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LEVERAGING THE LEVIATHAN: POLITICS OF IMPUNITY AND THE RISE OF  
VIGILANTISM IN DEMOCRATIC INDONESIA

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SANA JAFFREY

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For my grandparents,  
Nanna, Baba, Daadi and Daada.

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## Abstract

This dissertation explains the puzzling rise of vigilante violence in democratic Indonesia, despite relative success in management of larger security threats. It asks why states that are effective in stemming the tide of violence from terror groups and ethnic insurgents nevertheless display ambivalence towards daily acts of mob violence by ordinary citizens? Unlike prevailing theories that emphasize dissatisfaction with law enforcement as a motivation for citizens to take the law into their own hands, my research locates the causes of vigilantism in factors that allow citizens to get away with it.

While public dissatisfaction with the law and its enforcement can motivate citizens to engage in vigilantism, their ability to do so is constrained by fears of legal prosecution and revenge attacks from the victims. I argue that endemic levels of vigilantism are only possible when vigilantes can find a credible way of reducing the uncertainty about the consequences of engaging in vigilantism; and act with a reasonable assurance of impunity.

My research shows that vigilantism becomes endemic when street-level police officers can provide vigilantes impunity by withholding legal proceedings and thwarting revenge attacks from the victims' side. Impunity provided by street-level police is *selective* and based on assessments about the risk of potential escalation of violence. Impunity is also *revocable*, as protection offered to the vigilantes may be retrospectively withdrawn if it leads to a public scandal or poses the risk of escalation into communal violence.

The central claim of this dissertation is that impunity for vigilantism is generated as the result of state's dependence on coercive functions of civil society: states allow latitude for extra-legal violence against local threats, in order to seek society's cooperation in combating national menaces. Existing scholarship describes violence or its absence as a consequence of

interaction between formal and informal sources of coercion. My research builds on these studies by examining how parallel realms of order and disorder are produced when grassroots civil society structures are mobilized to complement the state's coercive power.

Civic structures such as neighborhood associations and ethnic councils have long served as a way for the state to organize society and make it legible for purposes of control. My research shows that when faced with threats from insurgents, dissidents and terrorists, states also draw on these structures for fine-grained surveillance, electoral control and provision of manpower for security patrols. Over time, this reliance turns into institutional dependence as a) the state's access to society is mediated through civic leaders and; b) the state's own coercive apparatus is built around the expectation of predictable support from them.

Within this context of institutional dependence, two changes generate impunity for vigilantism: a) loss of state's political control over civic structures and; b) expansion of the state's formal coercive apparatus. In authoritarian settings, compliance with coercive tasks is sought through high levels of political control over the leadership of these grassroots structures. When political liberalization diminishes this control, states manage the legacy of dependence by expanding the presence of their formal coercive apparatus.

At the micro level, these changes incentivize street-level bureaucrats to provide selective impunity for extra-legal violence as a way to earn the goodwill of civic leaders that is necessary for performing high priority tasks. Instead of responding to community needs by enforcing the law, street-level bureaucrats help them break it. At the macro-level, this selective enforcement of the law by street-level bureaucrats cumulatively creates security trade-offs for the state: it has to allow society latitude for violence against local offenders, in order to keep its support for combating national threats.

I identify three mechanisms through which expansion of the state's coercive apparatus in a context of dependence can generate impunity: a) atomization of the interaction between state and society incentivizes provision of private service by resource constrained street-level bureaucrats; b) increased access to a dedicated cop builds trust that is necessary for extra-legal transactions and; c) the presence of a larger police force improves credibility of impunity. Thus, I claim that vigilantism flourishes not because the state is weak, but because its strength can be leveraged by vigilantes to protect them from the risks of engaging in violence.

I support my theoretical claims by examining the history of Indonesia's dependence on the coercive functions of neighborhood associations and the impact of this institutional legacy on the levels and forms of violence that have emerged since the *Reformasi*. The empirical analysis weaves together quantitative data on sub-national patterns of vigilantism in Indonesia with qualitative evidence collected during 14 months of fieldwork. For quantitative analysis, I draw on the National Violence Monitoring System (NVMS) dataset that I collected during my previous professional experience in Indonesia. This dataset has recorded over 240,000 incidents of violence across the country, including more than 33,000 cases of vigilantism, between 1998 and 2014. Analysis of this fine-grained data shows that in line with my predictions, the rapid expansion of formal police presence in Indonesia is associated with higher levels of vigilantism. It also indicates the presence of a threshold of violence that is enforced by the state. My qualitative data draws from fieldwork across 13 districts in Indonesia, where I conducted case-studies of 20 specific incidents of vigilantism. In the process I collected court documents and interviewed 186 perpetrators and victims of vigilantism, along with local law enforcement officials and community leaders. These qualitative sources provide deep insight into the fears that govern vigilantes' conduct and the concerns that shape the response of state agents.

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from home and for helping me decode the nuances of Indonesian politics with his encyclopedic knowledge of history. This dissertation marks the end of our second project together. I am thrilled to see what comes next.

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## **Part 1: Puzzles and Arguments**

# 1. Introduction

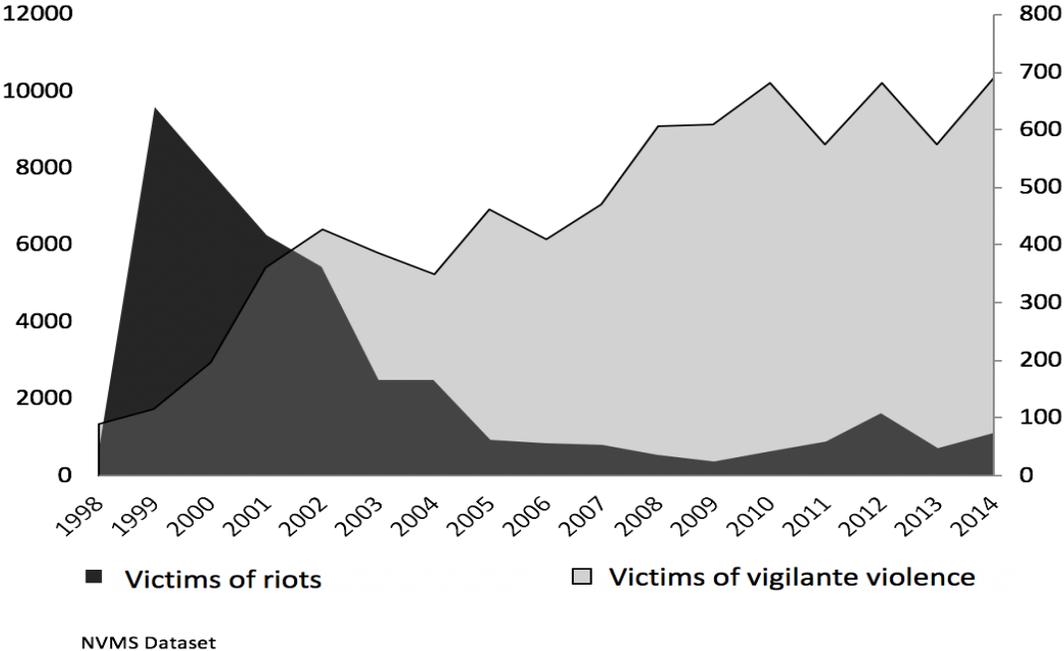
## 1.1 Puzzling realms of order and disorder

When I first arrived in Indonesia during the summer of 2008, the popular mood was unmistakably buoyant. The economy had recovered from a near-total collapse during the Asian Financial Crisis. After 32 years of authoritarian rule, a directly elected president was about to complete his first term in office. Political elites had navigated the contentious process of constitutional change more or less amicably. Ambitious decentralization reforms meant that for the first time, people were free to choose their local representatives whether it be a neighborhood chief, village head or the district regent. Most notably, the risky decision to separate an independent civilian police force from the military seemed to be paying off. A combination of peace deals and security measures had successfully terminated the communal and separatist violence that swept across the country during the early years of its democratic transition. Terrorist organizations that appeared on the scene with several high-profile attacks were dealt with swiftly. All in all, Indonesia was widely touted as an exemplary model of democratization and post-conflict recovery.

It was at this optimistic turn in Indonesia's political journey that I had the opportunity to observe the subtle but critical shifts in patterns of violence that would soon alter such a positive outlook. I was hired by the World Bank to lead the National Violence Monitoring System (NVMS) database project. The Indonesian government had commissioned the data in order to assess the efficacy of its conflict-management efforts and identify any trouble spots that may require specialized policy attention. After months of instrument testing, coder training and logistical preparation, when the data finally began flowing it, it was at once reassuring and

troubling. The data confirmed Indonesia’s remarkable recovery from a turbulent transition. There was a dramatic decline in riots and clashes between religious and ethnic groups. Despite the presence of several extremist networks in the country only a few isolated incidents of terrorism were recorded. Crime levels were comparable to other developing countries, but the incidence of violent crime was much lower. Puzzlingly, however, this political stability and improvements in the security environment corresponded with an alarming rise in a more quotidian kind of violence: vigilante mob attacks on suspected thieves, witches, social deviants, and an assortment of other alleged offenders (Figure 1.1).<sup>1</sup> The data recorded 33,262 victims of vigilante violence across 16 provinces that represent only half of Indonesia’s population, representing a 50% rise in vigilante violence over a decade.

**Figure 1.1 Shifting patterns of violence in democratic Indonesia**



<sup>1</sup> Left axis corresponds with victims of communal riots while the right axis depicts victims of vigilantism. Data from six provinces that experienced high levels of communal violence during the transition: Maluku, North Maluku, Central Sulawesi, Aceh, Papua and West Papua.

More perplexing than the incoming data was the widespread public acceptance of vigilantism as a legitimate response to crime. During the coding training sessions, I noticed that incidents involving lynching of thieves were yielding strange numbers. Discussions with my young, urban, college-educated team of coders revealed that several of them had been coding as ‘victims’ the individuals whose possessions were stolen, not the thief who was lynched by a mob. Although the coders were eventually persuaded to adhere to the coding scheme that defined victim as an individual subjected to physical violence, this was preceded by much reluctance.

Some coders pointed out that newspapers, which constituted the main source of the data, also used the word ‘*korban*’ (victim) to refer to the person who was the target of the theft. In contrast, the lynched individuals were referred to as ‘*pelaku*’ (perpetrator of the crime). Others were of the opinion that we should not even code cases of lynching where the offender had been caught red-handed because punishment for proven crimes cannot be called ‘violence’. In their minds, labeling the incident as violence implied that the citizen mob did something wrong when the actual crime was committed by the thief. They concluded that it was ‘*wajar*’ (fair) for the people to use force in order to stop a crime in their own ‘*wilayah*’ (area). As long as there is evidence to prove guilt afterwards, “even the police can be persuaded to let it go.”<sup>2</sup>

Discussions with government bureaucrats involved in the data collection effort revealed a deep-seated ambivalence towards vigilantism. They viewed these kinds of incidents as regrettable but at the same time, understandable. People were dissatisfied with the government’s ability to address their concerns and were sometimes ‘*terpaksa*’ (compelled) to take the law into their own hands. The people’s response was described in emotional terms: they were ‘*marah*’ (angry), ‘*gelisah*’ (agitated) and ‘*resah*’ (anxious). Even so, these officials were surprised by the

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<sup>2</sup> Author’s notes, NVMS Coding Training, LP3ES, Jakarta, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

high number of incidents and victims. Poring over the data, they expressed disapproval over some of the more brutal cases where accused offenders were torched alive or mutilated in full public view. Incidents involving unsanctioned vigilante attacks on prostitution hubs were dubbed reasonable, while similar raids on unlicensed places of worship were described as “*anarkis*” (anarchic).

Any concern generated by the incoming numbers on vigilantism was quickly overshadowed by apprehension about how this category of violence should be classified and whether it should even be included in a government-backed dataset at all. I was reminded repeatedly that the government’s primary concern was preventing terrorism and social conflict, defined as violence between tribes, religious communities, racial groups or other identity-based associations (SARA- *Suku Agama Ras dan Antar Golongan*). Vigilantism simply did not fit these categories of concern. Government officials were also uneasy about placing vigilantism under the violent crime tab in the database. The Indonesian criminal code forbids citizens from taking the law into their hands (*eigenrichting*). Vigilantes can be, and occasionally have been charged with rioting, an offense that carries a maximum sentence of 12 years in prison. However, some contended that things were often not as straight forward. After all, citizens share equal responsibility with the “*aparat*” (state apparatus) for maintaining law and order. Labelling all citizen efforts as crime would be inappropriate because such determinations have to be made on a case-by-case basis. One official described this distinction succinctly: “Of course, it [vigilantism] is illegal, but it is not always criminal.”<sup>3</sup> After many inconclusive discussions, we decided to leave vigilantism as a stand-alone category in the database, along-side violent crime, communal clashes, electoral violence so that users could lump or separate them as they saw fit.

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<sup>3</sup> Author’s notes, Technical Coordination Meeting, KemenkoKesra, Jakarta, January 11<sup>th</sup> 2012

By the time data collection concluded in 2015, vigilantism had grown to become the single largest category of collective violence in Indonesia. In fact, this awkward phenomenon that no one was quite able to classify, is now far deadlier than the terrorism and ‘social conflict’ incidents that had been feared by policy-makers. Moreover, targets of mob attacks are no longer limited to an unlucky thief or an alleged sorcerer in the countryside. Vigilantism has rapidly expanded to punish a host of social, religious and political ‘offenses’ in Indonesia’s major urban centers. The ambivalence towards vigilantism that was once expressed in private by government officials, is now articulated as a matter of policy. Senior bureaucrats publicly vacillate between issuing stern warnings to vigilantes and praising them as a “national asset.”<sup>4</sup> Law-makers accommodate vigilante demands by passing discriminating legislation against the most vulnerable groups in society<sup>5</sup>—all the while insisting that Indonesia is a “state based on laws.”<sup>6</sup> These developments represent extraordinary change within the span of a decade: vigilantism has evolved from a way for citizens to occasionally bypass the state, into a routine form of violence that is rapidly altering state policies and their enforcement.

This dissertation explains the puzzling rise of vigilantism in developing democracies like Indonesia. It asks: Why states that can stem the tide of violence from terror groups and insurgents, nevertheless display ambivalence towards daily acts of mob violence by ordinary citizens? Two related questions guide this study. First, like many developing countries, communities in Indonesia have long relied on informal justice mechanisms to cope with the

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<sup>4</sup> Hantoro, Juli. “Menteri Gamawan Pastikan FPI Ormas.” *Tempo*, July 25, 2013.

<https://nasional.tempo.co/read/499697/menteri-gamawan-pastikan-fpi-ormas>.

“Mendagri: FPI Adalah Aset Bangsa.” *KOMPAS.Com*. Accessed November 20, 2013.

<http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2013/10/24/1757390/Mendagri.FPI.adalah.Aset.Bangsa>.

<sup>5</sup> “Kejagung Usul Aturan Perzinaan Termuat Di RUU KUHP - News Liputan6.Com.” *Liputan6*, September 8, 2015. <http://news.liputan6.com/read/2312037/kejagung-usul-aturan-perzinaan-termuat-di-ruu-kuhp>.

<sup>6</sup> “LGBT Dalam Perspektif Hukum Di Indonesia.” *Republika Online*, February 26, 2016. <http://republika.co.id/berita/jurnalisme-warga/wacana/16/02/29/o3a5s0388-lgbt-dalam-perspektif-hukum-di-indonesia>.

inadequacies of the formal criminal justice system. What explains the more frequent use of collective violence in these informal processes? Second, historically, popular justice in Indonesia has been associated with specific offenses, most notably sorcery and petty theft. Over the past decade however, vigilantism has been used to punish new moral and ideological offenses such as homosexuality, adultery and even blasphemy. What explains this rapid expansion of punishable transgressions?

Unlike prevailing theories that identify state weakness and dissatisfactory law-enforcement as motivations for citizens to take the law into their own hands, my research locates the causes of vigilantism in factors that allow citizens to get away with it. First, this study specifies constraints on the use of collective violence to punish alleged offenders, even in communities that wish to circumvent the inadequacies of the formal justice system. Specifically, it is argued that the risk of legal reprisals or violent counter-attacks by the victims' families act as constraints on communities' ability to engage in vigilantism, prompting them instead to either tolerate an offense or employ non-violent forms of informal justice to address it. Second, this dissertation proposes a theory of impunity to explain how vigilantism becomes more likely when these constraints are eased due to a combination of historical legacies and contemporary pressures on state-building. I argue that in states like Indonesia that have a history of dependence on civil society for repressive functions, expansion of the state's coercive presence incentivizes street-level cops to provide impunity for vigilantism in exchange for communities' help in combating existential security threats. Drawing on a combination of quantitative and qualitative evidence from Indonesia, I show that vigilantism flourishes not because the state is weak, but because its strength can be leveraged by vigilantes to protect them from the risks of engaging in violence.

This chapter begins by introducing the concept of vigilantism as a template of coercion that can be replicated to address a range of threats to social, moral and political order. In particular, I identify three unique features of vigilantism that amplify its political impact. Second, I lay out the argument of this dissertation in brief to explain why vigilante violence is increasingly used to punish a wide range of offenses. The research design of this study is presented in the fourth section, followed by a plan for the rest of the dissertation.

## **1.2 Why study vigilantism?**

### 1.2.1 A global template of coercion

The rise and entrenchment of vigilante violence in political life is not unique to Indonesia. Exponents of vigilantism are taking center stage in much of the developing world—most noticeably in the aftermath of protracted political battles. Following a decline in Hindu-Muslim riots, self-appointed cow protection groups have lynched hundreds of Muslims and low-caste Hindus on the mere suspicion of consuming beef<sup>7</sup> and lynch mobs have killed scores following rumors about child-kidnapping<sup>8</sup>. A lull in electoral clashes between secular-religious parties in Bangladesh, has given way to mob attacks on atheist intellectuals. This trend is mirrored in neighboring Pakistan where pacification operations in northern areas correspond with high incidence of lynching of accused blasphemers<sup>9</sup>. Upon the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa, vigilante attacks against Nigerian and Somali migrants accused of running criminal rings have become routine.<sup>10</sup> Nigeria’s protracted struggle against Boko Haram is being fought by

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<sup>7</sup> Human Rights Watch. “India: ‘Cow Protection’ Spurs Vigilante Violence,” April 27, 2017. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/04/27/india-cow-protection-spurs-vigilante-violence>.

<sup>8</sup> Goel, Vindu, Suhasini Raj, and Priyadarshini Ravichandran. “How WhatsApp Leads Mobs to Murder in India.” The New York Times, July 18, 2018, sec. Technology. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/07/18/technology/whatsapp-india-killings.html>

<sup>9</sup> Amnesty International. “‘As Good as Dead’: The Impact of the Blasphemy Laws in Pakistan,” December 21, 2016. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/document/?indexNumber=asa33%2f5136%2f2016&language=en>.

<sup>10</sup> Abdi, Cawo. “Xenophobia and Its Discontents in South Africa.” *Al Jazeera*, June 13, 2013. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/06/201361895126526626.html>.

citizen-organized defense units who lynch neighbors sympathetic to extremist ideology,<sup>11</sup> just as vigilantes in Mexico are leading the war against some of the most dangerous drug cartels in the world.<sup>12</sup> Even within Southeast Asia vigilantism is on the rise. Spurred on by a populist president, death squads target drug peddlers in the Philippines amid efforts to deescalate separatist conflicts.<sup>13</sup>

These prominent cases of vigilantism, explicitly linked with issues of war, civil strife, populism, elections, and communal conflict, have generated much interest among scholars of political violence. In studying these cases, scholars have focused much more on the incentives governing the *organizations* behind the violence, analyzing them either as agents of specific interest groups (Jaffrelot 2017; Riaz 2008; I. D. Wilson 2006) or; as informal armed actors that play a strategic role in ongoing conflicts (Davis and Pereira 2003; Reno 2007; Jaffrelot and Gayer 2010; Staniland 2015). Little attention has been paid to the much more prevalent and routine variety of vigilantism that undergirds these politically salient manifestations. In the following chapters, data collected for this study will establish the enormous human toll of everyday vigilantism in Indonesia. But first, let us consider the significance of this kind of violence in other, relatively well studied cases.

The vigilante movement against blasphemy and beef-eaters may be new in South Asia, but the tradition of mob punishment is not. And while there is no doubt that *organizations* involved in the recent wave of cow vigilantism are linked to the political dominance of right-wing like the BJP, it is only part of the story. Within the context of rising Hindutva populism, it

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<sup>11</sup> ICG. “Double-Edged Sword: Vigilantes in African Counter-Insurgencies,” September 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Grillo, Ioan. “Mexican Vigilantes Beat Back Ruthless Knights Templar Cartel.” *Time*, January 29, 2014. <http://time.com/5755/mexico-vigilantes-knights-templar-cartel-michoacan/>.

