the way Suharto incorporated and depoliticised *ummah* and the Islamic movement. During Habibie's administration, which was

supported by conservative Muslims, the MUI produced many advices (*tausiyahs*) to legitimise government policies. In 2000, when the MUI declared a change in its role from the servant of the government to the servant of the *ummah*, the organisation furthered the conservatism that was already becoming mainstreamed in society as a result of previous political accommodations with the holders of state power going back to the 1990s.[26] On 26 July 2005, when President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono opened the national congress of the MUI, he stated that (Ricklefs 2012, 285):

> We open our hearts and minds to receiving the thoughts, recommendations and fatwas from the MUI and ulamas at any time, either directly to me or to the Minister of Religious Affairs or to other branches of government. We want to place MUI in a central role in matters regarding the Islamic faith, so that it becomes clear what the difference is between areas that are the preserve of the state and areas where the government or state should heed the fatwas from the MUI and ulamas.

This shows that the holders of state power, who aimed to gain support from conservative Muslims, played a vital role in strengthening the position of the MUI in society, thereby contributing to the mainstreaming of Islamic conservatism. More importantly, this development created a new environment for non-state violence organisations that placed the Islamic identity as a new source of mobilisation. Thus, mobilising the Islamic rhetoric is a tactic for vigilante groups to enhance their prowess, increase the degree of intimidation for racketeering and build alliances with predatory elites for their survival.

7.4.2 Enhancing Prowess

As discussed above, the new environment drives many Indonesian criminal gangs to employ Islamic rhetoric and identity. However, mobilising the Islamic rhetoric does not necessarily mean that non-state violence organisations are transforming into extremist groups that are

[26] In the early 1990s, Suharto had also built an alliance with conservative Muslims to back his regime in response to his rivals from segments of the military. This rivalry resulted from a contest over resources in which Suharto had attempted to centralise and monopolise businesses within his own family and a select group of cronies. To gain support from this conservative faction of Indonesian Muslims, Suharto and his family presented themselves as pious Muslims by going on the major pilgrimage to Mecca and adopting a new first name, 'Muhammad', while his eldest daughter began wearing a headscarf. The regime also institutionalised this Islamic conservatism by endorsing the establishment of the sharia-based financial institution Bank Muamalat, the Islamic newspaper Republika and a Muslim think tank organisation Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI). Hefner (2000, 125) notes that the ICMI was also used by Suharto to counter the fledgling pro-democratic movement 'by dividing it along religious lines'. This attempt was reflected in tension within the organisation since its establishment between those who wanted to work with the regime and those who endorsed democratisation agendas, as observed from many formerly critical Muslim activists that joined the ICMI (see also Hadiz 2008).

concerned with establishing the Islamic state using violence. Rather, the adoption of an Islamic identity for vigilante groups is useful for enhancing their prowess and their ability to exercise intimidation because of the link between Islamic politics and violence and militancy (Mudhoffir 2017a). Thus, many vigilante groups that employ the Islamic narrative in a decentralised democratic context have never been a symptom of the rise of Islamism or Islamic extremism, as claimed by security-oriented analysis.

Terrorism experts like Sidney Jones, who worked for the International Crisis Group (ICG) in Jakarta, paints an alarmist picture by arguing that Islamic vigilante groups that are concerned with Islamic morality have developed into a fertile ground for terrorism. This blurs the distinction between 'pro-sharia advocates and violent extremist groups' (Jones 2016, 276). According to Jones (2016), this has been caused by the weakening of jihadi groups as a result of the actions of the police counter-terrorism force, Detachment 88, which led them to view Islamic vigilantes as a 'recruitment pool for potential terrorists' (Jones 2016, 277). The ICG (2012, 1) also states that 'anti-vice raids and actions against non-Muslim minorities are becoming a path to more violent jihadism in Indonesia', and that members of Islamic vigilante groups have moved 'from using sticks and stones in the name of upholding morality and curbing deviant to using bombs and guns' (ICG 2012, 1). Jones (2016) further argues that 'antipathy to the police [...] has become a powerful unifying force that transcends ideology and institutional exclusivism' (277). The transformation from vigilantism to terrorism has been evident since 'the 2011 suicide bombings of a police mosque in Cirebon, West Java and an evangelical church in Solo, Central Java' linked to Tim Hisbah, one of the most prominent Islamic vigilante groups in Solo, Central Java, in the late 2000s (ICG 2012, 1; Jones 2016, 2013).