<sup>13</sup> Taub, Amanda. “How Countries Like the Philippines Fall Into Vigilante Violence,” November 9, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/12/world/asia/the-philippines-rodriigo-duterte-vigilante-violence.html>.

is important to note that *acts* of vigilante violence are concentrated in areas where other forms of vigilantism are already rife.<sup>14</sup> In Pakistan and Bangladesh, frequent attacks on alleged atheists and blasphemers need to be studied against the backdrop of rapidly rising honor killings<sup>15</sup> and child lynching<sup>16</sup> that are far more pervasive and deadlier. Similarly, vigilante organizations' involvement in xenophobic campaigns, Islamist insurgency and drug wars across Africa and Latin America must be juxtaposed with the rapid spread of vigilante violence against petty criminals and social deviants, mostly perpetrated by ordinary citizens (Goldstein 2004; Adamu 2008; Santamaria Balmaceda 2015; Smith 2019). Even in historic cases such as the United States, racially motivated lynching of African Americans in the post-bellum period was preceded by widespread vigilantism, practiced against alleged robbers, rapists and other outlaws (Brown 1975; Rushdy 2012).

Indeed, there are observational differences between politically-linked vigilantism and its more quotidian forms. The former is oriented towards specific policy objectives and the violence is usually perpetrated by actors who are members of sustained organizations. In contrast, the latter often lacks organizational cohesion or ideological consistency as it involves punishment of a wide variety of local transgressions by citizens, who may not be formally affiliated with any particular group. Despite these variations in scale, targets, actors and motivations, the basic

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<sup>14</sup> Consider the worst-affected states by cow vigilantism. In Haryana and UP informal institutions like *khap panchayat* have been doling out violent punishment for transgressions against rigid social and caste hierarchies for decades (Rao 2009; Berger 2017; Siddique 2013). The rise of mob attacks against suspected beef-eaters in Jharkand has taken place against the backdrop of a brutal vigilante campaign against suspected scorers that has resulted in the lynching of hundreds of women over the past decade (Dey 2017) Finally, West Bengal is a non-BJP-ruled state, has a long and violent history of mob violence against suspected dissidents of communist rule (Ghosh 2015).

<sup>15</sup> "Pakistan Is 'Mainstreaming' Misogynist Tribal Justice." *The Economist*, October 13, 2017. <https://www.economist.com/asia/2017/10/13/pakistan-is-mainstreaming-misogynist-tribal-justice>.

<sup>16</sup> Uttom, Stephan. "Mob Lynchings of Children Spark Outrage in Bangladesh." *UCA News*. Accessed February 7, 2019. <https://www.ucanews.com/news/mob-lynchings-of-children-spark-outrage-in-bangladesh/74037>.

*template* is the same: collective use of extra-legal violence by private citizens to respond to actual or perceived transgressions of established legal or social norms.<sup>17</sup>

### 1.2.2 Political dimensions of vigilantism

This dissertation examines the institutional settings that facilitate the rapid production and reproduction of this template of coercion by multiple actors against a wide variety of targets. It focuses on the *act* of vigilantism as a unit of analysis, rather than the actor. It conceptualizes vigilantism as a collective form of extra-legal violence that is woefully understudied in mainstream political science. Finally, instead of pre-selecting a politically salient sub-set of vigilantisms, it contends that vigilantism is inherently and manifestly political in all its forms. The impact of individual incidents of vigilantism may not be as salient as that of a riot or an insurgent ambush. Cumulatively, however, widespread vigilantism exhibits three properties that amplify its impact and necessitate its study as a form of political violence.

First, because vigilantism is deeply rooted in the idea of popular sovereignty, it is accorded a level of social legitimacy that makes it a highly *scalable* form of violence. Under normal circumstances, the state exercises sovereignty on behalf of its citizens to provide public order. This involves articulating collectively acceptable boundaries of behavior through a formal legal code and its enforcement through legitimized use of force. When vigilantes take the law into their own hands, they intercept the state's authority by claiming to exercise direct sovereignty. In doing so, vigilantes: a) claim jurisdiction over a particular territory; b) classify an act as offensive, c) judge the guilt of an offender d) determine and exercise the adequate level of violence as punishment.

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<sup>17</sup> This definition of vigilantism is consistent with concepts used by other scholars (Rosenbaum and Sederberg 1976; Johnston 1996; Abrahams 1998; Moncada 2017).

The discursive and behavioral infrastructure produced by every-day vigilantism renders this template of coercion replicable at a much larger scale. The collective experience of violent adjudication along with the rituals and language that gradually build around acts of vigilantism, endow the act with broad legitimacy. Instead of being viewed as a legal violation or a challenge to the state, vigilantism finds resonance as a regrettable but necessary correction to an ineffectual system by righteous citizens. Populist leaders or instrumentalist politicians who define their agenda in opposition to “public enemies” can draw on this infrastructure and shift the popular attention from local transgressors to national foes, giving rise to more organized and explicitly political vigilante movements that we see rising across India and the Philippines.

Second, vigilantes’ selective focus on transgressions and their use of spectacular violence make them highly *efficient*. Large-scale violence such as riots and communal clashes establish dominance through the collective elimination or displacement of a rival group. These confrontational tactics are costly both in terms of mobilization and the possibility of repressive response from state authorities. In contrast, vigilantes can achieve the same result by regulating behavior of their rivals through frequent and spectacular punishment of individual infractions. By targeting specific offenses rather than the ascriptive identities of a rival, vigilantes demarcate boundaries of acceptable behavior. The public spectacle created by lynching, through the use of gruesome violence in front of a cheering crowd, communicates the dire consequences of non-compliance (Wood 2011). The use of discriminate violence against individuals rather than entire groups, creates the expectation that potential targets can avoid violent sanction if they accept vigilantes’ domination and adjust their behavior accordingly. Thus, far from being a weapon of the weak, vigilantism is increasingly being used by majoritarian groups to consolidate local power.

The Indian case is particularly useful for demonstrating vigilantism's efficiency in soliciting a large degree of compliance with relatively small amount of violence. During past communal riots, Hindu mobs attacked entire Muslim neighborhoods in order to drive out their residents. In the most recent string of cow vigilantism, however, mob violence has been used more selectively against Muslim individuals who are accused (often falsely) of offending Hindu sensibilities by consuming beef. As horrific videos of the victims' ordeal surfaced on the social media, Muslim meat traders shut down their businesses in anticipation of violence, presumably removing the need for further violence against them.<sup>18</sup>

Third, the moral claims advanced by vigilantes to further their cause can make their actions *transformative*. Unlike anarchists that dispute the state's authority or insurgents that seek to usurp it, vigilantes pursue their goals by bending the state to their will. Individual acts of vigilantism have limited, often local impact. For example, a neighborhood known for punishing homosexuality and gambling, may drive away potential violators from that particular area. But, when vigilantism becomes routinized and widespread, it cumulatively serves as an expression of critical citizenship that asserts popular sovereignty over the state (Smith 2019). By appealing to 'shared' norms and demanding 'justice' for their violation, vigilantes demand a broader enforcement of their political or social vision.

Two kinds of transformations can be brought about through this form of violent lobbying. One involves harsher enforcement of existing laws by the state. This appears to be the case in South Africa, where widespread vigilantism against criminal suspects led to the reversal of restrictions on the use of violent force by the police and due process for detainees (N. Phillips

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<sup>18</sup> Bureau. "Yogi Adityanath's Uttar Pradesh: Meat Traders, Butchers Feel the Heat, Shut Slaughterhouses in Panic." *India Today*, March 21, 2017. <https://www.indiatoday.in/mail-today/story/uttar-pradesh-yogi-adityanath-meat-slaughterhouses-bjp-muslims-966683-2017-03-21>.

2011). Similarly, the spate of ‘religious-offense’ lynchings in Bangladesh have triggered the harsher enforcement of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Act against secular bloggers and media activists.<sup>19</sup> Another set of changes vigilantism can bring about is the expansion of the state’s purview into previously ungoverned domains. In Indonesia, this strategy has successfully nudged the state into regulation of sexual behavior and intra-religious disputes. In the wake of sustained vigilante violence against the country’s Ahmadiyah minority, national and local governments across the country have issued regulations that restrict freedom of worship for members of this beleaguered sect (ICG 2008). Planned revisions to the Indonesian penal code also criminalize LGBT relations and sex outside of marriage, potentially opening up more room for vigilante involvement in monitoring and punishing morality.<sup>20</sup>

Across the globe and within a single country, vigilantism can take many forms as it is perpetrated by a host of different actors with varying motives against a range of targets. What unifies these seemingly disparate acts are a) the collective perpetration of violence and; b) claims of punishing a specific infraction of established order. In some cases, the violence takes on communal or electoral dimensions due to the affiliation of the perpetrators or the victims. In the vast majority of cases, however, the affiliation of the perpetrators is rather unremarkable and the issues at stake are quite mundane such as theft, honor and morality. This dissertation studies vigilantism in all its forms by focusing on the *act* as a template of coercion rather than specific actors, their motives or affiliations. It does so in cognition of the tremendous human toll exacted by vigilantism but also in view of the scalability, efficiency and transformative nature of

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<sup>19</sup> Amnesty International. “Caught between fear and repression: Attacks on freedom of expression in Bangladesh,” January 5, 2017.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/document/?indexNumber=asa13%2f6114%2f2017&language=en>

<sup>20</sup> Knight, Kyle. “Criminalizing Indonesia’s LGBT People Won’t Protect Them.” Human Rights Watch, February 14, 2018. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/02/14/criminalizing-indonesias-lgbt-people-wont-protect-them>.

vigilantism that render it into a powerful coercive force at par with other forms of political violence.

### **1.3 Explaining the rise of a new coercive force**

This dissertation seeks to explain the emergence of vigilantism as a powerful coercive force across developing countries like Indonesia. Why is this form of collective violence increasingly being used to regulate local order? Why has it become rife in states that have demonstrated the capacity for managing much larger and more severe challenges to their authority? I answer these questions by first describing the fears that constrain citizens from engaging in vigilante violence, and then explaining the factors that enable them to overcome these fears and perpetrate vigilantism with impunity.

#### **1.3.1 Motivations and constraints that shape vigilantism**

Most of the existing literature describes vigilantism as a spontaneous act of violence by enraged citizens, who are frustrated with inadequate provision of order by the state. Weak state capacity, discriminatory policing, high levels of insecurity, and perceived leniency of the law are just some of the factors that can motivate ordinary citizens to secure themselves by finding alternatives to the formal justice system (Rosenbaum and Sederberg 1976; Abrahams 1998; Goldstein 2004; Godoy 2006; Welsh 2008; Bateson 2013; Auyero, Bourgois, and Schepers-Hughes 2015; Smith 2019). A shared belief in the deterrence value of violent punishment can also prompt frustrated citizens to want to take the law into their own hands and respond to perceived offenses with vigilantism.

Despite these motivations and inclination for violence, citizens' ability to engage in vigilantism is constrained by the fear of two consequences. First, vigilantes fear legal prosecution. Unlike inter-personal violence that may be committed in private, vigilantism is a

public act that is usually witnessed by a large number of people. As such, the identity of the vigilantes is known and there is a possibility that victims' families may be able to file legal charges against them. The risk of legal prosecution is especially relevant in reasonably well functioning states that have the infrastructure to investigate and punish acts of collective violence. Second, vigilantes fear the possibility of revenge from the victims' relatives, who may mobilize for a counter-attack to punish them. The likelihood of revenge attacks is high in diverse societies that have a history of ethno-communal violence and where small disputes between members of rival ethnic groups can serve as precipitating events for larger confrontations.

Given these risks of engaging in vigilantism, most disgruntled citizens who seek to bypass the state routinely pursue non-violent forms of informal justice. These measures may take the form of mediation led by traditional leaders or family elders. It may also take the form of social sanctions that are coercive but not physically violent, such as shaming rituals, social boycott or even the excommunication or eviction of an accused offender.

When vigilante violence is used by communities, it is preceded by a deliberative process, in which community leaders play an important role in assessing the risks attached with lynching a particular victim. The purpose of this process is to reduce the uncertainty about the possible future consequences of their actions: does the identity of the victim suggest that his family may be influential enough to file legal charges? Can his co-ethnics launch a counter-attack? Can someone offer protection if they do?

The presence of this deliberative process to reduce uncertainty about the consequences, debunks the widely held idea that vigilantism is a spontaneous act of violence by a mob of citizens, whose exasperation with the legal system has made them blind with rage. Brimming public frustration with formal law-enforcement can result in sporadic acts of collective rage.

However, I claim that endemic levels of vigilante violence are only possible when vigilantes can find a credible way of reducing the uncertainty about the consequences of engaging in vigilantism; and act with a reasonable assurance of impunity.

### 1.3.2 A theory of selective impunity for extra-legal violence

I argue that vigilantism becomes endemic when street-level cops can provide vigilantes impunity against the consequences of engaging in violence. They protect vigilantes in two ways. First, they can use their discretion to prevent legal proceedings, either by intervening in the investigative process or by dissuading the victims' families from filing charges. Second, they can draw on the state's formal coercive capacity to thwart revenge attacks from the victims' side. Impunity provided by street-level police is *selective* and contingent on larger considerations of order as well as their own career prospects: Is this lynching going to generate a public outcry? Will my superior officer get in trouble for inaction? Is the victims' family influential? What are the chances this will escalate into a revenge attack? If it does can we stop it? Impunity is also *revocable*. Protection offered to the vigilantes may be retrospectively withdrawn if the victim's family turns out to be more well-connected than previously thought or if the risk of large-scale conflict between vigilantes and the victim's side becomes higher.

The central claim of this dissertation is that impunity for vigilantism is generated as the result of state's dependence on coercive functions of civil society: states have to allow society latitude for using extra-legal violence against local threats, in order to seek its cooperation in combating national menaces. Existing scholarship that explains violence (or its absence) as a consequence of interaction between formal and informal sources of coercion can be classified into three categories. One set of studies explains how uncivil groups such as militias, paramilitaries and warlords emerge as a substitute to the state and provide order under anarchy

(Reno 1999; Bates 2008). A second, more recent set of studies contend that these uncivil groups, whose primary task is coercion, can also complement the state's coercive capacity and help combat threats from insurgents and foreign invaders (Mazzei 2009; Ahram 2011; Carey, Colaresi, and Mitchell 2012; Staniland 2015; Driscoll 2015). A third set of studies explains how civil society organizations, such as neighborhood associations, professional civic associations and ethnic councils can substitute for state's provision of order and stop spirals of ethnic violence either through inter-ethnic cooperation (Varshney 2002) or intra-group policing (Fearon and Laitin 1996; Tajima 2014b).

My research builds on this scholarship by examining how parallel realms of order and disorder are produced when grassroots civil society structures complement the state's capacity by performing a range of coercive functions (Table 1.1). Civic structures such as neighborhood associations and tribal/ethnic councils have long served as a way for the state to organize society and make it legible for purposes of control (Kurasawa 1988; Scott 1998; Read 2012; Kurasawa 2013; Tomba 2014). This dissertation shows that when faced with existential security threats from insurgents, dissidents and terrorists, states also draw on these structures for fine-grained surveillance, electoral control, in-group policing and even provision of manpower for security patrols. Over time, this reliance turns into institutional dependence as a) the state's access to society is mediated through the leaders of these civic structures and b) the state's own coercive apparatus is built around the expectation of predictable and standardized forms of support from them.

**Table 1.1 Violence as a function of interaction between formal and informal sources of order**

<b>Relationship with the state</b>		
	<b>Substitute</b>	<b>Complement</b>
<b>Un civil Organizations</b> Warlords, militias, paramilitaries, gangs	<b>Order Under Anarchy</b> Reno 1999; Bates 2008	<b>Insurgency and inter-state war</b> Mazzei 2009; Ahran 2011; Carey, Colaresi, and Mitchell 2012; Staniland 2015; Driscoll 2015
<b>Actor</b>		
<b>Civil Organizations</b> Neighborhood associations, professional associations, ethnic/tribal councils	<b>Preventing spirals of ethnic violence</b> Fearon and Laitin 1996; Varshney 2002; Tajima 2014	Proposed theory of vigilantism

Within this context of institutional dependence, two changes generate impunity for vigilantism: a) loss of state’s political control over civic structures and; b) expansion of the state’s formal coercive apparatus to compensate for diminishing political control. In authoritarian settings, compliance with coercive tasks is sought through high levels of political control over the leadership of these grassroots structures. Even though the leaders tend to be elected by the communities they represent, they are subject to screening by state officials and can be dismissed for noncooperation. This allows states to maintain a repressive hold on society efficiently, with relatively light formal presence. Democratic transitions or political liberalization diminish the state’s ability to regulate coercive support from civil society by exercising political control over its leadership. This change means that while the state is no longer able to *regulate* these structures, it still needs their *cooperation* for security management.

States manage this legacy of dependence, by expanding the presence of their formal coercive apparatus to compensate for diminishing political control over civic structures. At the micro level, these changes incentivize selective law-enforcement by street-level bureaucrats.

When a low-ranking member of the state's rapidly expanding police force arrives at his post, he finds himself beholden to an old system that now requires him to earn the cooperation of local community leaders for crowd control, fine-grained surveillance and even operational funds for daily needs. In this setting, street-level police officers selectively provide impunity for extra-legal violence as a way to earn the goodwill of civic leaders that is necessary for performing high priority tasks.

At the macro-level, this selective enforcement of the law by street-level bureaucrats cumulatively creates security trade-offs for the state: it has to allow society latitude for violence against local threats, in order to keep its support for combating major security threats. The degree of latitude is determined by micro-level interactions between the street-level police and communities that is based on concerns about public scandals and the risk of escalation. The two sides read each other's changing constraints on a regular basis and adjust the boundaries of impunity, through trial and error. These quotidian interactions add up to a threshold of disorder that is acceptable to the state, beyond which it is likely to punish perpetrators of vigilantism.

I identify three mechanisms through which expansion of the state's coercive apparatus in a context of dependence can generate impunity. First, the atomization of interaction between state's security officials and communities creates incentives for provision of impunity as a private service. A single street-level officer alone cannot improve the police's overall public service delivery to earn the goodwill of the community he serves. Instead, he has incentives to demonstrate his responsiveness to community needs by helping them get away with violence as a private service. Second, improved community access to local cops allow for the trust-building that is necessary for its members to be able to act on the expectation of impunity, given that it is offered selectively and can be revoked retrospectively. Finally increase in the ground presence of

street-level cops improves the credibility of impunity as it demonstrates the police's ability to successfully repel large-scale revenge attacks against vigilantes.

My proposed causal explanation of impunity for vigilantism differs from existing explanations that attribute selective law enforcement to state's apathy/disinterest (Slater and Kim 2015; Kleinfeld and Barham 2018). I claim that far from being disinterested, the state cares very much about vigilantism because such incidents carry the possibility of escalation into larger forms of violence. As such, it actively calibrates the provision of impunity to make sure that the violence does not escalate beyond a particular threshold.

My theory also differs from electoral theories of selective enforcement (Wilkinson 2006; Holland 2017) as it attributes latitude for violence to institutional imperatives that outlast transient political gains by individual politicians. I claim that selective enforcement of the law against vigilantes is being driven by the configuration of the state's coercive capacity, not by the configuration of the vote bank. This is different from electoral logics for selective enforcement in two ways. Electoral explanations imply a transactional logic for selective enforcement: a decision for selective enforcement is made in exchange for a particular outcome in the near future, e.g. intervening in riots against minorities in order to get minority vote share. Selective enforcement due to institutional imperatives is governed by a relational logic: the local cop is interested in building long term social capital without necessarily knowing when it may come in handy. Moreover, electoral theory of selective intervention assumes that elected political elites exercise full agency over security forces, who can be ordered to intervene or stand down during collective violence. As such this theory only applies to those states where the control over the police is decentralized. Institutional imperatives for tolerating violence can exist in both

centralized and de-centralized settings as they concern the structure of the state and not the interests of those who govern it.

### 1.3.3 Side-effects of state-rebuilding in Indonesia

The state in Indonesia has been the subject of intense debate, in part because of its baffling contradictions. On the one hand it is a woefully incompetent entity, fragmented by competing interests and weakened by endemic corruption. On the other hand, the state in Indonesia can, at times, overcome these deficiencies and coalesce into a powerful leviathan to tame formidable challengers. Scholars of Indonesian politics have long examined how these contradictions have shaped the country's experience with violence through the various phases of its political development.