However, the origin of Tim Hisbah and the nature of non-state violence organisations in general show that the above claims by terrorism experts are unfounded. Mohammad Syarif and Hayat, the suicide bombers in the Cirebon attack, were linked to Tim Hisbah, but this does not necessarily explain their transformation from Islamic vigilantes to a jihadist group. The ICG claims that they were part of a larger network of jihadi groups founded by Ba'asyir, Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI) and Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT). Yet, the experiences of Tim Hisbah members—including its commander, Sigit Qordhowi, who was killed in a counter-terrorism operation not long after the attack in Cirebon—show that they become 'Islamised' only as a tactic for racketeering in the context in which Islamic conservatism has been

mainstreamed. They were previously members of criminal gangs in Solo, and they never received intensive Islamic teaching. Further, using the Islamic identity as a way of conducting racketeering is not a new phenomenon; it had been done by other *preman* figures before Qordhowi, such as Kalono with the Islamic Youth Front of Surakarta (*Front Pembela Islam Surakarta*, FPIS) and Yanni Rusmanto with the Hezbollah militia, which were active in conducting raids of many entertainment venues in the early 2000s. In the mid 2000s, these groups were retired after business alliances were established with the police and army, thereby providing an opportunity for other *preman* figures, like Qordhowi, to take control of the street by employing the Islamic identity. This led him to establish a series of Islamic vigilante group, of which Tim Hisbah, founded in 2008, was the latest.

The ICG report claims that Tim Hisbah transformed into a jihadi group after Qordhowi showed sympathy to Ba'asyir, who was arrested in 2010 for allegedly funding military training for jihadists in Aceh. The report also notes that Qordhowi was further radicalised after a member of Tim Hisbah was killed in North Sumatra's anti-terrorist operation, which led him to declare war against the police. The question is: Will the declaration made by Qordhowi to undertake an urban war against the police drive him to undertake real violent actions, or is it only a rhetoric to enhance his prowess? Many Islamic gangsters have articulated a violent rhetoric linked to terrorism in an attempt to enhance their reputation for prowess to be more effective in conducting racketeering and establishing alliances with predatory elites; thus, Qordhowi's statement was merely rhetoric rather than indication of an intent to undertake real terrorist crimes. Vigilante groups usually also build an alliance with police and government agencies or oppose them to serve the interests of other predatory elites. Edy Tri Wiyanto, known as Edy Jablay, a member of Tim Hisbah who was sentenced to 4.5 years in jail after killing Qordhowi, also rejects the description of Tim Hisbah as a jihadist group. He asserted that his groups are only concerned with enforcing Islamic morality, commanding virtue and combating vice (interview with Edy Jablay, ex-terrorist suspect and a member of Islamic lascar Tim Hisbah, 21 October 2016; interview with Thayep, activist of the Institute for International Peace Building [*Yayasan Prasasti Perdamaian*], 20 October 2016). He admitted that he searched for illegal guns in Cirebon and kept them to prepare in case the police attacked members of Tim Hisbah after his group was associated with bombing a church in Solo, Central Java:

> Tim Hisbah was just a *nahi munkar* movement. We had around 500 members in the Greater Solo, which we cannot control one by one; their activities and their interaction outside Tim Hisbah. We had been a target of anti-terrorist force after there one of our former members,

> Atok, who was involved in Church bombing in Gawok, Pasar Kliwon, was arrested by the police. We never asked him to do that. He had another group. But, because he used to be a member of Tim Hisbah, we had been a target as well. We did not have link to jihadist groups or activists. We attended Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's Islamic teaching, but it was a public event often held in Solo. But, we were not members of Ba'asyir's Islamic community (*jamaah*). We only concerned with combating vice because in Solo we can easily find people drunk, gambled and committed adultery everywhere.
>
> Because we had been a police target, we felt terrorised. We did not want to be arrested. We just had to prepare to respond to that. Hence, we decided to fight back against the police, to defend ourselves. That is why we bought guns. (Interview with Edy Jablay, ex-terrorist suspect and a member of Islamic lascar Tim Hisbah, 21 October 2016)