The present contradictions of the Indonesian state can be traced back to its foundation in 1965, which was laid upon the fear of a common communist enemy that was ultimately annihilated. The need to manage the communist threat gave Suharto immense power to extract and organize support for building strong state institutions. However, the gradual decline of this threat made the regime insecure, prompting a shift from institution-building to institution balancing to forestall the emergence of a strong challenger (Slater 2010b). One of the most notable consequences of institutional balancing in Indonesia is the mobilization of society for coercive purposes to counterbalance the military and the police. Apart from mobilizing *uncivil* organizations such as militias and gangs to harass political opponents (Cribb 2000; H. G. C. S. Nordholt 2002; Ryter 2002), the regime systematically deployed the far more ubiquitous neighborhood associations for a host of coercive functions in accordance with evolving security needs (Kurasawa 2013). Initially, these grassroots bodies were tasked with mass surveillance to detect and report communists and political dissidents (Sullivan 1986). Following the New

Order's electoral turn, the support of neighborhood leaders ensured respectable victory margins for the regime-backed *Golkar* party (Antlov 1995). When the threat of communism began to fade, these civic structures were mobilized for eliminating the supposed threat from a criminal contagion (Barker 1998).

Extensive and deliberate use of civil society for security functions and their regulation through political control over its leadership, enabled the New Order state to meet its major security goals and maintain the image of an omnipresent force in society (Anderson 1983). On the ground, however, the substitution of institution-building with informal practices also made the state weak for several reasons. First, the state had little legitimacy in society and its access to citizens was mediated through middle-men like neighborhood leaders and village heads, whose job it was to placate the state enough to keep it out of people's lives (Sullivan 1992; Barker 2009). Second, while reliance on informal means of coercion complemented the formal coercive apparatus, it also deformed them to a point where they could not function without societal support (Tanter 1990). The consequence of these contradictions was that while the New Order state was able to instill fear in opponents through grassroots monitoring and periodic bouts of repression, it did not build a system that could outlast this fear.

Unsurprisingly then, the end of the regime in 1998 also brought about the collapse of the state—with deadly consequences. The rapid unraveling of New Order-era security bodies ended the state's political control over neighborhood organizations, even though its dependence on their coercive functions remained largely intact. Making matters worse, the formal coercive apparatus of the state was also in disarray after the splitting of the police from the ranks of the military. Democratic reform further constrained the state's ability to use repression for

maintaining order in the way it was accustomed to under authoritarian rule, resulting in multiple insurgencies, communal wars and terrorist attacks (Tajima 2014b).

To many long-term observers of Indonesian politics, the chaos of the transition signaled a bleak outlook for Indonesia and even disintegration (Emmerson 2000). Beating these expectations, however, the Indonesian state has been able to manage these formidable security challenges. Deadly communal wars have been terminated through a combination of security operations and government brokered deals. After much violence, the civil war in Aceh also ended with a comprehensive peace agreement. The threat of terrorist attacks that were once becoming increasingly frequent, has also been contained. Despite this remarkable success, everyday acts of vigilante violence remain rife across the country and appear to be slowly chipping away at the state's authority.

I contribute to the scholarship on the Indonesian state by examining the process of state re-building in Indonesia after the transition, its inherent contradictions and side-effects. I claim that reform of the security apparatus has followed the same trajectory as other sectors: retention of old regime elements yielded quick benefits but have prevented deeper reform (Aspinall 2010). In contrast to existing scholarship that describes the informal sources of coercion in Indonesia as a substitute for the state, I draw on the history of neighborhood organizations in Indonesia to show how society's coercive functions have served as an indispensable complement to the state's coercive functions.

Early democratic reforms initially ended the nationally mandated role of neighborhood associations in security management, but they have since been redeployed to combat new threats from communal violence and terrorism. Despite their redeployment, seeking compliance from its leaders has become difficult in the absence of New-Order era political controls. Instead of

overcoming dependence on neighborhood associations through a security sector overhaul, democratic governments have responded to new threats by superimposing the expansion of a semi-reformed police force on top of this New Order legacy. Increased police presence in democratic Indonesia has made it possible to seek compliance from neighborhood leaders for coercive tasks. However, the lack of deeper police reform has prevented the state from improving the public service delivery of the police in exchange for this cooperation (Jacqui Baker 2013; Muradi 2014). In this context, the increasing number of street-level cops are obliged to seek communities' cooperation for coercive tasks through the private provision of impunity for vigilantism.

#### **1.4 Research design**

My theory of impunity for vigilantism makes three broad claims. First, it predicts that in the context of institutional dependence on civil society for coercive tasks, expansion of the state's formal presence should lead to higher levels of vigilantism. Second, it predicts the presence of an acceptable threshold of violence beyond which vigilantism would no longer be tolerated by the state. Finally, I claim that the mechanisms that link state expansion and impunity of violence are based on every-day interaction between communities and street-level cops and that the boundaries of vigilantism are established through trial and error.

I undertake this task of testing these theoretical claims by drawing on a sub-national research design within a single country, Indonesia. Vigilantism is essentially a relational concept as it assumes a certain composition of the law and state authority that vigilantes seek to arrogate. Observing patterns of vigilantism within one overarching legal and institutional framework makes it possible to control for the contingent property of this concept. More practically, both quantitative classification of vigilantism and qualitative research into specific cases, required

language skills and professional networks that are difficult to build across multiple places. Focusing my efforts on a single case, allowed me to gain access to community-level actors involved in vigilantism and understand the broader moral and cultural universe within which they operate.

The choice of a sub-national research design in Indonesia is driven by three considerations. First, as explained in the preceding pages, Indonesia has a long history of dependence on the coercive functions of neighborhood associations and nature of this dependence has gone through several shifts over the years. Second, the upward trend of vigilantism in Indonesia is representative of other cases as documented in the preceding pages. But, the magnitude of violence is higher relative to some of the most well theorized cases, presumably due to data quality issues. Perhaps the best-known data on lynching come from the United States, where for a long time, African Americans were the target of brutal racial violence. In the United States, a total of 4,742 deaths were recorded as a consequence of lynching between 1882 and 1968 (Equal Justice Initiative 2015). In Indonesia, half of the country registered 1,605 deaths from lynching in just 10 years (2005-2014). Adjusting for population and duration, modern day Indonesian fatalities from lynching are 3 times higher than lynching deaths in the American South. Another set of figures are available from post-war Guatemala, where a total of 421 lynching incidents were recorded between 1996 and 2001 (Godoy 2006; Bateson 2013). Using a similar definition as the one used in Guatemala, and after standardizing duration and population, the lynching incident rate in Indonesia is twice as high.<sup>21</sup> In Brazil, a country of similar size but vastly different levels of insecurity, a total of 365 incidents of lynching were recorded in 2018, compared to 4,306 incidents recorded in all of Indonesia in 2014. Finally,

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<sup>21</sup>In this case, lynching is defined as “incidents of physical violence committed by large numbers of people against one or two individuals accused of having committed a crime”

limited data available from India in 2017 records 9 deaths from mob attacks on suspected child kidnappers<sup>22</sup> and another 13 fatalities from cow vigilantism<sup>23</sup>, while Indonesia recorded a total of 303 deaths from lynching in 2014.<sup>24</sup>

Second, Indonesia exhibits a mix of features that make it an ideal case for testing my theory against rival explanations. On the one hand, it presents an empirical challenge to those theories from Latin America and Africa that explain vigilantism as a consequence of state collapse, intense insecurity due to high homicide rates and the need to combat powerful drug cartels. Vigilantism is rife in Indonesia despite the absence of these crises. On the other hand, Indonesia classifies as a ‘positive’ case for theories that locate the causes of vigilantism in public dissatisfaction with state’s provision of order due to ineffectual law-enforcement, legacy of civil conflict and liberalization of the law following a democratic transition. As in most developing countries, the performance of law enforcement agencies in Indonesia leaves much to be desired. Human rights legislation has significantly constrained the use of force by the police, creating the popular perception that the law has become too lenient for criminals. Ethno-communal violence and insurgencies during the early years of Indonesia’s transition have also heightened citizens’ sense of insecurity. Like other developing countries, Indonesia has also experienced the spread of misinformation on social media that is now commonly linked to mob attacks.

In the presence of these national-level factors that have long been identified as drivers of vigilantism, the data show that there is much temporal and spatial variation in the incidence of

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<sup>22</sup> Saldanha, Alison, Pranav Rajput, and Jay Hazare. “Child-Lifting Rumours: 33 Killed In 69 Mob Attacks Since Jan 2017. Before That Only 1 Attack In 2012.” IndiaSpend, July 9, 2018. <https://www.indiaspend.com/child-lifting-rumours-33-killed-in-69-mob-attacks-since-jan-2017-before-that-only-1-attack-in-2012-2012/>.

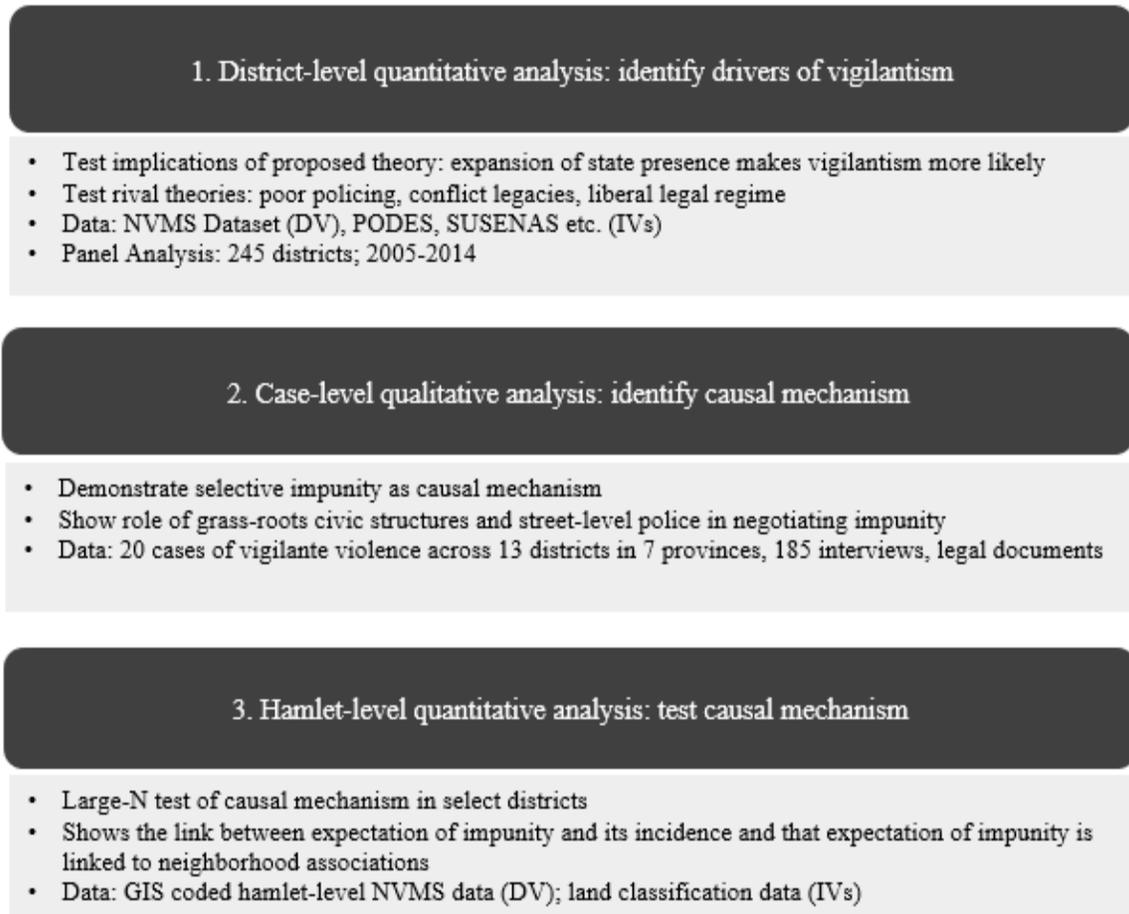
<sup>23</sup> “IndiaSpend | Hate-Crime Database.” Accessed February 8, 2019. <https://lynch.factchecker.in/#>.

<sup>24</sup> The data from Brazil and India is not as comprehensive as the one available in Indonesia both in terms of the scope of data that is collected and the amount of source material that is used. However, these comparisons highlight the need to collect comparable data on all kinds of vigilantism, not just those forms that gain political salience or have communal dimensions.

vigilante violence within Indonesia. This suggests two possibilities. One is that the patterns of vigilantism are being driven by corresponding local-level variation in quality of law enforcement, conflict-driven insecurity, perceived leniency of the law or exposure to misinformation. Alternatively, in line with my claims, these motivations are a necessary but ultimately not sufficient condition for vigilantism. Instead, in the presence of various motivations for vigilantism, violence is made possible by factors that generate impunity for vigilantes.

I assess these competing claims by developing a multi-level empirical strategy that weaves together quantitative and qualitative data (Figure 1.2). First, I test the broad implications of my theory of impunity against motivation-based theories, by analyzing patterns of vigilante violence at the district-level in Indonesia, over a ten-year period. The results, presented in Chapter 5, show that as per my predictions, the incidence of vigilante violence is positively associated with a rapid expansion of police presence in Indonesia. The data also show that contrary to the implication of motivation-based theories, vigilantism is more common in economically developed areas and less likely in areas with a legacy of armed conflict. Finally, the analysis reveals that formulation of harsher laws and their more stringent enforcement leads to more vigilantism.

**Figure 1.2 Research design**



At the second stage of analysis, I draw on case-level qualitative evidence to demonstrate that impunity is the causal mechanism that links vigilantism and high coercive presence of the state. Specific cases of vigilante violence are analyzed to show how anticipation of impunity played a role in authorization of violence by local elites. Evidence is presented from cases where vigilantes were not punished by the state as well as those in which they were prosecuted. This comparison demonstrates the broader considerations of order that determine the limits of impunity. Finally, the qualitative evidence shows the role of grassroot civic structures, especially neighborhood associations, in negotiating impunity from street-level policemen. At the third stage, I analyze hamlet-level quantitative data from a select sample of cities to show that insights

about the causal process obtained from case-level analysis apply at a much larger scale. Specifically, the analysis shows that incidence of violence is linked to the expectation of impunity, which is based on observed behavior of surrounding communities in the presence of local police. The case studies and hamlet-level analysis are presented in Chapter 6.

#### 1.4.1 Quantitative data

Quantitative data on the main dependent variables—incidents and impact of vigilante violence—is available from the National Violence Monitoring System (NVMS) database that I led at the World Bank in Indonesia.<sup>25</sup> It contains event-level data on incidence and impact of violence in Indonesia between 1998 and 2014. With a total of 239,586 individual incidents, coded for over 30 unique variables, the NVMS dataset is the world’s largest violence event dataset for any single country. Due to funding constraints and source material availability, the spatial and temporal coverage of the dataset is uneven (Appendix 1). The complete data is available between 2005 and 2014 from 16 provinces that comprise half of Indonesia’s population, representing all major islands and ethnic groups. Most of the analysis in this study draws on this complete portion of the dataset.

Incidents of vigilantism in the NVMS dataset were identified based on the definition adopted in this study: the *collective use of extra-legal violence by private citizens to respond to actual or perceived transgressions of established legal or social norms*. Based on this definition the dataset can be used to calculate frequency of incidents, resulting deaths and injuries from

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<sup>25</sup> The author led the implementation of the NVMS dataset between 2008 and 2013. The methodology was developed in collaboration with Patrick Barron and Ashutosh Varshney (Brown University). The NVMS dataset is a continuation of the Violent Conflict in Indonesia Study (ViCIS) dataset compiled by the World Bank between 2008-2011 through cooperation with Indonesia’s National Planning Agency (Bappenas), USAID-Serasi project and Ausaid. Under the ViCIS project, base-line data was collected from 16 provinces in Indonesia from 1998-2009. In Jan 2012 the ViCIS methodology was adopted by the Coordinating Ministry for People’s Welfare, Government of Indonesia (Kemenkokesra) to continue data collection on an ongoing basis under the National Violence Monitoring System (NVMS) program.

vigilantism. In addition to the NVMS data, alternative measures of vigilantism are available from the Village Potential Survey (PODES) Dataset compiled by the Indonesian government, every three years. In every iteration of the survey between 2005 and 2014, village heads are asked to report whether their residents have taken any collective measures to improve security in the area. These measures include establishment of a community security post, community patrols, appointment of voluntary guards and mandatory registration of visitors.

Data on explanatory variables has been collected from several publicly available sources. The number of villages with a dedicated police posts, recorded in the PODES dataset, are used to calculate changes in the levels of police presence 1998 to present. Apart from this, the PODES data contains indicators on perceptions of crime and self-reported level of communal conflict. Combined with the NVMS data on riots and clashes, these indicators serve as a measure of general insecurity. Measures of police intervention in violence are also available from the NVMS dataset. Data on socio-economic indicators such as education, poverty and inequality are obtained from the National Socio-Economic Survey (SUSENAS), conducted by the Indonesian government on an annual basis. Data on the enforcement of special morality laws in Aceh are available from the Aceh Syar'iah Court. Neighborhood-level maps of land classification according to residential status has been obtained from district/city governments. Miscellaneous district-level statistics on crime and judicial clearance have been compiled from the almanac series (*Dalam Angka*), published by the statistics bureau of respective provincial and district governments.

#### 1.4.2 Qualitative data

Analysis of the NVMS dataset established patterns of vigilante violence and helped identify the factors that drive them. However, due to the 'event' focus of the data, it was not

clear how vigilantism unfolded as part of the process of informal justice that has other, non-violent alternatives. The data also shows that a vast majority of vigilante violence incidents are perpetrated by ‘residents’ of an area but very little additional information can be gleaned about their socio-economic or political background. Furthermore, while the data confirmed my theoretical claim that high levels of vigilantism in Indonesia are associated with an expansion of local police presence, the causal mechanism linking these factors needed to be established. The qualitative data for this study was collected in order to answer these critical questions.

I conducted three rounds of fieldwork in 13 districts across Indonesia, for a total of 14 months between 2015 and 2017.<sup>26</sup> During this time, I conducted a total of 186 semi-structured interviews and compiled case-studies of 20 specific incidents of vigilantism. The initial phases of research sought to understand how the security landscape in Indonesia has changed since the democratic transition and the role of different actors in (mis)management of local order. To this end, I conducted elite-level interviews with politicians, district government officials, police chiefs, members of civilian policing groups and militia leaders in four districts with varying levels of insecurity.<sup>27</sup>

This initial phase of research generated two critical insights. One is that while militias and informal security groups routinely collect protection money from residents and businesses in areas where they operate, they do not help with crime control. Payments demanded by these groups are mostly extortive in the sense that to the person making them, it brings few benefits but denying them can result in harassment by the group. Second, Indonesia’s overall policing strategy is undergoing a transition. On the one hand, police officials continue to be dependent on civil society leaders to maintain order in their areas. On the other hand, the democratization

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<sup>26</sup> June-September 2014; September-December 2015; and February-September 2017

<sup>27</sup> Manado, Surabaya, Central Lombok and Medan

process has made these organizations including neighborhood associations, student forums, religious organizations and ethnic councils increasingly assertive vis a vis demands by state authorities. As a result, a number of efforts are underway to increase direct police presence across the country and cultivate new grassroots civic contacts that can be commanded more directly by state agencies.

The final phase of research was used to collect detailed information about 20 specific cases of vigilantism (Appendix 4). Most of these cases were selected from the NVMS dataset, based on a number of considerations. First, I sought to analyze cases in districts that exhibit varying levels of vigilante violence and a range of socio-economic characteristics. Second, the selection represented incidents that target a variety of alleged offenses, involving different types of actors and had different outcomes in terms of consequences for the vigilantes. Third, a mix of old and new incidents were selected, which allowed for observation of long-term impact of violence on the communities as well as their immediate reactions. Across these different kinds of variations, my goal was to look for the presence of *common* mechanisms, without which violence would not have been possible. Finally, during the process of data collection, I also came across several ‘near misses’ cases that were not recorded in the NVMS dataset because even though suspects were apprehended by communities, physical violence was prevented.

In order to compile case studies, I visited the communities where these incidents had taken place and conducted semi-structured interviews with victims and perpetrators of vigilante violence along with street-level law-enforcement officials, neighborhood and village officials, community leaders, journalists and legal rights activists. Documents related to non-violent forms of informal arbitration were collected along with legal records from cases where perpetrators of vigilante violence were prosecuted. These sources provide a deep insight into the fears that

govern vigilantes' decisions to engage in extra-legal violence and the concerns about improving community relations that shape the response of state officials. They provide empirical support for my proposed causal mechanism by showing how vigilantes seek protection from local state agents in order to mitigate risks of reprisals. Moreover, the qualitative case-studies reveal the critical role played by neighborhood association chiefs and village/hamlet heads in negotiating impunity for vigilantism with local police officials.

#### 1.4.3 Observations from the data collection process

The quantitative and qualitative data, described above, has been collected to support the theoretical claims of this study. Observations from the process of data collection also shaped the theoretical framework. First, the NVMS data collection process revealed a deep-seated ambivalence towards vigilantism. This suggested that vigilantes would be concerned about the possibility of negative public opinion and/or social sanction instead of expecting unequivocal support. The ambivalence displayed by my coding team and government counterparts was confirmed at a much wider scale during the fieldwork. Most informants discussed an incident of vigilantism by first condemning it, mostly in perfunctory terms. But their tone became more sympathetic as they described their community's frustration with crime or moral decline, cited lack of help from the police and emphasized the guilt of the victim.

Interviews with community leaders and law-enforcement officials also helped me understand the criteria that are used by the public to judge an act of vigilantism: profile of the victim, affiliation of the vigilantes and the level of violence used. As a rule, I found that the act of collective beating (*keroyokan*) was more widely acceptable as a form of punishment, even if it led to death. In contrast, burning of the body or parading the victims naked was criticized as excessive and 'inhumane'. Vigilante raids conducted by ideologically driven organizations were

considered less acceptable, even compared to brutal lynchings perpetrated by ordinary residents within their neighborhoods. Similarly, ethnic or class proxies were routinely used to assess the guilt of a victim. The lynching of a tattooed migrant from a crime infested region generated little protest but incidents where a middle-class individual was ‘mistaken’ for a thief was generally bemoaned as an act of anarchy (*anarkis*) in the mass media.

Second, analyzing newspaper reports for collecting the NVMS dataset made me aware of the discrepancy between the way incidents of vigilante violence are discussed in the public domain and the way they actually unfold. Across all of the 174 newspapers that were used to collect the violence data, incidents of vigilantism were reported in a standard format. The mob is usually identified in terms of their residential affiliation: ‘citizens of’ (*warga*) a particular village, hamlet or even a specific ward/neighborhood. Details of the victim are described in a manner that confirms his guilt: shabby clothing, tattoos, possession of a knife or a T-key for stealing bikes and place of origin if the victim is a migrant. The alleged offense is reported in some detail based on statements of eyewitnesses. The actual violence is reported only briefly to say whether the victim died on the spot, was in near-dead condition (*sekarat*) or beaten black and blue (*babak belur*). Reporters also mention the level of violence: beating, mutilation or a burning or burying alive etc. However, the process of mob gathering and ensuing violence is always explicitly described as occurring spontaneously (*secara spontan*), without being led (*tanpa komando*).

Despite this narrative of as indignant citizens’ instant reaction to wrongdoing that has been popularized by mainstream media, my field research showed that these incidents, especially the fatal ones, are rarely spontaneous. In cases where the victim of vigilante violence is known to the perpetrators, for example a neighbor accused of homosexuality, the violence is preceded by

protracted surveillance, accusations, gossip mongering and mobilization of support from influential community members. In incidents involving a stranger, the victim is searched and interrogated in the presence of community leaders before a lynching commences. Countless videos of deadly lynchings found on social media platforms, as well as court documents collected for this study, show that this kind of violence is performed over the duration of a few hours, not minutes. Furthermore, contrary to the way these incidents are depicted in newspapers, vigilantism does not always represent an act of solidarity between ‘citizens’ of a particular neighborhood. Instead, vigilantism is often a deeply divisive act that generates much discomfort and disagreement between community members who think violence is justified, and those who think it is risky or excessive.

Third, the process of approaching individuals for interviews and posing questions about specific incidents taught me that vigilantes are deeply afraid of possible repercussions for their actions. My previous fieldwork experience in Indonesia was related to a study of communal riots. During this research, most informants, even ex-combatants, had been open to discussing their role in the conflicts. Approaching this topic, I expected the same. In fact, I had assumed that people would be even more keen to talk about their involvement, given the righteousness and social legitimacy associated with vigilantism. But, I learned that the mention of a specific case of lynching in their area made informants anxious. They were first surprised that a stranger knew such an intimate fact about their community and then worried about why a local matter was of any interest to me. During the first few visits, I was detained and interrogated at length by community leaders who sought to verify my identity and intentions. Some feared I may be sent by a human rights group or worse, an intelligence agency to investigate their involvement in the incident.

These early experiences led to a change in my approach. Instead of mentioning the specific incident that I already had on my list, I began asking broader questions about the general law and order conditions in an area and the challenges faced by residents. However, most informants brought up the incident themselves at about an hour into our conversation, making way for me to follow up with more questions. Towards the end of the interviews, some respondents wanted to verify my identity again, realizing that they might have shared something too personal. I also learned that for several informants, especially the victim's families, the interview was the first time they had spoken about their loved ones in a long time as the topic was not encouraged by the community.

Finally, the experience of doing research in multiple locations gave me the opportunity to observe the organization of authority in small neighborhoods and the state-society interactions within these hierarchies. Unlike ethnographic studies in which researchers earn the trust of a community by staying in one place for a long time, my focus on investigating specific cases meant navigating power structures across multiple neighborhoods in different villages and hamlets. Initially, I tried to organize appointments through students or research assistants who were residents of nearby areas. This approach failed for two reasons. One, was that the narration of my project's description by a third person made community leaders nervous. By the time I arrived at a site, the news about my 'agenda' had spread far and wide, which created in equal parts hostility and fear in the community. The other serious problem was that it hindered my ability to select informants and appropriate settings for interviews. Advance notice of my arrival made the interaction very formal. Community officials often pre-arranged gatherings with multiple law-enforcement officers, victims and perpetrators in the same room, which was highly problematic.

Under these circumstances, I decided to adopt a go-show strategy to meet with officials and community members in pre-selected urban and rural neighborhoods. However, geography of residential areas in Indonesia is such that one cannot wander in without having to explain one's business. In densely populated areas, passing through narrow lanes usually involves being greeted by groups of women gathered in each other's yards or young men who are 'hanging out' (*nongkerong*) at the community's security post. In some rural areas, barrier gates and handy-talkies are used to monitor visitors, especially at night. In upper-class neighborhoods, this function is performed by uniformed guards. I learned how to navigate local hierarchies with the help of a colleague, who has extensive experience in administering opinion surveys. Armed with official letters, I first approached the district or sub-district police stations to introduce myself. Following this, I went to meet the village or hamlet chief at his office, or home. From there on I approached the village-level police officer (*Bhabimkantibmas*), the relevant ward chief (*Ketua RW*), neighborhood chief (*Ketua RT*), and residents. After an initial meeting at their homes or offices, many informants were also willing to talk in more informal settings outside their neighborhoods, usually over dinner or coffee at a restaurant.

This experience of visiting communities as an unannounced stranger proved highly valuable for understanding the dual role of the neighborhood system (RT/RW) in mediating the residents' access to the state and vice versa. A meeting with the RT/RW chiefs and village heads in a new location was also necessary for understanding local hierarchies which varied greatly from one place to another. Moving through this system did not require written permission but it was necessary for maintaining credibility. In the absence of a common friend or a contact, a resident would most likely refuse an interview unless I had familiarized the neighborhood chief with my business beforehand. The neighborhood chief was more likely to receive me if I had

already tried to meet the ward chief and the police chief and the village/hamlet chief etc. Following these unwritten rules reassured the informants about my credibility as a researcher. It also allowed the officials to monitor my activities. Even in the more remote, rural parts of the country, my movement was closely watched. Often, I would arrive to meet someone, only to learn that the person was already expecting me after being informed of my visit by another informant I had been visiting before. In particular, information traveled fast between village-level police and neighborhood officials. I also had the opportunity to observe the informal interaction between these officials as it was not common for one to show up while I was meeting with the other. Village-level policemen who were well-liked had a greater access to the residents and were usually invited to social and religious gatherings in the neighborhood. Stand-offish local cops and their superior officers stationed at a district or sub-district office were less involved and visited only sporadically.

### **1.5 The plan**

The plan of this dissertation follows the flow of the argument and empirical strategy described in the preceding pages. Chapter 2 examines how the fear of consequences constrains communities' ability to respond to perceived threats with vigilante violence. It reviews dominant theories of vigilantism that explain it as the consequence of factors that motivates citizens to take the law into their own hands. Comparative evidence shows that while motivations are necessary, they are not sufficient for explaining vigilante violence because vigilantes are constrained by two risks: the threat of revenge by the victims' families and the possibility of legal prosecution. It challenges the popular depiction of vigilantism as the spontaneous reaction of an enraged mob and describes informal justice as a deliberative process with a range of violent and non-violent outcomes. In this process, communities' shared understanding of the risks associated with

vigilantism shape their views about when vigilantism can be used to respond to a threat and when non-violent alternatives are preferable. Finally, it calls for a new theory of vigilantism that accounts for factors that allow vigilantes to overcome the fears that constrain them and make violence more likely.

Chapter 3 examines the factors that generate impunity for vigilantism. When states are dependent on civil society for combating existential threats, they initially regulate compliance with coercive tasks through political control. A simultaneous decline in this political control over civil society leaders and the expansion of the state's formal coercive presence can generate security trade-offs for street-level state agents. In order to earn communities' cooperation in fighting national menaces, street-level cops have to allow latitude for violence against local threats. The confluence of dependence on civic structures and state expansion produce impunity through three mechanisms: atomization of interaction between state and society privatizes provision of security, increase access to local cops builds trust necessary for extra-legal arrangements and; increased state presence improves the credibility of impunity. I argue that the selective nature of impunity for vigilantism and the institutional imperatives that generate it, set it apart from theories that emphasize the role of apathy and electoral logics in collective violence. Finally, the empirical implications of the theory are presented.

Chapter 4 examines the evolution of Indonesia's dependence on the coercive functions of neighborhood associations for security management. First set up as a wartime institution by the Japanese, the state's relationship with these grassroots civic structures has gone through several changes over the last seven decades. High levels of political control over the leadership of neighborhood associations enabled the New Order state to regulate compliance from these structures for mass surveillance, electoral intimidation and crowd control—even as the state's

formal presence in society remained low. During the democratic transition, dependence on security functions of these associations remained intact as the state needed their cooperation for managing new threats from terrorism and communal conflict. However, the mechanisms of political control over them collapsed, diminishing the state's ability to seek their compliance with essential coercive tasks. Since then, successive democratically elected governments in Indonesia have sought to reactivate the coercive functions of neighborhood associations' by expanding the presence of formal police within communities. But, in the absence of political control over their leaders, street-level policemen seek their cooperation by providing extra-legal solutions, one of which is impunity for vigilantism.

Chapter 5 tests the predictions of my theory against the implications of motivation-based explanations of vigilantism along with alternative explanations of collective violence. It presents panel analysis of data on vigilante violence from 245 districts across Indonesia, between 2005 and 2014. The analysis provides support for my claims and shows that the rapid expansion of formal police presence is associated with higher levels of vigilantism. Furthermore, the data shows that vigilantism is positively associated with higher levels of socio-economic development and harsher enforcement of the formal legal code by state authorities. Finally, the analysis indicates the presence of a threshold of violence that is enforced by the state, beyond which impunity is no longer possible and consequently, vigilantism becomes less likely.

Chapter 6 provides two types of evidence to show that the mechanism that links high levels of police presence in Indonesia with the rise in vigilantism, is impunity. I draw on case-level qualitative evidence to show how anticipation of impunity plays a part in the decision to perpetrate violence. In order to show the broader considerations of law-enforcement that govern the *selective* provision of impunity, I compare cases where vigilantes managed to get away with

ones where they were prosecuted. Finally, I test my claims about impunity on hamlet-level panel data from the Greater Jakarta Area. The analysis of 7,485 hamlet-year observations shows that the likelihood of vigilantism in a given hamlet is determined by signals of impunity, generated by vigilantism in nearby areas amid high police presence. The analysis also shows that this expectation of impunity is linked to the residential status of a neighborhood and does not travel well to commercial or other public spaces

Finally, Chapter 7 concludes by presenting the extensions and implications of my argument. First, I argue for the need to study vigilantism as a form of political violence instead of a spontaneous public reaction to fear. The emergence of vigilantism as a powerful coercive force in the developing world is often attributed to populist politics and misinformation circulated through social media platforms that stoke fear among citizens. These fears can revolve around threats from criminality, sexual deviance, heresy, blasphemy, migrants or religious minorities. This dissertation makes a case for examining the institutional infrastructure that is producing impunity for vigilantism and enabling citizens to *act* on the basis of these fears. Second, I discuss the implications of my arguments for the way we think about state-building and its benefits for public service delivery. I make a case for moving beyond discussions of state capacity in terms of levels and examine how different configurations of state capacity create incentives for the provision of security as a private instead of public service by state agents. Finally, I conclude by discussing solutions for reducing the state's dependence on coercive functions of civil society through institutional and technological interventions.

## 2. Risk in Rampage: Motivations and fears that shape vigilantism

*“You were lucky I got there with my men. That hothead told us someone is trespassing, come quickly to secure the village. We ran over thinking he had caught a thief! Turns out he was going crazy because you guys were digging up the past. But, we had to be sure first. Grabbing [gebuk] the wrong person, can lead to trouble [panjang urusanya].”*

Community Leader, Bantar Kuning Village, Cariu, West Java<sup>28</sup>

I knew something was wrong the moment we arrived. The neighborhood chief (Ketua RT), who had agreed to meet with us, was still working in the fields so we decided to wait at a small kiosk near his house. When I sought permission to sit with a group of women under the shade, they made space for me with customary politeness. In a manner atypical to Indonesia, however, no one asked me where I was from or what had brought me there. My attempts at light conversation were also rebuffed. A group of young men gathered across the street, watching us from a distance. After waiting for an hour, there was still no sign of the Ketua RT. The silence of the crowd began to make me uneasy.

The Bantar Kuning village in Cariu, West Java is situated 70 kilometers from Jakarta, but it took four hours to get there because of ongoing road repairs. I had come to learn about an incident from 2010, in which a local elderly man (BY) was lynched by other residents after being accused of using sorcery to kill a teenage girl. As recorded in the NVMS dataset, newspapers reported at the time that BY was beaten and buried alive in an empty well, from where the police retrieved his body the following morning. I selected this particular village as the first case to study for this research because I had found someone who could introduce (*antar*) me to the community. DH lived in a nearby village and was a friend of my Jakarta-based colleague, who

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<sup>28</sup> Interview # 69, Male, community leader and *pesantren* leader, Cariu, Bogor District September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017

was also accompanying me on this trip. DH had obtained permission for a research visit from the village secretary of Bantar Kuning. The night before our arrival, he sent a message saying he had also met with the deceased girl's father, who seemed willing to talk about the incident.

When the Ketua RT finally returned in the afternoon, he was surprised to see that we were still waiting. He greeted us curtly and gave us a brief description of the problems in the village: low yield on the rice crop and youth leaving to find jobs in Jakarta. When I brought up the incident, he said he did not know much about it, just that it had happened a long time ago. He did not wish to say more, and I did not press him. I asked if there were other leaders we could talk to about the daily law and order issues faced by the community. He walked us over to the house of the local religious teacher (*Ustad*), who received us warmly.

Sitting on his verandah, the *Ustad* began listing his misgivings about smart phones and moral decay of the youth. Fornication was mentioned as a major problem along with dwindling interest in Quran recitations. He also discussed efforts to keep his students in the seminary (*pesantren*) away from social media. Then, as he was recounting the time when the village was terrorized by BY's sorcery, a few young men began making rounds in front of the house. One of them, whom I recognized from the group near the kiosk, called the *Ustad* away. Upon his return, the *Ustad* informed us that we been 'called' (*dipanggil*) without saying where or by whom. His anxious manner suggested that we had no choice in the matter.

The three of us were escorted to another house nearby, where about a dozen men were waiting. The youngest among them, (NN) motioned us to sit on the floor and asked for our identity cards. He examined them quietly for a few minutes. Then, came the questions. NN wanted to know who we were and with whose permission we had come digging up 'the past.' When we answered, he demanded proof. He tossed my student credentials on the floor, claiming

anyone could print them at the town market. DH was quizzed on his address, while the details were relayed to someone over the phone. When my colleague presented copies of our co-authored books in Bahasa Indonesia to verify our identity as researchers, it did little to allay NN's concerns. Over and over again, he wanted to know who had told us about this incident and what was our 'agenda'. He was incredulous when I told him that the incident was listed in the NVMS database. He demanded to see the data on my phone, then he insisted that I show him the news, then he wanted to see the actual 'paper' because anyone can post anything online.

The interrogation lasted for a couple of hours before others in the group intervened by offering us water. In a softer tone, an elder explained that our visit could not be accepted (*terima*) because we did not follow the proper procedure in obtaining permission. We were told that the village is governed by three laws: natural law, customary law and the government's law. Seeking the village secretary's consent only satisfied the third, not the first two laws. Most importantly, they were troubled by our interest in a matter that had long been settled. They acknowledged that the lynching had taken place but claimed that as citizens they have just as much right as the police to take care of their problems. BY's killing was the result of a collective decision by the entire village. In fact, his own family was consulted and there was no conflict, one of them insisted: "Why else would the police suspend all charges?" Finally, it seemed we had come at a sensitive time. Village chief elections were to be held in a few weeks and the community did not want any conflict. The group concluded that there had been a misunderstanding and accepted our apologies. They invited us to come for a social visit another time. So, we did.

I visited Bantar Kuning for the second time after repeated requests from JJ, who had been the first to intervene in our favor. He invited us for lunch at a small school that he runs in the village. The three of us were welcomed by his family and a few people I remembered from the

previous visit. NN was not present but he called several times to ask about us. It was clear that JJ wielded much influence in the community. He apologized for the unpleasant experience and explained what had happened. The girl whose death had triggered BY's lynching was NN's sister. NN got worried when his father told him the day before our visit, that DH had come asking questions about the incident. When we showed up, he asked his men to keep an eye on us. He panicked when we met with the Ketua RT, who we learned had been known as BY's apprentice. NN was also contesting in the village head elections and thought we may be sent by a rival to investigate his role in the killing.

When I asked JJ how serious the situation was that day, he admitted that they were quite worried. NN had told them in a text message that someone had been trespassing. He asked JJ to bring his people to secure the village. They came prepared to deal with a thief but NN told them the full story once they got there. Our interest in the incident made him suspicious too. However, the questioning session convinced him that we were telling the truth. He also knew DH's village chief, who has a reputation as a local tough (*preman*). JJ and his friends did not think it wise to offend him by mistreating his resident. He stressed the importance of verifying facts before grabbing (*gebuk*) someone for punishment. Acting recklessly can be costly in terms of action from the police, revenge from families or even political rivals. In the end, I asked JJ who he thought I was during the interrogation. "I suspected some human rights lawyer or intelligence officer (*intel*) from Jakarta. NN worried someone from Sukabumi may have sent you. But, I told him: why would anyone send a foreign (*bule*) woman to deal with you?"<sup>29</sup>, he chuckled.

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<sup>29</sup> Sukabumi is a city/district in West Java, known for election betting rackets that back candidates in local races with campaign funds. They are also known to harass rivals with low-level violence and legal cases to ensure their candidate's victory.

The fear and caution exhibited by the residents of Bantar Kuning village illustrate how communities across Indonesia view vigilantism: as a risky activity. During my fieldwork, I found that despite their claims of moral indignation and righteousness, vigilantes are deeply afraid of being punished for their actions. While the post hoc fear of retribution keeps them from openly discussing their role in the violence, the ex-ante anticipation of consequences, makes vigilantes cautious of engaging in violence in the first place. Just as JJ and his men felt the need to verify my identity before responding to a resident's complaint, so do other communities in Indonesia while dealing with threats to local order.

This chapter examines how the fear of consequences constrains communities' ability to respond to perceived threats with vigilante violence. The first section reviews dominant theories of vigilantism that explain it as the consequence of factors that motivates citizens to take the law into their own hands. The second section presents comparative evidence to show that while motivations are necessary, they are not sufficient for explaining vigilante violence. Section three describes the two risks that constrain vigilantes: the threat of revenge by the victims' families and the possibility of legal prosecution. Section four challenges the popular depiction of vigilantism as the spontaneous reaction of an enraged mob and describes informal justice as a deliberative process with a range of violent and non-violent outcomes. In this process, communities' shared understanding of the risks associated with vigilantism shape their views about when vigilantism can be used to respond to a threat and when non-violent alternatives are preferable. In conclusion, I argue that despite widespread public dissatisfaction with formal law-enforcement, vigilantism can become rife only when vigilantes can find systematic ways of mitigating their fears. I call for a new theory of vigilantism that accounts for factors that allow vigilantes to overcome the fears that constrain them and make violence more likely.