Jablay's story contradicts the claims of terrorism experts regarding the transformation of Islamic vigilantes to jihadi groups, especially in the case of Tim Hisbah. Although they were prepared to attack the police by purchasing illegal guns, it was more as a reaction to threats made by the anti-terrorist force. They are likened to jihadists because the police and terrorism analysts have constructed them that way. After Qordhowi was killed and members of Tim Hisbah, including Jablay, were arrested by the police, the Islamic vigilante group disappeared. In contrast, jihadist groups usually have a strong network and organisational structure that make it difficult for them to disappear, even when key figures are killed. Jablay now engages in racketeering without an organisation, and he works as a trainer of Thailand martial arts Muay Thai. He sells his services to those who need protection, and he works as a debt collector. Soon after Tim Hisbah ceased its racketeering, another Islamic vigilante group, Lascar of Islamic Ummah of Surakarta (*Laskar Umat Islam Surakarta*, LUIS), appeared. LUIS has become the most prominent lascar in Solo by exercising a protection racket using the same rhetoric as Tim Hisbah.

As further evidence of the transformation of vigilantes, the ICG report cites efforts to prevent Christianisation by a coalition of JAT and Islamic hardliners in Bekasi and Central Java. However, the development of JAT shows that the organisation has actually transformed into a less violent group that focuses more on preaching and enforcing Islamic morality, especially since its founder, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir—the spiritual leader of terrorist organisation Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), which was responsible for the Bali bombings in the early 2000s—and many key figures split and established new organisations as a result of different ideological allegiances to global terrorist organisations. Ba'asyir established Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) after

pledging allegiance to Abu Bakar Al-Baghdadi, the leader of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Meanwhile, disagreeing with Ba'asyir's decision, his son Abdul Rochim Ba'asyir and other key JAT figures established another organisation, Jamaah Ansharut Syariah (JAS) after pledging allegiance to ISIS's rival Al-Qaeda. Since then, JAT has been more concerned with social issues, preaching and conducting *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* morality campaigns, similar to other Islamic vigilante groups. Thus, the claim made by the ICG that there is a blurred line between jihadist groups and Islamic vigilantes is more related to the transformation on the part of JAT than those who advocate Islamic morality.

From here, the claim made by terrorist experts that transformation into jihadist groups is a path that will be taken by Islamic vigilantes is unsubstantiated. Contemporary development of the most prominent Islamic lascar in Indonesia—the FPI—has instead showed a different direction than the one predicted by experts. Rather than providing a fertile ground for jihadists by taking a clandestine movement, the FPI has become more active in the political arena by participating in democratic contests. This is because the nature of non-state violence organisations, as observed in Turkey and Iran, provides an instrument for predatory elites to accumulate capital and political power.

7.4.3 Establishing Predatory Alliances

Recent political developments in Indonesia show that contestation over the representation of the interests of Muslims, which form a monolithic community, has become more important. This was particularly shown after the Ahok case, discussed in Chapter 5. Given the fragmented nature of Islamic politics, the articulation of Islamic sentiments in contests over power has led to a different path, which is furthering the interests of predatory elites without Islamic hegemony.

In this sense, the form of instrumentalisation of Islam by non-state violence organisations can be explained in two arenas: at the street level and in formal politics. This differentiation illuminates the fact that the autonomy of Islamic militias is limited in Indonesian politics. For example, the victory of Anies Baswedan in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election was in large part due to successfully politicising religious sentiment through the actions of the FPI and other organisations that mobilised the masses against his rival. Although the FPI and Jakarta's conservative Muslims claimed that the electoral success represented the victory of Islam, which will pave the way for the Islamisation of Jakarta, Baswedan instead affirmed that his policies

will not be directed towards that path (Mudhoffir 2017b). Baswedan also denied that his campaign team had any political contract with the FPI (*Tempo* 21 April 2017). This implies that although the FPI and other Islamic militias played a significant role in his victory, their position remains marginal, confining them to the street level of politics and protection rackets.