## 2.1 What motivates vigilantes?

Existing scholarship explains vigilantism mostly by identifying factors that motivate citizens to bypass the state and look for informal means of security. One set of studies claim that dissatisfaction with the formal criminal justice system is what compels communities to secure their surroundings by engaging in vigilante violence (Rosenbaum and Sederberg 1974). The most prevalent version of this argument is the ‘state substitution’ hypothesis. Weak state capacity (Kaldor 2007; Bates 2008) or the uneven projection of state power across its territories create ‘brown areas’ that lie beyond the state’s coercive reach (O’Donnell 1993). In such places, citizens adopt vigilantism as a means of managing their own security. Some scholars have described ‘brown’ areas in terms of physical frontiers of the state that remain inaccessible for governance due to geographical barriers or distance (Abrahams 1998). This kind of lawlessness has been used to explain vigilantism in the American West (Allen 2009; Pfeifer 2013). Other studies have pointed to spatial variation in the state’s ability to assert its authority as a driver of vigilantism. For example, vigilantes can provide order in certain urban neighborhoods that are physically accessible but politically off-limits for state agents (Godoy 2006; Gayer 2014).

Building on this insight, some scholars have posited the ‘marginalization hypothesis’. Drawing on evidence from across Latin America, they show that more than physical absence of the state, public disillusionment is driven by discriminatory practices of law-enforcement agencies. Such discriminating policing practices are most pronounced in economically marginalized areas and they limit poor communities’ access to effective law-enforcement services (Goldstein 2004; Auyero 2007; Arias and Goldstein 2010; B. J. Phillips 2017). This gap in public service delivery can prompt poorer citizens to make up for deficient provision of order by the state, through vigilante action.

In Indonesia, this explanation of vigilantism is prevalent both in the vernacular understanding of the issue and in scholarly analysis. Particularly brutal or contentious incidents of vigilantism that catch public attention are often lamented as having occurred because ‘the state is absent’ (*negara tidak hadir*). Vigilantes themselves are first to blame biased and corrupt policing practices, claiming these conditions compel otherwise upstanding citizens to take the law in their own hands. A conversation about law-enforcement with residents of a middle-class neighborhood is unlikely to conclude without the recitation of a popular phrase: “In Indonesia, the law is a sword that is blunt [accommodating] when struck upwards [to the wealthy] but sharp [harsh] when struck downwards [to the poor].”<sup>30</sup> Moreover, perceptions of corruption are so prevalent that ordinary citizens go out of their way to avoid dealing with the formal justice system, as a matter of common sense. Ask anyone why they did not report a stolen motorbike or computer to the police and they will invariably respond with a quip about police extortion: “report [to the police] a stolen chicken and you will end up losing a goat.”<sup>31</sup>

Scholars of Indonesian politics have also linked vigilantism to absent or ineffective state institutions. Historical accounts of sporadic lynching in the countryside describe it as a method of self-defense by communities that were far removed from the reach of the Dutch Colonial authority (Dijk 2002). According to these explanations, even when police was present, it was preoccupied with protecting property of the rich or guarding the political interests of the ruling class. As such, the colonial state did not adequately address petty crime and largely left its regulation to traditional (*adat*) bodies. Over time, these conditions left citizens to fend for themselves and resulted in the incorporation of ‘self-help’ violence into local cultural and social

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<sup>30</sup> “*Hukum di Indonesia tumpul ke atas dan tajam ke bawah*” usually used to express the perceived bias of the police and courts against the economically marginalized.

<sup>31</sup> The popular expression “*Lapor polisi hilang ayam, malah hilang kambing*” is meant to suggest that the cost of dealing with the police is often higher than the value of a stolen object.

practices (Jonge 2002; Dove 2006; Wiyata 2013).<sup>32</sup> This form of state-substitution continued under the New Order regime, as uneven projection of state power shaped patterns of society's self-policing capacity. Studies have shown that the parts of Indonesia that were exposed to the presence of state security forces became reliant on formal law-enforcement, while communities in unexposed areas developed their own means of regulating local order (Tajima 2014b). Despite the projection of omnipotent power by the New Order Regime, the rise of vigilantism in democratic Indonesia has been taken by some as evidence that the regime was actually quite weak at its core (Barker 2006). Other analysts, including those affiliated with the Indonesian National Police (*Polri*), blame vigilantism on low levels of public trust in law-enforcement agencies after the *Reformasi* (Dirdjosisworo 2002; Dermawan 2013; Rompis 2015). Some studies have explored the order-creating properties of vigilante justice in the Indonesian borderlands that are physically remote and lie beyond the state's reach (Eilenberg 2011). Others yet, have described lynching and mob violence in densely populated urban centers as the "dangerous side-effect of a withdrawing state" (Bakker, Laurens 2017, 29).

A second set of scholars propose the 'insecurity hypothesis' to explain rising levels of vigilantism. They claim that rapidly rising perceptions of insecurity can force citizens to bypass the state's formal institutions and manage local order through extra-legal violence. An unusual rise in violent crime (B. Baker 2002a) or experience with civil war (Higazi 2008; Bateson 2013; LeBas 2013) can overwhelm the state's ability to provide basic order or even bring into question its neutrality. Under such circumstances, vigilantism becomes a practical way for citizens to ensure their safety. If the social conflict is drawn along ethnic lines, the losing side can also use

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<sup>32</sup> Most notably '*carok*' among the inhabitants of Madura region. It is the practice of avenging one's own honor or that of fellow clansmen, often in response to insult, dispute over women and property claims. Other similar traditions include *amok* in Malay-speaking areas, *siri na pacce* among the Bugis and *maja labo dahu* in Bima.

vigilantism to regain some of its former status. This can be seen most clearly in the systematic lynching of African-Americans in the US South, after the Civil War (Tolnay and Beck 1995; Rushdy 2012; Equal Justice Initiative 2015).

Indeed, many scholars explain the rise of vigilantism in Indonesia as a reaction to the severe insecurity and institutional uncertainty that surrounded the early years of democratic transition (Djalal 2000; Colombijn 2002; Welsh 2008). During this time, communal conflict flared across Indonesia's sparsely populated Eastern and Central regions, while civil war afflicted the Western-most province of Aceh. Several scholars studies have noted how these conflicts resulted in the formation of militias that regulated local order during the crisis but have retained the ability to mobilize for vigilante violence in peacetime (Dijk 2001; N. S. Nordholt 2002; Ryter 2002; I. D. Wilson 2006). Other studies show that vigilantism also became rife in regions like Java and Sumatera that were not gravely affected by ethno-communal conflicts and civil strife (Sidel 2001). Most notably, the lynching of hundreds of suspected sorcerers ('ninja killings') and subsequent reprisals in East Java have been attributed to the anxiety that followed Suharto's sudden exit from power (Herriman 2013, 2016).<sup>33</sup> Even in places like Lombok that did not experience widespread chaos, private crime-fighting militias (*pam swakarsa*) were formed with the explicit backing of local police and military (Tyson 2013).

A third perspective on vigilantism claims that while vigilante organizations may be formed during moments of insecurity, they last when they can evolve to fulfil political needs. The organizational capacity of vigilantes and their coercive presence in society makes them a

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<sup>33</sup> In 1999 hundreds of alleged sorcerers in the Banyuwangi district and surrounding areas were lynched by mobs wearing ninja-like masks. This triggered reprisals by the country's largest Muslim organization, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), whose affiliates were disproportionately targeted in these localized attacks. Roaming mobs apprehended and killed scores of individuals accused of being 'ninjas' before the police arrested perpetrators and the chaos finally subsided.

powerful ally for politicians who seek to limit their rivals' electoral prospects (Acemoglu, Robinson, and Santos 2013). Several studies show that when powerful vigilante groups are coopted by local politicians, they eventually turn into private armies (LeBas 2013; Higazi 2008). Thus, vigilante organizations that start out to improve the provision of order in their areas, gradually abandon their public service goals and direct their violence against political targets (Turnbull and Biberman Forthcoming).

These insights resonate with the Indonesian experience. Studies of militias in the initial democratic phase frequently noted concerns about the deployment of these organizations for political ends (Hadiz 2003; ICG 2003; Bertrand 2010). During the unrest of the transition, high-ranking military officials assembled and explicitly employed civilian vigilante groups, to counter civilian protesters that were gathered in large numbers outside government buildings. Since then, many of these organizations have evolved to pursue more explicitly political goals during tightly contested electoral races (Hamayotsu 2013; Munajat 2012; I. D. Wilson 2015; Mudhoffir 2017). Even the *pam swakarsa* have all but abandoned their crime-fighting function, engaging instead in extortion and offering muscle-for-hire in communal disputes or competitive elections (Tyson 2013; Telle 2014; Jaffrey and Fauzi 2016).

Finally, a fourth set of studies posits the 'critical citizenship hypothesis' and claim that vigilante violence is motivated by citizens' rejection of the law itself. The rise of a liberal rights regime, often brought about by democratic transitions, imposes greater restrictions on the use of repressive measures by state actors. Increased emphasis on due legal process and limitations on corporal punishment can create the perception that the state is too protective of criminals and less concerned with addressing the security needs of law-abiding citizens (Buur and Jensen 2004).

Under these circumstances, vigilantes engage in violence as a way to exercise “critical citizenship” and correct the excessive liberal bias of the formal legal system (Smith 2019).

In Indonesia, the ‘leniency’ of the law is routinely cited as a driving force behind vigilantism and is viewed as something that merits correction. Some scholars have argued that vigilante violence, especially against heterodox sects like Ahmadiyya, is driven by a long-standing belief by large sections of society that the law does not adequately reflect what they imagine as necessary conditions for belonging to Indonesia. Violence is thus a way to align the law with their idea of the nation (Menchik 2016). Law-makers are quick to refer to the threat of vigilante violence when stipulating new criminal offenses or prescribing harsher punishment for existing ones. During ongoing revisions of the Indonesian Criminal Code, the Indonesian Attorney General advocated for the insertion of sorcery as a criminal offense by arguing that “with the regulation of supernatural powers (*kekuatan gaib*), [the government] hope[s] to achieve early prevention and elimination of popular justice that is often practiced by society against those accused of sorcery.”<sup>34</sup> In a similar session, another official emphasized the need for stricter punishment for adultery because “this problem results in public anxiety that makes people take the law in their own hand, as the law does not regulate it.”<sup>35</sup> Even district and city executives justify the increasingly common promulgation of discriminative, religious by-laws by citing the need to pre-empt vigilantism (Bush 2008; Buehler 2016).<sup>36</sup>

Law-enforcement officers and perpetrators of vigilante violence are also candid in criticizing what they see as the law’s ‘new’ preoccupation with human rights. Senior police

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<sup>34</sup> Triyoga, Hardani. “Timbulkan Keresahan, Pasal Santet Diperlukan.” Detiknews, September 2015. <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-3012163/timbulkan-keresahan-pasal-santet-diperlukan>.

<sup>35</sup> Taufiqurrohman. “Kejagung Usul Aturan Perzinaan Termuat Di RUU KUHP.” Liputan6.Com, September 2015. <https://www.liputan6.com/news/read/2312037/kejagung-usul-aturan-perzinaan-termuat-di-ruu-kuhp>.

<sup>36</sup> For a prominent, recent example see: “Bima Arya: Dalam Kasus Syiah Saya Tanggung Jawab, Antisipasi Ter.” Rmol.co, October 2015. <https://rmol.co/read/2015/10/30/222678/>.

officers, who served under the New Order, explicitly blame new due process provisions for the deterioration of law and vigilantism.<sup>37</sup> One such officer expressed his frustration by explaining that “it is like having our hands tied. Even if we know that this is a dangerous criminal and we want to help the community get rid of him, we have to prepare expensive evidence for court. Back in the day we had more flexibility.”<sup>38</sup>

Ordinary community members also dispute the law. Individuals who supported vigilantism were critical of what they perceived as light sentencing for petty crimes, especially the theft of cattle or electronic devices. In their view seeking legal redress is useless because the process is inconvenient for the plaintiff and even if an offender was convicted, he would be out in a few months--free to steal again. One resident of an urban ward astutely noted the class dimensions of sentencing guidelines: “Maybe you think, ‘what is the value of this old cellphone?’ but for someone like me it is months of saving. The law says it is a light crime (*tindak pidana ringan*) but for me it is a heavy price.”<sup>39</sup> Interviewees also expressed concern that organized criminal gangs were exploiting leniency in the legal system by hiring juvenile offenders, who are subject to lighter sentencing<sup>40</sup>: “They [gangs] hire children on purpose because they get out in a few months and back to work. We also used to pity the kid if we caught one but, now we have to be strict”.<sup>41</sup> While these impressions convey popular perception of the law as lenient, the extent to which they can explain vigilante violence remains to be seen.

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<sup>37</sup> For a detailed discussion on how human rights affect police officers’ perceived ability to maintain order, see (Tajima 2014b)

<sup>38</sup> Interview # 57, Male, Retired two-star general in the Indonesian National Police and member of the National Police Commission, August 28 2017, Jakarta.

<sup>39</sup> Interview #10, Male, Resident of Tanah Baru, Northern sub-district of Bogor City, April 28 2017, Bogor City

<sup>40</sup> Law 11/2012 Regarding the Juvenile Criminal Justice System, specifies mandatory arbitration to resolve cases involving minors (under the age of 18). If arbitration fails, sentencing guidelines stipulate much lower maximum prison time for minors, usually half of what is allowed for adults. (I am grateful to Anugerah Rizki Akbari at the Jentara Law School for explaining this.)

<sup>41</sup> Interview # 75, Male, Village head in Woha sub-district of Bima District, August 7 2017, Bima District.

## 2.2 Can motivations explain vigilante violence?

Citizens' motivations for circumventing the formal criminal justice system are crucial for understanding why they resort to vigilantism. There is no doubt that public frustration, disillusionment and even anger towards law-enforcement agencies is widespread in Indonesia. The question is: can these conditions alone lead to vigilante violence? Two sets of empirical analysis suggest that motivations are not sufficient for explaining rising levels of vigilantism in developing democracies like Indonesia.

First, cross-country comparisons reveal that public dissatisfaction with the criminal justice system is also prevalent in highly developed countries that have not experienced rising levels of vigilantism. Table 2.1 presents data from the Asian Barometer Survey that shows the percentage of citizens from different countries, who reported having *any* trust in their respective law-enforcement agencies. The countries that consistently report the lowest level of trust in the police and the judiciary are among the most developed in the region. In South Korea and Taiwan, less than half of the citizens surveyed expressed any trust in the police and only about a quarter said they trust the courts. Even in Japan, a country that is consistently rated as one of the safest in the world, only half of the population trusts the law-enforcement agencies.<sup>42</sup> Despite low public trust, none of these three countries has a record of systematic vigilantism in recent history. In contrast, Indonesia where vigilantism has been a persistent problem, citizens report a significantly higher rate of trust in the police (65%) and the judiciary (50%). Also note that while vigilantism is rife in the Philippines, public trust in law-enforcement is at levels that are comparable to Taiwan, South Korea and Japan. This comparison suggests that low public trust in the criminal justice system does not necessarily produce vigilantism.

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<sup>42</sup> According to the Global Peace Index Japan has been ranked among the ten safest countries in the world along with Scandinavian countries: <http://visionofhumanity.org/indexes/global-peace-index/>

**Table 2.1 Citizen trust in the law-enforcement agencies**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Trust the Police</b>		<b>Trust the Judiciary</b>	
	<i>2006-08</i>	<i>2009-11</i>	<i>2006-08</i>	<i>2009-11</i>
South Korea	44%	50%	28%	37%
Taiwan	49%	49%	35%	33%
Philippines	50%	55%	45%	44%
Japan	52%	65%	50%	55%
Mongolia	54%	51%	37%	23%
Malaysia	60%	71%	68%	75%
Indonesia	65%	67%	56%	55%
Cambodia	66%	72%	53%	63%
Thailand	67%	60%	79%	72%
Mn China	72%	85%	77%	86%
Vietnam	90%	89%	87%	84%
Hong Kong	91%	89%	89%	90%
Singapore	91%	84%	92%	89%
<b>Average Asia Pacific</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>63%</b>

Source: Asian Barometer Wave 2 & 3, Hu Fu Center for East Asia Democratic Studies, National Taiwan University

Second, widespread approval of extra-legal punishment also does not correspond with high levels of vigilantism. It is possible that the disconnect between low trust in law-enforcement agencies and vigilantism is due to confounding factors, such as ingrained cultural practices and learned behavior. It could be that the history of citizens' experience with law-enforcement in countries like Indonesia and the Philippines has led them to conclude that the solution to inefficient policing is extra-legal violence, but this sentiment is missing in Japan and South Korea. I explore this possibility by examining responses to a specific question about extra-legal punishment in the same Asian Barometer survey. It asks respondents: Do you believe that cruel criminals should be punished without lengthy legal processes? The responses are presented in Table 2.2. The data show that in addition to reporting low trust in law-enforcement, a vast

majority of citizens in Japan and South Korea also agree with the use of extra-legal measures to punish criminals. Specifically, 77% citizens in Japan and 69% in South Korea support extra-legal punishment, compared to 71% in the Philippines and 59% in Indonesia. This shows that the level of public support for vigilantism does not automatically translate into vigilante action.

**Table 2.2 Citizen approval of extra-legal punishment (2006-08)**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
Mongolia	79%	21%
Japan	77%	23%
Philippines	71%	29%
South Korea	69%	31%
Thailand	66%	34%
Vietnam	61%	39%
Indonesia	59%	41%
Malaysia	57%	43%
Mn China	42%	58%
Taiwan	42%	58%
Singapore	37%	63%
Hong Kong	30%	70%
<b>Average Asia Pacific</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>45%</b>

Source: Asian Barometer Wave 2, Hu Fu Center for East Asia Democratic Studies, National Taiwan University

Third, temporal trends within Indonesia suggest that the rise of vigilante violence has occurred *despite* significant improvements in factors that motivate vigilantism. Indonesia has one of the lowest homicide rates in the world and levels of other violent crimes have remained more or less constant.<sup>43</sup> The insecurity of the transition subsided after ethno-communal conflicts and civil wars were terminated through a combination of security interventions and peace deals. This

<sup>43</sup> According to UNDOC data from 2016, Indonesia experienced 0.5 homicides/100,000 people, which is lower than Norway that has a rate of 0.51.

has led to a remarkable 79% reduction in annual violent deaths since 2003 (Barron, Jaffrey, and Varshney 2016, 201). The institutional uncertainty that underpinned these conflicts (J. Bertrand 2004) has also been addressed through a series of constitutional reforms related to regional autonomy and electoral rules (Horowitz 2013). Most importantly, security sector governance has resulted in the rapid expansion of the Indonesian National Police (*Polri*) force after its separation from the Armed Forces (TNI) in 1999. The Police's budget has increased ten-fold, from IDR 9,000 billion in 1998 (Muradi 2014, 70) to IDR 95,000 billion in 2018 (Amelia 2018). Moreover, the *Polri*'s force-strength has doubled from 250,000 in 1998 to over 400,000 in 2014 (Jacqui Baker 2015, 120), most of which comes from recruitment of street-level cops for community policing programs. Besides the rapid expansion of police presence, Indonesia has also experienced high economic growth that has lifted millions out of poverty. Between 1998 and 2018, the number of Indonesians living under the poverty line fell from 23% to 10% and the severity of poverty reduced from Poverty Gap Ratio of 5 to 1.4.<sup>44</sup> Presumably this downward trend alleviates the economic marginalization linked to discriminatory policing that triggers vigilantism.

Instrumental use of vigilante organizations for political purposes remains widespread in Indonesia. Over the past few years, prominent vigilante organizations such as the Islamic Defenders' Front (*Front Pembela Islam*—FPI) have emerged as major political players in mobilizing the Indonesian electorate along religious lines (Jones 2015; Fealy 2016b; Arifianto 2017). Militias affiliated with other Islamic mass organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama's Banser (*Barisan Serbaguna*) or Muhammadiyah's KOKAM (*Komando Kesiapan Angkatan Muda Muhammadiyah*) have also been intimidating critics and opponents of their leaders (Jaffrey and

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<sup>44</sup> Calculations by author based on Headcount Poverty data available from The World Bank group at <https://data.worldbank.org>

Mulyartono 2017). However, the political evolution of these organizations has not been accompanied by the use of more vigilante violence. The NVMS dataset shows that 88% of all vigilante attacks are perpetrated by ordinary citizens who do not have a clear affiliation with such groups.

Finally, contrary to perceptions of excessive law-enforcement liberalization in Indonesia, in many ways the legal system has become harsher since the democratic transition. Civilian oversight has curbed arbitrary detention and police brutality to some extent, but torture under custody and fatal encounter shooting of criminals remain rife (Pohlman 2008; Hernawan 2015). More criminal offenses with much more severe punishments have been stipulated in bills passed by democratically elected law-makers, compared to legislation passed under 32 years of authoritarian rule. In 1960, about 500 offenses were specified as criminally punishable in the penal code. The number rose to 885 by the end of the New Order in 1998. Today, more than 1,600 offenses are recorded in the main criminal code and supplementary laws.<sup>45</sup> Courts are also increasingly likely to give harsher sentences for minor offenses, citing the need for deterrence (efek jerah).<sup>46</sup> Moreover, decentralization reforms have led to the implementation of regional regulations (*perda*) that criminalize a host of moral and social offenses. The most extreme case of these regulations can be seen in the Aceh province, where the Islamic regulations (*Qanun Syariah*) stipulate stringent corporal punishments for a range of offenses that are enforced by a dedicated unit of municipal police.

Based on the prediction of motivation-based theories, these temporal changes within Indonesia should have reduced the impetus for vigilantism. Instead, we observed a rapid rise in

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<sup>45</sup> Akbari, Anugerah Rizki. *Talking Indonesia: A New Criminal Code*. Accessed March 8, 2019. <http://indonesiaatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/talking-indonesia-a-new-criminal-code/>.

<sup>46</sup> I am grateful to Rifqi Assegaf for this insight, which is based on his ongoing dissertation research at the Melbourne Law School.

vigilantism, against the backdrop of fast economic growth, a rapidly expanding police force, low levels of armed conflict and harsher criminal laws. Why is there an empirical gap in high levels of motivations for vigilantism and actual violence? I argue that we observe this discrepancy due to two basic limitations of motivation-based theories: a) they do not account for the factors that constrain vigilantism and; b) they do not consider the non-violent alternatives to vigilantism that are routinely practiced by communities who seek informal justice. The following pages fill these gaps in existing scholarship to show that vigilante violence is neither the only course of action available to disgruntled citizens, nor is it the safest.

### **2.3 What do vigilantes fear?**

Dominant accounts of vigilante violence portray it as a relatively risk-free activity, undertaken by indignant citizens who seek to maintain order. In these theories, the state is described as either too weak or simply disinterested in holding vigilantes accountable for their actions. Moreover, vigilantes appear to find safety in numbers and their moral claims about asserting popular sovereignty shield them from any social or legal backlash. Contrary to these assumptions, however, vigilantes in Indonesia are deeply afraid of two possible repercussions.

#### 2.3.1 Revenge from victims

First, vigilantes face the risk of revenge from their victims' relatives. Distinguishing themselves from ordinary murderers and rioters who defy the law for personal or political gain, vigilantes insist that they use violence for the common good. Consensus is emphasized as the legitimate basis for violence, which includes the support of victims' own families. As such, acts of vigilantism are depicted as the solemn execution of the collective will. In reality, these incidents are highly contentious. The guilt of the victim is disputed, need for violent punishment questioned and the purity of vigilantes' motives in doubt. In cases where the victim of

vigilantism is a community insider, perpetrators point to a history of bad behavior that could no longer be tolerated. Families of the victims maintain vastly different accounts of the violence, blaming old rivalries with neighbors that first led to slander (*fitnah*) and eventually the attack. These disputes about facts and guilt create lasting conflicts within tightly knit communities. Even in Bantar Kuning, where leaders insisted that BY's family had agreed with the lynching, his widow has been ostracized and his children have since left the village.

Multiple versions of events also exist in cases where the victim is an outsider. Perpetrators' accounts of lynching usually revolve around the victims' offense and the evidence against him. Body tattoos are described as a sign of gang membership, possession of a T-key as proof of motorbike theft and attempts to escape as the confirmation of guilt. Vigilantes describe the victim as an intruding stranger, and themselves as defenders of their territory (*wilayah*). Victims' families, on the other hand contend that the victim had a previous link to the area: a lover, in-laws, friends or customers. They insist that he was known to the people who killed him and are often left wondering whether the violence was motivated by personal conflict or ethnic rivalry.

Apart from this contention surrounding guilt and motives, the risk of revenge from the victim's side is heightened by the fact that the identity of the perpetrators is widely known. Unlike inter-personal violence that may take place in private, vigilanteism is essentially a public act. In fact, vigilantes go to great lengths to publicize their actions, ostensibly to create deterrence against future transgressions. Members of the crowd are witnesses to the violence and word spreads quickly within small communities. Video clips of the lynching are posted on social media platforms, showing both the brutality of the violence and sometimes the identity of perpetrators.

The risk of revenge from the victims' side was present in varying degrees across all the 20 cases that were studied in detail for this research. In some cases, it took the form of an imminent counter attack. In 2017, a young man was beaten to death for allegedly stealing a cellphone, in the Mauk region of Banten that is situated on the outskirts of Jakarta. The victim's relatives disputed this allegation and claimed that he was killed due to an ethnic rivalry with the vigilantes' village. They began an armed march to attack the vigilantes' village but were blocked by the police before they could reach it. In other cases where the victims' family was not influential enough to mobilize for a counter-attack, the fear of revenge was fueled by rumors. A young man was burned alive by a mob in 2015, in an urban ward of South Tangerang District, Banten, after being accused of stealing a motorbike. His mother insisted that he was visiting an ex-girlfriend, not stealing. Living in extreme poverty, she had no pull with community leaders to push for justice and resigned herself to fate. Even so, vigilantes in the neighboring hamlet complained about receiving mysterious letters from the victims' side, warning of an imminent counter attack.

The risk of revenge is highest in the immediate aftermath of a lynching, but the fear of one can linger for years. Recall the anxiety expressed by residents of Bantar Kuning village upon my visit. Even after seven years, they feared someone may be trying to get back at them for BY's lynching. This kind of paranoia was observed across other similar cases. A village head in Soromandi, Bima District, was anxious because the widow of a victim was returning after 5 years. She had escaped when her husband was burned alive after being accused of sorcery. "It [her return] will be disruptive [*mengganggu*]," he explained, "Not everyone agreed with it [the

lynching] and people were mainly split along family lines. If she comes back now, it can scratch old wounds for her family.”<sup>47</sup>

Although the fear of revenge is omnipresent for all vigilantes, actual reprisals from the victims’ families were observed in two incidents out of 20. In one case the two sides were comprised of ethnic groups with a protracted history of violent conflict. In 2015, two alleged motorbike thieves were lynched by the residents of Malangsari village in South Lampung District. The victims were ethnic Lampungese residents of the neighboring Batubadak village, while the majority of Malangsari residents are Javanese transmigrants. Soon, the news spread that Batubadak villagers, along with other Lampungese majority villages were mobilizing for a revenge attack. In a preventive move, the village secretary of Malangsari and the local police chief (*Kapolsek*), traveled to Batubadak to offer monetary compensation to the victims’ families. During their visit, the *Kapolsek* and his men were detained, while the village secretary of Malangsari was lynched in an open field.

In the second case, the two sides also had a history of inter-village disputes related to distribution of irrigation facilities. In 2012 a man accused of sorcery was lynched by the residents of Dadibou village in Woha, Bima District. The victim was originally from the neighboring village of Samili but had moved to Dadibou many years ago to live with his wife. Following the lynching, residents of Samili rejected the sorcery charges against the victim and claimed that he was killed because of a personal dispute. They avenged the victim’s death by attacking and destroying an entire neighborhood in Dadibou. At least 88 houses were burned to the ground and hundreds of people were displaced.

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<sup>47</sup> Interview # 79, Male, Village head, Soromandi, Bima District, August 06 2017.

Although the damage from revenge attacks was limited in these particular cases, retribution for vigilantism in Indonesia can spiral into much larger conflagrations. The deadly communal riots that swept across Indonesia during early years of the *Reformasi* were triggered by small incidents of vigilantism (Tajima 2004; C. Wilson 2008; McRae 2013). In Poso, dispute over appropriate punishment for the stabbing of a Muslim man by an intoxicated Christian added fire to already simmering tensions between the two groups. Religious riots in Maluku were similarly triggered by an altercation between a Christian bus driver and Muslim passengers. In Central Kalimantan, the deadliest ethnic riots started after a group of Madurese men lynched a Dayak man over a minor dispute at a bar. Cumulatively these communal conflicts, triggered by small incidents of vigilantism, led to over 9,985 deaths between 1999 and 2003 (Barron, Jaffrey, and Varshney 2016, 198).

The risk of such severe escalation remains even today. One of the deadliest episodes of communal violence in the past decade took place in response to a vigilante attack. In 2012, residents of a Balinese transmigrant village violently punished ethnic Lampungese youths from a neighboring village in the South Lampung Regency. The Balinese alleged that the boys had molested two girls from their village. The Lampungese contended that they were just helping the girls fix a motorbike. The beating of the youth led to a massive mobilization of Lampungese villages across the district, who launched a coordinated attack on the Balinese village. 12 people died, hundreds were injured and thousands of residents were displaced as a result.<sup>48</sup>

The anticipation of revenge by victims has a powerful and long-lasting effect on vigilantes. The legacy of this fear can be observed throughout Indonesia's history after the 1965 communist killings, which involved some of the most horrifying acts of vigilantism.

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<sup>48</sup> "Pemicu Bentrokan Lampung Versi Penduduk - Nasional Tempo.Co," January 11, 2012. <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/439069/pemicu-bentrokan-lampung-versi-penduduk/full&view=ok>.

Notwithstanding the decisive role of the military in the killings, death squads from nationalist and religious mass organizations also took the lead in the identification and murder of local suspects. Since then, the specter of revenge from the descendants of the Communist Party (PKI) has haunted Indonesia through the various phases of its political development. The scare was first fanned by dubious documents in which communists pledged to take “revenge on Islamic Youth” (Robinson 2017, 478). The fear peaked under the New Order as constant references to “organizations without form” (*organisasi tanpa bentuk-OTB*) warned citizens of vengeance by PKI remnants (Siegel 1998, 5–6). During the *Reformasi*, ‘ninja’ killings of NU affiliates in East Java were widely feared as PKI’s revenge for 1965 (Cribb 2000, 194). Even today, more than 50 years after the killings, the fear of PKI continues to shape aspects of public policy at the highest levels of government.<sup>49</sup>

Even though the threat of imminent revenge by the PKI was self-servingly manufactured by the New Order regime, the enduring resonance of the fear is rooted in a broader social reality, where victims often do seek revenge against vigilantes. Violent reprisals from the victims’ families hurt ordinary community members as their lives and properties come under attack. However, there can be consequences for leaders as well. Elected local leaders such as village heads often do not survive politically in the aftermath of counter-attack from the victims. They are blamed, both by the residents and by other officials, such as the police and district government, for not anticipating the consequences of lynching the ‘wrong’ person.

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<sup>49</sup> Justifying a recent ban on leftist reading groups in university campuses, Indonesia’s Defense Minister brought up the issue again: “It’s a matter of revenge. The PKI want revenge. (These raids are needed) for us to reduce the risk, if it becomes big it’ll be difficult to stop later.” As quoted in “Indonesia Defense Minister Says Raid on Leftist Books Needed to Prevent Communist ‘Revenge’ | Coconuts Jakarta.” Coconuts, January 25, 2019. <https://coconuts.co/jakarta/news/indonesia-defense-minister-says-raid-leftist-books-needed-prevent-communist-revenge/>.

### 2.3.2 Legal prosecution

The second risk faced by vigilantes in Indonesia is that of legal reprisals. Citizens are forbidden from taking the law in their own hands (*eigenrichting*). Acts of vigilantism are punishable under Article 170 (1) of the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP), which is also used to charge suspects in other forms of collective violence such as riots or violent demonstrations. The Article states that: “Those who collectively and publicly commit violence against persons or property, shall be punished by a maximum imprisonment of five years and six months.”<sup>50</sup> It stipulates higher maximum prison terms if participation in such an act results in property destruction or injury (7 years), grave injury (9 years) or death (12 years). Depending on the specific role played by an individual in the violence, additional charges can be added to an indictment. These include incitement (*penghasutan*), unlawful detention (*penyanderaan*), or planned murder (*pembunuhan terencana*). This crime is classified as *delik biasa*, ie the police can directly register a case and start an investigation, even in the absence of a complainant.<sup>51</sup>

In a majority of vigilantism incidents, perpetrators are not prosecuted. The police arrive at the scene of a lynching to take the victim into custody or retrieve the body, if the victim has already died. Afterwards, police officers usually issue statements regretting (*menyesalkan*) the violence and politely urge (*menghimbau*) residents to refrain from taking the law into their own hands in the future. Typically, the matter ends there, and no further action is taken. However, legal action is taken in select cases.

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<sup>50</sup> Translation by author. Bahasa Indonesia: Barangsiapa terang-terangan dan dengan tenaga bersama menggunakan kekerasan terhadap orang atau barang, diancam dengan pidana penjara paling lama 5 (lima) tahun 6 (enam) bulan. (KUHP terjemahan Prof. Moeljatno, SH, Kitab Undang-undang Hukum Pidana ; Cet.20, Jakarta : Bumi Aksara, 1999, hal.147)

<sup>51</sup> In contrast to offenses classified as *delik aduan* in which a complainant can file a case, such as adultery and defamation etc.

In the sample of 20 incidents of vigilantism that were studied in detail for this research, the police registered charges against perpetrators in seven cases. Out of these, perpetrators in four cases were sentenced under Article 170 (1), in two others the families dropped legal charges to settle out of court and; in one case accused perpetrators were found to be not guilty. In several other instances, the police reportedly arrested a few suspects but released them without filing charges.<sup>52</sup> The high proportion of legal prosecution in my sample of cases are the result of my deliberate effort to study how impunity is denied or revoked. In reality, an overwhelming majority of vigilantism incidents go unpunished. Although prosecutions are limited, they show that under some circumstances, Indonesian law-enforcement agencies are both capable of and willing to hold vigilantes accountable for their actions. Moreover, because these cases tend to be high profile and attract much media attention, they demonstrate to the vigilantes that prosecution is a risk that must be anticipated and mitigated.

It is widely believed that prosecuting vigilantes is difficult because the violence occurs in a collective frenzy, making it hard to know who did what. Law-enforcement officers acknowledge that the investigation of such cases can be more challenging than those involving interpersonal assault or murder. Residents who witnessed an incident are usually tight-lipped about what they know because they are afraid of harassment by the perpetrators. Community leaders are also hesitant to testify against the perpetrators as they do not want to be seen as taking sides (*berpihak*) by the residents—and because they are often implicated themselves. It is also

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<sup>52</sup> Note that the NVMS dataset does not record the legal status of a case as it is a protracted process, subject to many changes and the outcome is not always disclosed in media reports. I was able to collect this information in the small sample of 20 cases that were studied in detail during fieldwork. In particular, I attended court proceedings for one case that occurred in 2017 in Jatiwaringin, Bekasi. Apart from these, I also collected publicly accessible legal decisions pertaining to other cases of vigilantism that I was not able to research in detail during fieldwork but in which perpetrators were legally prosecuted. These documents provide useful insights about how the violence unfolds and the kind of deliberations that go into charging perpetrators and prosecuting them

common for male residents of the area run away *en masse* and hide in surrounding areas, before the police arrives.

Members of the police's criminal investigation unit (*Reskrim*) claim that experienced investigators can overcome these challenges. One officer from this unit who led the investigation of several such cases in Bima District, explained that he has his 'tricks' for cracking cases involving crowds. The most important thing, in his view, is to know the social map of an area and understand that people are afraid to testify against a neighbor in open court. "We have to be sensitive. We do a lot of off-the-record questioning to understand who was where at what time but do not use everyone's names in the official investigation documents (*Berita Acara Pemeriksaan BAP*). Once we have the main coordinates, we can collect other evidence and get the suspects to testify against each other."<sup>53</sup>

Increasingly, technology can also help the police solve such cases. Video and photographic evidence helps identify the suspects even if such evidence cannot be presented in court. Cell phone data is also used to track the suspects' movements and verify statements of their whereabouts during the incident. Even so, investigators acknowledged that not all perpetrators can be brought to justice. The police are usually able to arrest those who take the lead in the physical violence. Those who sanction the act, the 'provocateurs', are rarely charged because such individuals are usually influential leaders.

While law-enforcement agencies in Indonesia are increasingly *capable* of prosecuting incidents of vigilantism, their *willingness* to do so depends on two main factors. First, law-enforcement agencies are most likely to take legal action against vigilantes if the threat of communal conflict looms large. The assessment of this risk is based on whether a) the victim and

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<sup>53</sup> Interview #86, Male, Criminal Investigation, Bima District Police Office, August 03 2017.

perpetrators belong to rival groups, b) there is recent history of violent conflict between them and; c) a counter attack from the victims' side has been mobilized or is imminent. This assessment is usually made by the sub-district police chief (*Kapolsek*) but may involve the intervention of district or the provincial level personnel.

Vigilantes' fear of legal prosecution is ironic given their grievances about the 'absent' and 'ineffective' state. While legal action against vigilantes is relatively rare, it remains a major concern for vigilantes for two reasons. One is that it makes them vulnerable to extortion. Because the law prohibits vigilantism, and its investigation does not require a complainant, local police officers can arrest suspects and demand a fee for not registering a case against them. Second, the considerable uncertainty in legal processes generates fear among vigilantes. As the following pages will show, communities try to anticipate some of the factors that trigger police reaction and constrain their actions in a way that will minimize the risk of legal reprisals. Even so, as shown by the leaders of Bantar Kuning, vigilantes continue to fear that one day, a powerful rival might be able to influence the police and use a legal case to bring them down.

#### **2.4 How does the risk of revenge and prosecution constrain vigilantes?**

The perceived risk of revenge and legal prosecution shapes the way communities and their leaders think about their options for managing local order. Vigilantism is often depicted as the spontaneous response of disgruntled citizens, who have no other recourse. However, my research shows that non-violent alternatives to vigilantism are widely practiced by citizens in Indonesia. As such, use of collective violence in response to a transgression is neither requisite nor is it spontaneous. Instead, vigilantism is the result of a *process* of informal justice that involves collective deliberations about appropriate responses. It is during this process that

communities' shared understanding of consequences, developed through trial and error, effects how they think about which offenses to punish, who to punish and how to punish.

#### 2.4.1 Non-violent forms of informal justice as alternatives to vigilantism

Ordinary citizens in Indonesia often prefer to find ways around the formal law-enforcement system when dealing with petty crimes and sometimes even more serious offenses. However, informal justice can take many forms. One is informal arbitration. During my fieldwork in sites of vigilante violence, I collected documents from local neighborhood chiefs related to informal adjudication of a range of alleged offenses (Appendix 5). Most contain confessions from alleged thieves, adulterers and individuals involved in motor accidents. The offending party usually commits to some monetary compensation and a promise to not repeat their offensive acts. The offended party promises to withhold legal action. This informal method of dispute resolution, also referred to as 'restorative justice', is not only allowed but is actively encouraged by the formal justice system for 'light crimes' (*Tindak Pidana Ringan--Tipiring*).<sup>54</sup> These documents are signed by the accused, the offended party, community leaders and even the local police officers. Official stamps are sometimes used to give the document semblance of formality, although they do not carry much legal weight. In cases where the offender is from another residential area, the leaders of that community may also be invited to witness or affirm the agreement. Local leaders are proud of brokering these agreements. According to them, no one gains by going through the legal system: the victim of a crime gets no compensation and the accused goes to jail but later may exact revenge on his accuser.

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<sup>54</sup> See the Supreme Court Regulation No. 2/ 2012 on the guidelines for management of light crimes: <https://www.hukumonline.com/berita/baca/lt5240256b79ffe/ma-keluhkan-pelaksanaan-perma-tipiring>

A second form of informal justice is social sanction. Some communities maintain the tradition of “*arak*” (public shaming) for alleged thieves,<sup>55</sup> adulterers or other minor transgressions.<sup>56</sup> The accused are forced to wear a board with a written confession around their necks and paraded through the streets. The parade is usually just for humiliation but in some cases, the accused have been stripped and beaten while being forced to walk.<sup>57</sup> Unmarried couples caught having sex are most often married off by their elders, even if they are minors. Suspected homosexuals are sent to religious centers for ‘treatment’<sup>58</sup> or asked to ‘repent’ through community service tasks.<sup>59</sup> Allegations of sorcery are traditionally resolved through a set of rites, such as *sumpah pocong*, to discredit the accuser (Herriman 2013, 61–64).<sup>60</sup> Even if found guilty, the sorcerer is condemned to live outside the village boundaries, minimizing contact with other residents. These measures can be coercive but do not involve physical acts of violence.