This was manifested in an attempt to enforce Islamic morality by claiming that Islamic vigilante groups do so to serve local communities. Raids against entertainment venues that are deemed to practice sinful business, as claimed by vigilantes, are often made based on neighbouring reports to attack certain places that sell alcohol or give striptease performances. However, these places are often treated differently. Many Islamic vigilante groups clarify that what they are targeting are business activities that are illegal according to state regulations (interview with Imam Mulyana, FPI figure in Bekasi, 3 September 2016; interview with Edi Lukito, leader of LUIS, 14 February 2014; interview with Khoirul, leader of FPI of Solo, Central Java, 24 October 2016). As long as certain entertainment spots possess legal permits to sell alcohol, their business will be protected. In this case, this claim signifies that Islamic vigilante groups are more likely to enforce state regulations instead of Islamic morality. In fact, targets of raids are mostly determined by whether they have links to the security apparatus (interview with Nawi, FBR local leader of Depok chapter, 20 August 2016). Places that are backed by powerful military or police figures are overlooked. Raids by Islamic militia are sometimes ordered by military officials as a way to wrest control over particular entertainment spots from the police, which collaborate with *preman* groups, or vice versa (interview with Hariadi, deputy police chief of Solo, 24 October 2016; interview with Bowo, police intelligent unit commander of Solo, 24 October 2016; interview with Mardianto, military intelligent unit commander of Sukoharjo, 21 October 2016). This is why the clash between *preman* groups and Islamic militias in Solo, Central Java, is a common phenomenon.

One of the biggest clashes between *preman* groups and Islamic militias in Solo occurred in 2012, triggered by the persecution of the members of Islamic lascar by one of the most influential *preman* figures, Iwan Walet, who was an army deserter (interview with Iwan Walet, influential *preman* figure in Solo, Central Java, 25 October 2016). As a result, hundreds of members of Islamic militias—led by LUIS, the most influential lascar at the time—and their sympathisers took revenge by surrounding the Gandekan district, where Walet and his followers were based, and blockading roads leading there for more than a week. Many of those who were involved in the clash observed that the tense situation could lead to religious

conflicts, as in Ambon and Poso, because each party represented different religions—Muslim lascars and Christian preman. Walet believes that this event was designed by powerful elites in Jakarta because it occurred when Widodo, as Mayor of Solo, had become one of the strongest Jakarta gubernatorial candidates (interview with Iwan Walet, influential *preman* figure in Solo, Central Java, 25 October 2016). Meanwhile, when Widodo ran for Jakarta governor, his vice mayor, a Christian and former *preman* figure, replaced him, a development that was not expected by the Islamic lascars and other conservative Muslims in Solo. Hence, this clash was also intended to block Widodo's candidacy in the Jakarta gubernatorial election. This case illustrates how Islam was instrumentalised by Islamic lascars in Solo to extort money from entertainment venues linked to formal politics in which their practices served contending predatory elites.

Attacks on minorities such as Christians, Ahmadis and Shiites by Islamic vigilante groups also illustrate the instrumentalisation and politicisation of Islam to extract money from victims and establish predatory alliances with political elites. The expulsion of the Shiite community in Sampang, East Java, for example, used the majority Sunni interpretation of Islam as a pretext. NU paramilitary wings were deployed to attack the Shiite community and destroy their houses and boarding schools. However, the main problem was related to competition between clerics linked to local political elites (*Jakarta Post* 1 September 2012). Meanwhile, raids against the establishment of 'illegal' Christian churches often results in extortion (interview with Anick HT, human rights activist, 3 October 2016; interview with Choirul Anam, member of Human Rights Working Group, 10 August 2016). Extortion might also be the case in the persecution of Ahmadis, but other purposes related to an attempt by Islamic vigilante groups to gain sympathy from mainstream organisations—Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, which also label Ahmadiyah as a deviant sect—are also apparent.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter explained the specific feature of non-state violence in post-authoritarian Indonesia, where it is operated in a context in which society has been increasingly Islamised. In this regard, a tendency of Islamisation among vigilante groups is apparent. This is also the case in Iran and Turkey, although Islamic populist alliances have dominated the state power. This is because the nature of the state and capital in these countries is predatory, as in the case of Indonesia. As explained in Chapter 2, the development of the state that is accompanied by predatory capitalism requires the use of non-state violence to accumulate and maintain