More recently, evictions have been used to punish women accused of prostitution, the mentally disabled or members of religious sects deemed ‘deviant’. Evictions are mostly arranged informally through a “set-up”. One neighborhood official described the process as one where influence must be used in the ‘right way’.<sup>61</sup> He explained that if the accused party is a renter, the

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<sup>55</sup> Nursyamsi, Muhammad. “Tradisi Arak Maling Di Gili Trawangan.” *Republika Online*, February 25, 2017. <https://republika.co.id/berita/gaya-hidup/travelling/17/02/25/olx661284-tradisi-arak-maling-di-gili-trawangan>.

<sup>56</sup> “Pasangan Zina Diarak Keliling Kampung.” *Terkini!*, September 29, 2013. <https://bengkuluexpress.com/pasangan-zina-diarak-keliling-kampung/>.

<sup>57</sup> Pratama, Akhdi Martin. “Kronologi Pasangan Kekasih Diarak, Dianiaya, hingga Ditelanjangi.” *KOMPAS.com*, November 14, 2017AD. <https://megapolitan.kompas.com/read/2017/11/14/16581861/kronologi-pasangan-kekasih-diarak-dianiaya-hingga-ditelanjangi>.

<sup>58</sup> “Menelisis Praktik Ruqyah LGBT Di Indonesia.” *New Naratif* (blog). Accessed March 12, 2019. <https://newnaratif.com/journalism/menelisis-praktik-ruqyah-lgbt-di-indonesia/>.

<sup>59</sup> Putro, Yuliardi Hardjo, and 20:00 Wib. “Pasangan LGBT Bengkulu Terancam Hukuman Cuci Kampung.” *Liputan6.Com*, March 2016. <https://www.liputan6.com/regional/read/2459308/pasangan-lgbt-bengkulu-terancam-hukuman-cuci-kampung>.

<sup>60</sup> *Sumpah Pocong* is a traditional ritual that requires an accused person to swear to his innocence while wearing a white shroud (mostly used in Muslim burials). The ceremony is accompanied with recitation of Quranic verses and other religious texts. Participants believe that a person who lies under such an oath will be cursed by God and may even die of unnatural causes.

<sup>61</sup> Interview # 21, Male, Neighborhood official, Sukaresmi, Bogor City, May 6 2017. This explanation was offered in response to questions about how the community maintains security of the area and harmony among residents.

landlord can be instructed by the local officials to simply terminate the contract and prohibit others from leasing to him or her. In some cases, evidence of guilt can be planted, only to be recovered during a ‘surprise’ raid by the police: rusty needles or broken mirrors for sorcery and cigarettes or condoms for prostitution. Similarly, if a particular business in the neighborhood is considered disruptive, such as an internet café that allows streaming of pornographic videos or a food stall that sells alcohol, community leaders apply pressure to have the license of the facility cancelled. More recently, disciplinary actions and evictions have been ordered in writing by ward and neighborhood chiefs (Appendix 6). One such eviction notice was issued to a resident who was the local *imam*, accused of spreading radical religious views in his mosque). In another case, the neighborhood chief issued a decree, prohibiting non-Muslim residents from inviting outside guests. It should be noted that neither ‘set-up’ evictions nor written notices by neighborhood officials have any legal standing.

#### 2.4.2 Factors that make violence preferable to alternatives

Vigilante violence is a third way to respond to perceived offenses outside of the legal system. Compared to arbitration and social sanction, the use of vigilante violence to punish transgressions is less common because it involves the risk of revenge and legal prosecution. However, several factors can make violence preferable to its non-violent alternatives. One is the belief that violent punishment acts as a strong deterrent against future transgressions. The very public and spectacular display of violence observed in incidents of vigilantism is meant to achieve this effect. Proponents of vigilantism also cite the need for deterrence as the reason for using brutal forms of violence. One community leader explained that vigilante violence helps

builds the neighborhood's reputation as one where residents show no mercy to criminals, so that "those with bad intentions think twice before stepping in our area (*wilayah*)."<sup>62</sup>

The belief that violent punishment reduces crime by creating deterrence is not unique to vigilantism but can be seen in public discourse on the death penalty and other forms of corporal punishment. In 2015, national polling data showed that an overwhelming majority of Indonesians (85%) approve of the death penalty for certain crimes.<sup>63</sup> Recently, discussions on effective punishment for child sex offenders also highlighted public support for harsh corporal punishment. In 2016, due to intense public pressure following a series of horrific assaults on minors, the Indonesian government passed legislation stipulating castration as punishment for pedophiles. Even though the measure was opposed by most human rights organizations in the country, it was approved with broad support in the parliament.<sup>64</sup>

The popular belief in vigilantism as an effective deterrence against crime is yet to be supported by any evidence. In fact, the NVMS dataset shows that over time, vigilante violence follows a repetitive pattern: it is more likely to take place in an area that has already experienced such incidents in the past. If vigilantism had a deterrence effect, it would reduce the need for repeated acts of violence. Most law-enforcement officers interviewed for this research were also skeptical of vigilantism's deterrence value, even if they were otherwise sympathetic to it. One officer noted that most petty criminals, especially thieves, are driven by economic factors. While the threat of punishment can scare them away for some time, it is unlikely to stop them from committing crimes in the long run. He described the temporary effect of vigilantism as one that

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<sup>62</sup> Interview #11, Male, Former RW Chief, Tangerang District, April 30, 2017.

<sup>63</sup> Taufiqurrohman. "Survei: Mayoritas Masyarakat Dukung Jokowi Eksekusi Mati Tahap II." Liputan6, April 28, 2015. <https://www.liputan6.com/news/read/2221660/survei-mayoritas-masyarakat-dukung-jokowi-eksekusi-mati-tahap-ii>.

<sup>64</sup> "Hukuman Kebiri 'bisa Langsung Diterapkan' - BBC News Indonesia," October 13, 2016. [https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/berita\\_indonesia/2016/10/161012\\_indonesia\\_hukuman\\_kebiri](https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/berita_indonesia/2016/10/161012_indonesia_hukuman_kebiri).

is “like biting into a hot chili pepper. At first when it burns, we can’t eat another bite. But, after the burn wears off, we eat again.”<sup>65</sup>

Apart from public beliefs about the deterrence effect of vigilantism, elite-level considerations can also affect the preference for using violence to punish an alleged offender. Playing a prominent role in a vigilante attack can help aspiring youngsters build a significant amount of social capital. Decisive action to protect one’s territory can earn admiration from some residents and inspire fear in others. Either way, the act of killing someone in full public view and getting away with it without facing any consequences sends a clear signal of local power. Overtime, this reputation can be leveraged to chart an upwards path in village politics.

Recall NN, the youth in Bantar Kuning village who led the lynching of BY, after accusing him of killing his sister with sorcery. In a period of just seven years, NN evolved from an ordinary youngster to the top contender in the village head election. He was clearly an influential person, who could order a group of youngsters to monitor us during our visit and command other local leaders to come to his aid when needed. The career trajectory of other individuals interviewed for this study, who had played a leading role in a lynching, followed a similar graph. One such individual in an urban ward of South Tangerang was the son of the neighborhood chief at the time of the incident but had since become the head of the neighborhood youth association (*Karang Taruna*) and coordinates security in the area. Another individual in Lombok, Nusa Tenggara Barat, was a neighborhood chief when he led the lynching of an alleged thief. At the time of the interview, he was contemplating running for the village head election but was not sure because he had bigger ambitions. He explained that “even a

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<sup>65</sup> Interview #25, Male, Community Guidance Unit, Tangerang City Police Office, May 08, 2017.

monkey can become a village head. What matters is who controls the monkey.”<sup>66</sup> Last year, he was elected as the head of the local chapter of the election commission.

#### 2.4.3 Vigilantism as a deliberative process

Media accounts of vigilante violence erroneously depict it as an instantaneous occurrence. According to a typical news report in Indonesia, frustrated citizens chance upon an offender and unleash violence in a mindless rampage—in a matter of minutes. Overwhelming evidence is available to show that this is simply not true. Ethnographic studies have long claimed that lynching of a community insider is preceded by months, if not years of gossip mongering and accusations (Siegel 2006; Welsh 2008; Herriman 2016). Cases studied for this research support these observations. In the Bantar Kuning incident, accusations of sorcery against BY were rife for decades before his killing. The lynching took time to plan, as it required building community consensus. A similar process was observed in the 2015 lynching of a mentally-ill man in Jasinga, Bogor. The victim was lynched by his neighbors when he vandalized decorations for a religious celebration in a mosque. One of the perpetrators explained that the villagers had been frustrated with the victim’s ‘impolite’ behavior for years. They had tried to lynch him twice before, but the village head had intervened. Finally, the charge of desecrating a mosque was so serious that it gave them the chance they had been waiting for.

Trial evidence reveals that even when the victim is a stranger, caught spontaneously during the commission of an alleged crime, vigilante violence does not take place suddenly. A 2017 lynching that took place in Mampawah, West Kalimantan, lasted for 2 and a half hours. Testimony of eye witnesses showed that the victim, accused of being a child kidnapper, was apprehended at 2:30 pm but his beating lasted until 5 pm, when he finally succumbed to his

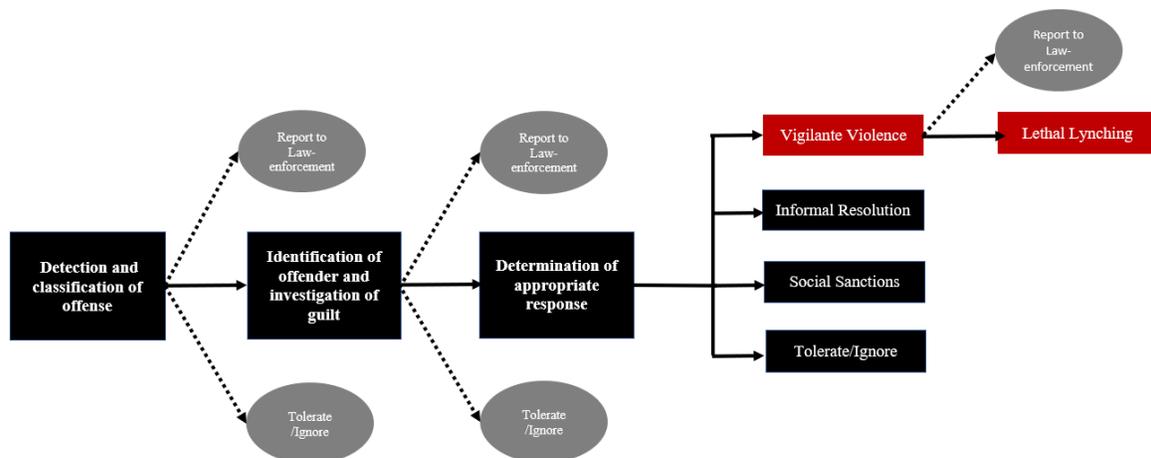
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<sup>66</sup> Interview #100, Male, RT Chief, Lajut, Central Lombok, July 31, 2017.

injuries.<sup>67</sup> The 2015 lynching of the Javanese village secretary in Batubadak village of East Lampung started at 7:30pm, when the mob began throwing rocks and glasses at the victim. He was confined in a house until 10:30 pm when he was finally retrieved and killed.<sup>68</sup> A 2012 lynching in Central Lombok lasted for 3 hours, from detention of the victim suspected of motorbike theft, until his death.<sup>69</sup> Another 2012 lynching of two suspected child kidnappers in West Lombok unfolded over a period of 5 hours.<sup>70</sup>

Why does the violence take so long and what does it involve? Contrary to popular perceptions, vigilante violence is the result of a deliberative process that involves classification, investigation and consideration of possible responses. Figure 2.1 presents a simplified version of the steps that are typically involved in a community's collective response to alleged offenses in Indonesia. The outcome at each stage of the process is affected by perceived risks of revenge and prosecution.

**Figure 2.1 Vigilantism as a deliberative process**



<sup>67</sup> Mempawai District Court Decision: 256/Pid.B/2017/PN.MPW

<sup>68</sup> Sukadana District Court Decision: 12/Pen.Pid.B/216/PN.SDN

<sup>69</sup> Praya District Court Decision: 122/Pid.B/2012/PN.PRA

<sup>70</sup> Mataram District Court Decision: 09/Pid.B/2013/PN.MTR

The first step in the process is the detection of an offense and its classification. When residents come across an offensive activity in their area, a determination is made as to whether it is something that can be handled internally or should be reported to the authorities. Communities classify offenses based on ‘commonsense’ considerations of jurisdiction and consequences. Residents never respond autonomously to suspected terrorist or separatist activity because these issues are widely believed to be exclusively in the state’s purview.<sup>71</sup> Communities also do not handle instances of organized crimes such as extortion, narcotics and illegal arms. These crimes syndicates are usually backed by powerful and well-connected individuals. Communities understand that disturbing (*mengganggu*) one of their operatives could prove costly. Several community leaders in urban and sub-urban parts of Indonesia identified drug-sale to minors as the second most serious crime affecting their community after motor-bike theft. Although they listed several instances of thieves being apprehended by residents, no one mentioned a citizen arrest in a drug-related incident. When I asked one ward chief (*Ketua RW*) whether frustration with drugs has ever led the residents to raid and punish peddlers in his area, he looked bewildered. He explained that it would never happen because “That is not our business (*urusan*). If we nab someone like that we don’t know who he’s connected to. What if he is the [police/military] commander’s man?”<sup>72</sup> Residents may choose to ignore these offenses but when they act, it is by reporting them to law-enforcement agents—not through informal justice. Compared to terrorism and organized crime, communities have more discretion in responding to other offenses such as assault, rape, kidnapping, theft, adultery, sorcery and homosexuality, etc.

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<sup>71</sup> Even when civilian militias have been used to fight rebels during civil wars in Aceh or East Timor, they have been assembled and managed directly by the military (Robinson 2001; Davies 2006; Aspinall 2009).

<sup>72</sup> Interview #11, Male, Former RW Chief, Tangerang District, April 30 2017.

If such a transgression is detected, it can either be tolerated, reported to the police right away or, community members can investigate further before deciding on the next steps.

The investigative phase is used to establish the identity of the offender and gather proof of guilt in a bid to mitigate the risk of reprisals against vigilantes. If the suspect is a community insider, the investigation and evidence gathering process can be protracted. Residents who suspect a neighbor of theft, sorcery, or sexual deviance reported having to wait for months, sometimes years to convince others of the said neighbor's guilt or to organize a raid to catch him/her red-handed. This process is especially complex if the accused is an influential person in the community. Building consensus and gathering convincing proof becomes critical for undermining the social support of such a person and minimizing the risk of a backlash against the accuser. However, most people who are accused by their neighbors are already vulnerable in some way. Indeed, victims of vigilante attacks from their own communities tend to be old widows, childless women, the mentally-ill, migrants or religious/sexual minorities. Leading the charge against such individuals is relatively easier because they are unlikely to have any social backing or legal access to protect them from the attack or avenge them afterwards.

Even vigilante organizations that conduct violent anti-vice raids, select their targets to minimize the risk of repercussions. Typically, these organizations vandalize small business and informal vendors that are least likely to have social support or legal access. Frequent targets are carts and stalls, selling food during the fasting months, small alcohol peddlers or minority houses of worship. Vigilante organizations generally stay away from higher end establishments in malls and restaurants that are likely to have private security. When high end establishments are visited, such as massage parlors and karaoke bars, violence is rarely used as owners are able to make adequate 'peace offerings' (*damai*). It should be remembered that no anti-vice vigilante

organization in Indonesia, no matter how big or influential, has ever been involved in a narcotics-related raid. Presumably, for the same reason citizens do not go after drug peddlers.

If the suspect offender is a community outsider, who is caught red handed during the commission of a crime the investigation is brief but critical. Vigilantes may be angry and frustrated, but they are also discerning: knowing the identity of a suspect is essential for ascertaining the risk of using violence against him. Such an accused is physically detained, often at a local civilian security post or at the house of the neighborhood chief, searched for evidence and questioned about his or her identity and area of origin. This interrogation may involve some intimidation or violence aimed at extracting a confession but does not necessarily escalate into a mass beating. This is essentially the process that took place during my first visit to Bantar Kuning. While NN was busy trying to understand our motives for asking about the lynching, the community leaders were trying to ascertain who we were and how far they should let him go.

While the process of interrogating a suspect usually takes time, I found that communities have developed short-hands for such determinations. Class and ethnic markers are critical short-cuts for assessing the risks of doling out violent punishment. Clothes, accessories, occupation and area of residence on an ID card indicate class and therefore access to the police and media. Communities tend to avoid punishing someone of a middle- or high-class background because it could lead to a public outcry and a prosecution. Conversely, evidence of poverty can make a suspect more vulnerable to violence. Thieves that are caught stealing small items like a handful of chilies, a chicken or used underwear are more likely to lynched. The miniscule value of the stolen item indicates the depth of the suspect's poverty and thus a low risk of consequences for the vigilantes.

Ethnic markers also serve as a quick reference for risk assessment. In areas that are most vulnerable to ethnic or religious conflict, when communities catch a suspect from a rival group it can serve as a red flag against using violence. For example, in Poso, Ambon and Ternate, the fear of a repeat of the religious conflict has led community leaders to devise mechanisms for intervening quickly in such incidents. In other contexts, suspects of certain ethnicities are considered low risk and more likely to be lynched. In Jakarta's sub-urban areas, when a young man from Palembang or Lampung cannot explain the purpose of a nocturnal visit, he is usually assumed to be a motorbike thief (*begal*) because many robberies are committed by crime rings from these two regions. In the words of one village head who coordinates security patrols in his areas "Why would a decent person be roaming around at night in other people's areas, not able to explain his business? Then if we know he is from there [Lampung], that just confirms our suspicion."<sup>73</sup> Residents claim that they can detect the person's origin from his facial features and accent and do not need to conduct a protracted interrogation to establish guilt before starting a mass beating. Nonconformist attributes such as tattoos or piercings can also indicate a criminal background.

The investigative phase is followed by a collective deliberation on how to respond based on the suspect's identity and affiliation. Most often, the final decision is made in consultation with local leaders, such as the neighborhood chief, ward chief, the village head and religious or customary figures. In some cases, the suspect is handed over to the police. If not, community leaders may use social sanctions or arbitration as means to address the grievance of the accuser. However, it is important to note that even if these offenses are not formally reported to the authorities, local police officials are often informed of or consulted about the social measures

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<sup>73</sup> Interview #14, Male, Village Head, Tangerang District, April 30 2017.

taken to address them. The interrogation usually leads to violence when the identity of the suspect indicates a low risk of repercussions for the vigilantes.

The decision to use violence may be made on a case-by case basis or instructions to lynch certain kinds of suspects may be issued ahead of time. One village secretary in Lampung expressed her anxiety about pedophiles. She recalled with regret how one suspect, caught red-handed, was able to escape before the community could decide how to punish him. She explained that following the incident “The village chief has issued strict instructions not to let it slide again. If there is trouble with the police later, he said he will deal with it. So now we are ready. If we catch him, by the will of God [*Inshallah*], he will not live.”<sup>74</sup>

These intentions, mostly stated verbally, are also often displayed across residential areas in Indonesia in the form of explicit posters and banners that warn of dire consequences for a range of offenses (Appendix 7). One such display found in a middle-class residential complex in Bekasi, West Java declares “For those found committing acts of public indecency (dating) in the area, death will be the consequence. Arrested by the residents, they will be beaten senseless.” The poster is duly signed by several neighborhood-level anti-vice bodies. Another one found in a similar area in Palu, Central Sulawesi displays the following text next to the picture of a burning man, “Attention: Thieves, robbers, motorbike snatchers, gang members and drug dealers—enter this area at the risk of being burned (alive).” This one is signed by the neighborhood chief. As such, vigilante violence may precipitate spontaneously, but it is very often based on pre-existing deliberations and considerations.

Witness accounts and hundreds of video clips of incidents available online provide useful insights for understanding how the violence progresses during an incident. In a typical case, the

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<sup>74</sup> Interview #128, Female, Village Secretary, East Lampung District, August 20, 2017.

accused is dragged out into an open, public space and beaten collectively by residents. Younger men usually take the lead in the beating, while other residents egg them on. Sticks and other blunt objects are often used in the process and the accused is tied up and stripped. In lethal cases, the accused may be hit repeatedly on the head until he dies. Sometimes, fuel or a tire is used to set him on fire. In incidents involving accusations of sorcery, the killing is more ritualistic and reflects local beliefs about the supernatural. This often involves mutilation, burying and beheading.