authority and resources. When Islamist politics achieve domination over social and political life, the Islamic identity provides a powerful source of mobilisation for non-state violence. This is because domination is never complete, leading predatory elites to employ non-state violence among other means to take control over political opposition and maintain their power. In this regard, the existence of non-state violence is an indication of primitive accumulation instead of projecting the different features of Islamic populist alliances, as argued by Hadiz (2016). When the Islamic identity can be a powerful source of mobilisation, non-state violence tends to appear with an Islamic face. Indeed, the different characteristic of Islamic populist alliances—resulting from historical conflicts of social, political and economic interests—defines the different functions and social positions of non-state violence. While Islamic non-state violence in Indonesia works to negotiate power, in Turkey and Iran, it is used to maintain Islamic ascendancy, which is used as a narrative to defend the interests of predatory elites in accumulating capital and power.

Therefore, although Islamic conservative agendas in Indonesia do not dominate politics, their influence in social life also gives the Islamic identity a powerful source of political mobilisation. In these circumstances, the Islamic identity in post-authoritarian Indonesia becomes more appealing, leading non-state violence organisations to employ it. At the street level, they articulate the Islamic rhetoric and identity to increase the degree of intimidation and threat in extorting protection money from entertainment venues and minority groups. Hence, given that the Islamisation of non-state violence in Indonesia is a result of the way criminal gangs adapt themselves to the new environment for their survival, the proliferation of Islamic vigilantes cannot be considered a symptom of the rise of Islamic militancy, as argued by terrorist experts. They are not a fertile new ground for jihadists that blurs the distinction between those that struggle to enforce Islamic morality and those that attempt to Islamise the state by using violence. This is because the nature of vigilante groups is to provide an instrument for predatory elites to accumulate capital and power, by which these groups will continue to survive. That is, Islamic vigilante groups in Indonesia will continue to operate in the street by exercising the protection racket using the Islamic narrative instead of transforming into jihadists.

In the case of Turkey and Iran, Islamic vigilante groups may not extract money from the street, as in Indonesia, but they enjoy abundant economic resources from the state by claiming to maintain Islamic ascendancy. In Indonesia, these groups are marginalised to the street and

subject to the whims of the elites, while in Turkey and Iran, they become major players within the state and business itself. They not just part of predatory alliances; they also dominate them. As observed in the case of Basij in Iran and the HöH in Turkey, they work to serve the interests of those in power, including religious leaders, to suppress political opponents and protect attempts to concentrate material resources.

Predatory alliances between Islamic vigilante groups and politico-business elites in the Indonesian context can also be found in their attempt to enforce the formalisation of Islamic norms within state regulations. This is often conducted by secularist elites to gain support from the increasingly Islamised society. For this reason, the proliferation of Islamic vigilantism and the increasing incidents of discrimination against minority groups do not simply signify the rise of religious fanaticism and Islamic radicalism. Instead, displays of religious fanaticism by vigilante groups are a useful instrument for predatory elites to mobilise support from conservative Muslims during electoral contests and to suppress political enemies.

Further, the trend of non-state violence providers to identify themselves as groups that are concerned with Islamic morality illustrates the different characteristic of non-state violence in Indonesia's democratic context compared with the authoritarian period. In the previous order, Pancasila was a dominant discourse employed by vigilante groups to defend the national identity and state ideology. This was mainly because the secular–nationalist agenda embraced by the authoritarian state was more appealing and thus provided a powerful source of mobilisation. In post-New Order Indonesia, Islam has become a new powerful source of mobilisation, meaning that non-state violence groups that employ the nationalist identity, like PP, no longer monopolise control at the street level. However, the practices of non-state violence that employ the Islamic identity are limited within the framework of the predatory form of politics that embraces Islamic conservatism as a useful means of fostering predatory interests. In this regard, the existence of Islamic vigilantism is less related to the characteristics of Islamic populist alliances and more related to how the predatory elites instrumentalise vigilantism to defend their interests in the context in which Islam has become a powerful source of sociopolitical mobilisation in the context in which Islamic populist alliances are consolidated or fragmented.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

In his first political speech after being re-elected as Indonesian president on 15 July 2019, Joko Widodo stated:

> No one should be allergic to investment. This is how we create as many jobs as possible. Therefore, anything that obstructs investment must be trimmed, such as slow or complicated permit processes, especially illegal levies. Be careful, going forward I guarantee that I will chase, I will control, I will check and I will beat [them] up if necessary! There should no longer be any obstructions to investment because this is the key to creating more jobs. (Jakarta Post 2019)

This statement implies an attempt to open an avenue for the development of liberal markets in Indonesia. It suggests a removal of the problems—defined largely in technocratic terms—hindering investment. However, for reasons discussed in this thesis, attempts to impose a liberal environment onto the market, such as the enforcement of the rule of law and the creation of business certainty, will almost certainly remain in the realm of rhetoric. This is because what Widodo describes as acute corruption problems (illegal levies) and bad governance (complicated permit processes) have become part of the normal environment through which politico-economic actors must navigate in furthering their interests. These dominant actors can adapt to and optimise on returns from such disorder. However, this disorder should not be defined in Weberian terms as the result of dysfunctional public institutions or ineffective governance arising from the pervasive problems of corruption, which is how Chabal and Daloz (1999) describe it in their studies on Africa.

Disorder appears as the norm in Indonesia because what is construed as order in the West is absent. This is not because of the absence of the rule of law or the failure of government institutions to effectively deliver public goods and serve the interests of the general public but because the dominant actors do not require the kind of order reflected in the experience of the West. The disorder is a result of historical conflicts over power and resources, which have been instrumental in dominant actors being able to maximise the concentration of power and resources. Disorder has become the norm because of the reproduction of a particular form of capitalism, defined in this thesis as predatory capitalism, that relies on extra-economic means. According to Robison and Hadiz (2017, 902), such an environment 'provides a highly efficient means of organising power and capturing and distributing wealth and resources; it is a state

that works.' Instead of obstructing the accumulation process, various forms of disorder have facilitated politico-business elites in concentrating wealth. Violence, including that inflicted by non-state actors, is a component of disorder that is continually utilised by these actors to further their interests. In this context, non-state violence continues to survive in various political settings, including in democracies, which have failed to alter the foundations of disorder. Given that the nature of the state is predatory—nurtured by the persistence of predatory capitalism—democratic politics can also operate within the framework of disorder. The survival of non-state violence in Indonesia's democracy, as well as in many other nations, should be understood against this backdrop.

The existence of non-state violence is made possible by three main factors as explained in Chapter 2: (1) predatory capitalism, which Marx defines as 'primitive accumulation', (2) the disorganised nature of progressive movements and (3) the historical organisation of coercive institutions in accelerating the accumulation process. The first aspect relates to the structural context that creates a framework of disorder and is characterised by the predominant use of extra-economic means (e.g. various state facilities and the mobilisation of violence) in the accumulation of power and wealth. In many late industrialised countries, state-enforced plunder has resulted from the absence of a strong capitalist class in the early formation of the modern state. This practice has persisted as the emergence of the capitalist class continues to rely on state facilities, by which the use of extra-economic means has become a permanent feature of capitalist development. In this context, primitive accumulation can be regarded as the premise of capitalist social relations rather than as a historical transition to capitalist society or a response to capitalist crises as some scholars (e.g. Harvey 2003; Luxemburg 1968; Wallerstein 1974) have argued.

The reproduction of predatory capitalism has also been made possible by the absence of coherent forces striving for a more equal distribution of wealth, paving the way for dominant politico-economic actors in various political settings to plunder state resources by use of any means, including violence. This is the second aspect contributing to the persistent survival of non-state violence—such conditions provide an opportunity for criminal gangs, religious militias and vigilante groups to mobilise memberships from the poor. In predatory states, government institutions favour the interests of the dominant class, while formal representative institutions fail to channel the dissent and hopes of the increasingly precarious elements of society. Social organisations such as labour and peasant unions are disorganised, enabling

violent groups to position themselves as substitutes for the state in providing social services to the poor and to replicate the role of social movements in channelling popular interests. However, these violent groups can only justify their usefulness to society when predatory politico-business elites require their functions in facilitating the accumulation of resources. Thus, the third aspect describes how the state-driven organisation of coercive institutions in consolidating power and concentrating capital also determines the reproduction of non-state violence. When the state mobilises non-state coercive elements, in addition to formal coercive institutions, to facilitate the consolidation and reproduction of predatory capitalism, privatised violence will persist.

For example, in Argentina, defined in this thesis as a predatory state because of its predominant use of extra-economic means for the accumulation of power and capital, non-state violence is now largely absent. This is partly attributable to the prominence of formal coercive institutions in suppressing political opponents and the pervasive legacy of leftist movements, which is different to the situation in Indonesia. Although civilian death squads were used to suppress the left in the 1970s, these disappeared shortly after the right-wing Peronist president Isabel Peron (1973–76)—who established these groups—was toppled by a military regime that mobilised military forces to consolidate its power through the so-called death squads. Meanwhile, the remnants of the leftist Peronist groups still had room to mobilise the poor as an oppositional movement, as seen in the organisation of unemployed workers known as *piquetero* (Dinerstein 2001, 2003; Petras 2002). In other Latin American countries such as Colombia, states continue to mobilise paramilitary groups to repress the left, with the aim of becoming integrated with neoliberal markets.

In Southeast Asia, including Myanmar, Thailand and the Philippines, local politics are dominated by violent individuals (Sidel 2004; Trocki 1998), who facilitate the growing market economy rather than obstructing capitalist expansion. In post-communist countries such as Russia and China, gangsters have become dominant actors in facilitating the transition to market capitalism (Holdstorm and Smith 2000). In the Middle East, such as in Turkey and Iran, non-state violence has also accompanied the development of the state because of the reproduction of predatory capitalism (see Chapter 7). State rulers continue to use non-state elements of coercion in suppressing opposition, especially that from the left.

In countries where Islamic politics dominates state power, vigilante groups also mobilise Islamic identity, claiming to be enforcers of Islamic morality and defenders of national

interests, as can also be seen in Indonesia. This illustrates that even in places where Islamic politics are more coherent, which is not the case in Indonesia, Islamic vigilantism remains evident, confirming that its existence has more to do with the nature of capitalism than with the feature of Islamic political movement. As such, Islamic violence and vigilantism are not merely symptoms of the fragmentation of Islamic politics, as some scholars (see Hadiz 2016; Sidel 2007) have argued.

However, the rise of vigilante groups employing Islamic rhetoric and identity in Indonesia's democratic context has resulted from Islam becoming a powerful cultural resource for mobilisation. Although Islamist politics in Indonesia is fragmented, the increasing conservatism among Muslims has provided a new environment that enables gangs to enhance their prowess and the degree of threat in extorting protection money as Islamic rhetoric employed by these violent groups is linked to violence and militancy. Articulating Islamic rhetoric is also a tactic for gangs to survive in this environment because it paves the way for them to establish alliances with politico-business elites. This implies that the Islamisation of non-state violence in Indonesia does not indicate the rising threat of state Islamisation. Islamist groups, including vigilantes, that embrace such an agenda will remain in the margin of politics because their power largely relies on secular political elites that align with conservative Muslims to achieve their own interests instead of embracing the Islamisation agenda.

Hence, because the existence of non-state violence is inherent within predatory capitalism, its survival relies on dominant politico-business actors reproducing the use of extra-economic means to concentrate material resources and power. This contrasts with the views of those who explain the phenomenon from the vantage point of 'state weakness'—an idea derived from Weberian accounts (Migdal 1988; World Bank 2011; Lindsey 2001; Cribb 2009, 2011) and the 'fragmented state' thesis (see Migdal 2001, 2004, 2013; Kyed and Albrech 2015; Barker 2016; Wilson 2015; Aspinall and van Klinken 2011; Barker and van Klinken 2009).

In explaining the emergence of privatised violence, Weberian accounts emphasise the degree of state capacity or the ability of the state to enforce law and order and monopolise the legitimate use of coercion. From this perspective, the state is defined as the only entity that can monopolise the legitimate use of physical force. The failure of the state in centralising the use of violence and enforcing the rule of law creates a space for non-state elements to take the law into their own hands. These elements are seen from this perspective as an anomaly, a deviation from the ideal definition of the state. Yet, as seen in a number of countries, non-state violence

organisations can accompany the development of the state and coexist with formal coercive institutions with impunity instead of hindering the state's attempts to enforce law and order. More importantly, by explaining non-state violence as the result of a lack of state capacity, this view perceives institutions as existing in a vacuum. Consequently, the proliferation of non-state violence organisations is seen as simply a technocratic issue that can only be overcome by strengthening the capacity of state institutions and officials, particularly in enforcing law and order. This explanation disregards the importance of conflicts over power and tangible resources in shaping the actions of institutions in which non-state violence is embedded.

Meanwhile, the 'fragmented state' thesis emphasises the nature of the state in explaining the existence of non-state violence. Unlike the Weberian account discussed above, it defines non-state violence as a symptom of the fragmented nature of the state. Societal actors that can also 'legitimately' claim the use of coercion are not defined as anomalies; rather, they blur the boundaries between the state and society and confirm that violence can be exercised by multiple agencies. Non-state elements are also considered autonomous because they can establish their own authority and act like a state. Hence, this perspective suggests investigating the practices of the state, which is characterised by the plurality of authorities. However, this raises the question of whether fragmentation is an inherent feature of all modern states. According to this account, fragmentation is a specific result of the incomplete development of the state, mostly in post-colonial societies. In other words, fragmentation of state power becomes evident in states that have failed to fully develop their capacity in enforcing law and order, leading to societal actors challenging the monopoly over the legitimate use of violence. Such a theoretical implication may, in turn, lead in the same direction as that of the Weberian account in defining violence and the state, particularly by placing primacy on institutions. Moreover, because non-state violence organisations can establish their own authority, their continued existence is largely defined by their ability to establish social legitimation through their perceived potency in delivering social services or contributing to the common good (Bakker 2015).

However, as discussed in Chapter 4, claims made by violent groups that they serve the interests of the poor and local communities are rhetorical, fabricated by their elites to mobilise popular support and establish predatory alliance. Indeed, the engagement of these groups in reactionary politics, as demonstrated by the facilitation of the interests of predatory elites, exacerbates marginalisation of the poor. However, this provides an ideational resource pool from which

violent groups can recruit members. Hence, it is the politico-economic function of vigilantes, rather than their perceived social function, that defines their survival. As explained in Chapter 5, politico-economic functions can be identified in how gangs perform as repressive mechanisms to suppress political challenges, including by reproducing anti-communist propaganda. They also act as agent provocateurs that help politicians mobilise sectarian sentiment to gain support in electoral contests. They can also be useful to business actors in providing protection to facilitate the expansion of capital both in urban and rural areas. In urban areas, they are hired by government agencies to execute forced evictions for the provision of space in the interests of the market, while in rural regions, local authorities employ them to facilitate land grabbing for infrastructural development or the expansion of plantation areas. Many private companies in industrial areas employ criminal gangs to suppress labour movements. Gangs are seen as one of the most effective instruments to protect business interests because they can deliver direct threats to union members at the neighbourhood level to weaken consolidation of the labour movement (see Chapter 5).

Such politico-economic functions of gangs not only contribute to their survival in the democratic context but also illustrate the acceptance of dominant actors in states of disorder. Politico-business elites not only passively adapt to this framework but also actively reproduce it and utilise it as a means of maximising their accumulation of capital and power. This affirms that bad governance and various forms of predation and disorder are not an obstruction to business interests, as claimed by Widodo. Access to and control of public offices remain essential for business actors to expand their capital. Conversely, access to financial support from businesspeople is vital for local leaders and political actors to control state offices won through elections fuelled by money politics.

The reproduction of disorder is illustrated by the confusing and overlapping system of land titles, despite the many technocratic solutions proposed by the government (see Chapter 6), such as the plan to produce a national single-map policy for land management as well as other populist policies aimed at redistributing land for the poor. However, these plans appear to be nothing more than rhetoric. For example, despite the highest court ordering the relevant ministry to make the data on land leases (*Hak Guna Usaha*, HGU) publicly available in 2017, the government has not only failed to do so but has also maintained inaccessibility of the data in the name of protecting national interests. Most of these land leases are for large-scale plantations owned by state-owned and private companies with close corporate ties to Suharto.

Given that the on-the-ground boundaries of HGU are often unclear, the protection of data is a means for companies to continue plundering resources using state access.

This comprises part of what Widodo describes as bad governance and acute corruption problems hindering the expansion of capital. However, the technocratic terms used in defining the problem conceal the underlying structures that make the reproduction of disorder possible. This leads not only to an escalation of agrarian conflict, which marginalises landless farmers and the poor in general, but also provides a fertile ground for the reproduction of non-state violence.

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