The progression of violence is also slow and performative. Instead of descending on the victim(s) at once, those involved in the violence take turns dealing blows. Usually two people can be seen attacking at a time and then moving back to let others in before repeating the same process. This dynamic is observed even in incidents that involve large crowds, comprised of hundreds of people. By-standers can typically be seen jeering and joking about the victims' fearful appearance. In most cases, there is no resistance from the victim, who is often pulled up to his knees to beg for mercy several times before being struck back down.

The term most commonly used in Indonesia to describe a mob's mental state during an attack is the word *amuk*. It is the origin of the English word 'amok' and shares a similar meaning: to attack collectively with blind rage, a rampage. However, there is considerable evidence to show that the process of vigilante violence is not completely blind. In fact, it involves pauses and critical thinking. It is not uncommon for perpetrators to take a break from the beating to smoke a cigarette or get a drink of water before joining in again. Court documents also suggest that the procurement of materials to hurt the victim can take some time and thought. In one incident the victim was bolted inside a room, some members of the mob sent an accomplice to look for a long rope to get him out. Once the rope was found, it was used to tie the

victim's feet and pull him out from a window close to the ceiling. He was later beaten to death in an open field. In another incident, a local school teacher, who was cheering on the beating of an accused thief, gave IDR 10,000 (70 cents) to a teenager and told him to go buy a bottle of petrol from a nearby kiosk. The fuel was later used to burn the victim alive on a public road.<sup>75</sup> Despite these facts, the continual description of the violence as a mindless rampage not only projects a distorted image of vigilantism, it also absolves the perpetrators of responsibility for the violence.

It is important to note that local leaders, most notably neighborhood officials, exercise considerable discretion in stemming the violence or accelerating it. In incidents where the target is a local resident, officials such as the village leader, ward chief or neighborhood chief are either involved in mobilization plans or are aware of them. If they are not involved in the attack and do not endorse the violence, local leaders warn the victim to run away or hide them while waiting for the police. In cases when the victim is an outsider who is caught by residents, neighborhood officials are immediately informed, and they lead the interrogation process. In consultation with others, they can either decide to turn in a suspect to the police along with the evidence or proceed with violence.

In video evidence from a number of cases, one person with authority can usually be seen coordinating action throughout the incident. He directs people to make way for others during the beating or commands the crowd to make way while the victim is dragged to another location. In deadly incidents, such a person can be seen circling the victim in the middle of the crowd to check whether the victim is dead. In others, he can call the violence off by physically shielding victim, legs on either side of the torso, and repeatedly yelling "enough" (*sudah*). Sometimes the

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<sup>75</sup> Nugroho, Adi. "Jadi Tersangka, Guru Honorer Ini Pemberi Uang Bensin Untuk Bakar Zoya." Merdeka.Com, August 25, 2017. <https://www.merdeka.com/peristiwa/jadi-tersangka-guru-honorer-ini-pemberi-uang-bensin-untuk-bakar-zoya.html>.

victim can be secured in the house or office of the local official such as the village head, ward chief or neighborhood chief. Usually the crowd disperses if the police arrives on the scene and evacuates the victim. In rare cases, however, the crowd follows the police to their station and attack their post to retrieve the victim for more violence.

Aside from calling officials, there is very little others can do to stop a lynching from progressing. Several witnesses who admitted to disagreeing with the violence, felt unable to intervene because they feared the crowd may turn on them. One such person explained: “Anyone in the crowd who does not like us can easily accuse us of being the ‘needle’ who brought in the criminal if we try to help. It is dangerous. Better to wait for an official.”<sup>76</sup> The term ‘needle’ (*jarum*) is used to describe the person who acts as a local accomplice for an outside criminal, who is referred to as the ‘thread’ (*benang*). The local accomplice is critical for providing a criminal information about safe entry and exit routes in residential areas. He or she also conveys information about residents who may be easy targets for theft or other crimes. Ironically, the person who is actually the local accomplice of an apprehended criminal is most likely to call for his death in a crowd, presumably to eliminate evidence of his guilt.

## **2.5 Need for a new theoretical approach**

Dissatisfaction with the law and its enforcement are important drivers of vigilantism across the developing world. However, vigilantes’ ability to act on these motivations is constrained by fears of legal prosecution and revenge attacks by their victims’ families. This is why most disgruntled citizens refrain from using violence to punish offenders, even though it is perceived as a more effective response and thought to have a high deterrence effect. Instead of violence, communities who wish to bypass the formal legal system, do so by relying on non-

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<sup>76</sup> Interview # 28, Member of Citizen-Police Forum, Bogor City, May 9, 2017

violent forms of informal justice, such as arbitration and social sanctions. When vigilante violence is used, it is preceded by a deliberative process, in which community leaders play an important role in assessing the risks attached with lynching a particular victim. The presence of this deliberative process and assessment of risks debunks the myth that vigilantism is a spontaneous act of violence by a mob of citizens, whose frustration with the legal system has made them blind with rage.

Given that vigilantes are deeply afraid of the consequences of their actions, vigilante violence can only become rife in a society when they are able to obtain credible assurances of impunity. While existing theories about the sources of discontent with the formal legal system can tell us why citizens prefer informal justice, they do not tell us why they are increasingly likely to address these grievances through violence, despite being afraid of its consequences. Why is it that sexual misbehavior is being punished violently by beating and stripping offenders in public instead of family sanctioned marriage? Why is it that accused and 'proven' sorcerers are lynched instead of being evicted? Why are thieves being burned alive instead of being forced to pay compensation money or subjected to public shaming? A new theory is needed to explain the factors that enable vigilantes to overcome their fear of consequences and makes vigilante violence more likely.

### 3. The Beholden State: a theory of impunity for extra-legal violence

*“My higher-ups just give the order. All they want to hear is ‘can-do’ (bisa), without being troubled with questions. In a crunch like that, I need support of community leaders who can get things done in my area. By the grace of God, usually I receive their help. Even though they don’t really trust the [law-enforcement] system, they are happy with me because I can help them find ways around it.”*

Street-level police officer, Bogor City, West Java<sup>77</sup>

Preparations for the law-and-order competition in Tanah Baru were quite elaborate. In a freshly painted security post, official portraits of the President and Vice President hung above a poster of Java’s nine revered saints, the *Walisongo*. Another wall displayed a map of the hamlet, identifying ‘vulnerable’ areas in red. Next to it was a weekly schedule for citizen patrols and a list of alarms to announce different emergencies. A brand new “Incident Register” dangled from the door frame and the verandah was plastered with official police posters. The largest one featured the national police chief, fist raised, announcing the force’s new slogan: ‘Professional, Modern and Trusted’. Tanah Baru’s assigned community police officer (*Bhabinkamtibmas*) was the star in all other posters. In one he declared ‘We are ready to serve you’ next to a picture of him helping an elderly woman. In another, he sternly warned of ‘radicalism from ISIS’, and ‘hate speech’. In yet another, he could be seen praying with the residents and locking hands with their leaders. Each poster prominently displayed the officer’s cell number and an appeal: ‘If you see anything suspicious, report it at once to the *Bhabin*.’

I was invited to observe this inter-hamlet contest by Kompol WJ, chief of the Community Guidance Unit (*Kasat Binmas*) at the Bogor City Police (*Polresta Bogor*). She had explained that the goal of the competition was two-fold: improve community participation in policing and enhance police involvement in the community.<sup>78</sup> The national police is rapidly expanding the

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<sup>77</sup> Interview #21, Male, Community Police Officers (*Bhabinkamtibmas*), Bogor City Police, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017

<sup>78</sup> Interview # 3, Female, Community Guidance Unit, Bogor City Police, Bogor City, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The phrase is a widely-used slogan in police campaigns: “pemolisian masyarakat dan memasyarakatkan polisi”

community policing program to meet the one-hamlet-one-police ratio target. The competition was an opportunity for street-level *Bhabin* in Bogor City to get closer (*akrab*) to the communities they serve and gain their trust. “People have to understand that the police can’t solve all their problems. They have to do their part to help us.”, she added. I was informed that competition was in the final round and each hamlet would be judged based on how well a *Bhabin* had trained the residents to assist him.

We arrived in Tanah Baru around midnight to a surprisingly big turn-out.<sup>79</sup> Leading an all-male contingent, baton in hand, Kompol WJ cut an imposing figure. The local *Bhabin*, hamlet head (*camat*) along with the ward (*Ketua RW*) and neighborhood chiefs (*Ketua RT*) offered formal greetings. Curious residents peered through the windows as she began inspecting the post. Her assistant took notes: batteries were missing from a torch and there was no pen for writing in the incident register. Then, she gathered the resident patrol group and asked them if they knew the police in charge of their area. They responded by showing her the *Bhabin*’s calling cards with his name, picture and cell number. Pleased, she continued: “Let’s say you see a suspicious intruder on your patrol tonight, what will you do?”

The group’s leader answered that they were prepared to catch him if he is not armed.

“Ok,” Kompol WJ said, “what will you do then?”

“We will call our neighborhood chief (*Ketua RT*)”, the group replied unanimously.

“What if it is late and your *Ketua RT* is asleep, then what?” she prodded on.

“We will knock on his door to wake him”, a young man replied confidently.

“But, what if your *Ketua RT* is out of town, then who would you call?” she asked again.

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<sup>79</sup> Contest evaluation notes from April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017

“We will call the *Ketua RT*’s wife”, one elderly member of the group blurted, prompting raucous laughter from the residents.

An embarrassed *Bhabin* was called forward by Kompol WJ, as she explained to the residents that he was the one they should call. “You can tell the *Ketua RT*, but the *Bhabin* is here to serve you, so call him first if there is a problem.” This instruction was qualified almost immediately, “But, don’t call him to complain about silly things like your wife is fighting with you or your neighbor scratched your bike. For those things it is enough to call the *Ketua RT*.”

The event in Tanah Baru ended after a quick exchange of pleasantries. The scene was the same at two other hamlets. There were elaborate exhibits of residents’ cooperation with the police, smiles all around. However, it was clear that the interaction was mediated through the hamlet, ward and neighborhood chiefs. Not only did these leaders organize the residents in displaying their support to the police, they also had to pay for the expenses through residents’ contributions. Apart from post renovation and snacks, the budget for the contest also included an honorarium for senior officers and envelopes were handed to them at each location.

Later on, I followed up with officers to ask if they preferred direct contact with the residents or a nuisance-filtered interaction through their leaders. There were different opinions on the issue. According to a senior deputy in the Community Guidance Unit, local leaders were indispensable for police work.<sup>80</sup> He was quick to offer the Defense of Islam rally as an example, in which thousands were mobilized by Islamist organizations to protest allegedly blasphemous remarks by Jakarta’s governor. “By the grace of God, not many people from our city went to the rally. Why? Because we were able to get the leaders to hold their residents back.” He also pointed out the need for surveillance support to track the more radical sympathizers of the cause.

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<sup>80</sup> Interview # 10, Male, Community Guidance Unit, Bogor City Police, Bogor City, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

“We need the community leaders to monitor their people and warn us if someone is spreading anti- *Pancasila* (official state ideology) ideas.”<sup>81</sup>

Separately, the sub-station police chiefs (*Kapolsek*) expressed a less positive view of community leaders.<sup>82</sup> While acknowledging that their support was crucial in moments of crises, officers pointed out that not all leaders are cooperative. “They solve a problem for us once in a while, but create new ones all the time, demanding favors for this resident and that relative”, explained one chief. He insisted it was better now that there was a network of *Bhabin* policemen to verify information directly and solve problems before they get out of hand.

The group of *Bhabin*, who participated in the contest had a more practical take on the issue. One joked that street-level officers like him are supposed to be doing the ‘cutting edge’ (*ujung tombak*) work of the police, but with so few resources at their disposal, they are always ‘on edge’ (*ujung tanduk*) themselves. Dealing with these constraints means seeking funds from the local community leaders, but also influence and information. They understood that community members trust their own leaders more than the police and that it was more effective to go through them than dealing with residents directly during an operation or an investigation. They also acknowledged that the leaders are aware of their leverage. Keeping their support involves addressing their concerns informally because going through the legal system is as difficult for the *Bhabin* as it is for an average citizen. “Who can understand better than us how burdensome (*berat*) the system is?” an officer quipped, explaining proudly that he is well-liked in his community because he can help them work around it: “we call it problem-solving.”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Said in anticipation of a government ban on Islamist organization Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI).

<sup>82</sup> Interview # 10, Male, Community Guidance Unit, Bogor City Police, Bogor City, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017

<sup>83</sup> Interview #21, Male, *Bhabinkamtibmas*, Bogor City Police, Bogor City, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017

The citizen-police interaction observed in the Indonesian city of Bogor, illustrates the tension between contemporary pressures of state-building and the inertia of a system that has long relied on civil society to combat security threats. On the surface, a massive expansion of the police force is underway across the country, enhancing its coercive reach in society. In practice, when the street-level representative of this rapidly growing force arrives at his post, he finds himself beholden to an old system that requires him to earn the cooperation of local community leaders. He depends on these leaders' goodwill for crowd control during communal conflicts, fine-grained surveillance against terror suspects and even operational funds for daily needs. In exchange for this cooperation, a low-ranking officer cannot overhaul his institution's public service delivery in the area. He does have the discretion, however, to provide a private service to the leaders: helping them get away with the use of extra-legal violence to regulate local order.

This chapter proposes a new theory of impunity for extra-legal violence to explain rising levels of vigilantism in developing democracies. Contrary to existing explanations, it claims that vigilantism flourishes not when the state is weak, but when its strength can be leveraged by vigilantes to protect them from the risks of engaging in violence. Section one describes the factors that generate impunity for vigilantism. When states are dependent on civil society for combating existential threats, they initially regulate compliance with coercive tasks through political control. A simultaneous decline in this political control over civil society leaders and the expansion of the state's formal coercive presence can generate security trade-offs for street-level state agents. In order to earn communities' cooperation in fighting national menaces, street-level cops have to allow latitude for violence against local threats. Section three describes how the confluence of dependence on civic structures and state expansion produce impunity. Three mechanisms are identified: a) atomization of the interaction between state and society

incentivizes provision of private service by resource constrained street-level bureaucrats; b) increased access to a dedicated cop builds trust that is necessary for extra-legal transactions and; c) the presence of a larger police force improves credibility of impunity. Section four engages the broader literature on political violence to examine alternative causal mechanisms. While the police have incentives to provide impunity to vigilantes, they are also compelled to regulate the violence and prevent escalation into chaos. Thus, instead of anarchy or state sanction, impunity for vigilantism results from quotidian, street-level negotiation between state and society about mutually acceptable boundaries of violence. Section five concludes by laying out the empirical implications of my theory, along with the scope conditions that circumscribe it.

### **3.1 Factors that generate impunity for vigilantism**

Scholars have long challenged the idea that states have a monopoly over the legitimate use of violence within their territories. This is especially the case in developing countries, where a host of non-state security actors such as gangs, militias and paramilitary organizations co-exist alongside otherwise functional states. Of the several critiques of the ideal Weberian state model,<sup>84</sup> two dominant perspectives need to be reviewed briefly. One explains the presence of informal sources of coercion in society in terms of gaps in state capacity. It holds the view that the state is an entity that is distinct from society, driven by its own institutional interests (Skocpol 1979). It also agrees with the idea that chief among the state's interests, is to achieve the Weberian ideal through the elimination of challenges to its authority (Tilly 1993). Even so, most states do not have the resources or the reach to enforce their authority evenly and so they draw on cooperation of non-state actors to maintain control over their territories (O'Donnell 1993; Herbst 2000; Staniland 2012; Acemoglu, Robinson, and Santos 2013).

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<sup>84</sup> For a review of various approaches to studying the state see (Wulf 2007) and (Vu 2010).

A second perspective rejects the analytical separation of state from society (Migdal 2001). It claims that description of the state as a controlling organization with a coherent set of interests is only an image. In practice, the state is highly fragmented, comprised of loosely defined parts in the form of various bureaucracies at different levels, represented by numerous agents. These parts of the state are enmeshed with society, along with other organizations that are capable of wielding coercion. While there may be an image of coherence at the macro-level, in everyday life, each fragment of the state represents one of the many social groups competing for dominance.

The aspiring-Weberian state theories are useful for explaining how various parts of the state can, at times, overcome their fragmentation to fight existential threats from separatists and foreign invaders. On the other hand, the state-in-society approach is essential for grasping why, at most other times, states and their agents act in ways that contradict these overarching interests.

A middle path between these two approaches is needed for understanding how and why impunity for vigilantism is produced. First, we need to think about the state's security interests in terms of priorities that require making trade-offs. While states have an institutional imperative to monopolize sources of coercion by eliminating rivals, these challengers are ranked both in order of their relative importance but also on the basis of available resources or capacity. This means it is possible to relinquish a relatively lower-ranking priority as long as doing so can help attain a higher-ranking goal.

Second, we need to consider how such priority trade-offs vary at different levels of the state. Elite-level formulation of security priorities may be driven by bureaucratic politics (Downs 1965), threat assessments (Staniland, Mir, and Lalwani 2018), concerns about transparency (Jackson 2011; Beeson, Bellamy, and Bellamy 2012; Narang and Staniland 2018) as well as

political risks of security sector reform (Hinton 2006; Uddin 2011; Marat 2018). However, street-level agents of the state that bear the brunt of enforcing these policies face a different set of constraints (Lipsky 1980). Not only are such front-line bureaucrats resource constrained, they sit at the interface between state and society, seeking compliance from citizens who may be dissatisfied with their institution as a whole. Caught between pressure from above and ground realities, street-level agents of the state use their discretion to make additional trade-offs. In some institutional settings, they may be required to undermine some of the state's lower-ranking priorities in order to achieve compliance with ones that rank higher.

The theory presented in this chapter claims that impunity for vigilantism is produced as a result of discretionary decision-making by street-level policemen, who are trying to enforce the state's security priorities within a specific set of institutional constraints. These constraints comprise of: a) a legacy of state's dependence on civil society for security tasks and; b) diminishing ability to seek civil society's compliance for these tasks through political control over its leaders. In this context, street-level cops need the goodwill of communities they serve to be able to service the priorities set by their superiors, such as monitoring potential terrorists or preventing communal violence. For an individual cop, earning community goodwill for enforcement of a higher order, can require accepting a low-level of disorder, by helping communities get away with vigilantism.

### 3.1.1 State's dependence on civil society for coercive functions

In exploring non-state sources of security, existing scholarship has evaluated the role of civil society organizations mainly as a *substitute* for the state, rather than a *complement* to its coercive power. One influential study stresses the importance of in-group policing in preventing spirals of inter-ethnic conflict (Fearon and Laitin 1996). The main intuition behind this theory is

that while ethnic tensions are quite prevalent in diverse societies, they spiral into violent conflicts on relatively rare occasions. Most of the time, rival ethnic groups are able to avoid violence by setting a self-fulfilling expectation that individuals who commit transgressions against the rival group will be punished severely by their own leaders. Building on this idea, others have argued that the social capacity for self-policing arises to fill gaps in the formal provision of order by the state (Tajima 2014b). Here, the argument is that communities that are removed from the influence of the state, develop autonomous mechanisms for preserving order. Instead of engaging in out-group punishment that can spiral into widespread conflict, these communities practice in-group punishment of members who offend a rival. Gradual state intervention in these previously ungoverned areas, makes communities reliant on help from the police and military to control ethnic conflicts, weakening their capacity for autonomous in-group policing (Tajima 2014b, 28).

A second perspective contends that inter-ethnic civic organizations are key for preventing outbreaks of ethnic violence (Varshney 2002). These local-level organizations are most effective in urban areas when they are associational in nature, i.e. based on commonly shared professional affiliation between members of different ethnic groups. Spirals of ethnic violence are often triggered by anticipatory attacks based on misinformation about the intentions of a rival group. The presence of thick associational networks between ethnic groups that require frequent interactions between members, can help avoid violence by exchanging credible information with the other group and dispelling false rumors about impending attacks. Here too, civil society organizations are defined as being independent of state intervention (Varshney 2002, 40). Moreover, those inter-ethnic associations that are formed from ‘above’ with state influence are found to be less effective than those that grow organically from below (Varshney 2002, 47).

In contrast to these studies, scholars seeking to explore societal complements to state power have focused on ‘uncivil’ society organizations such as militias, paramilitaries and gangs, whose primary function is coercion. This trend is driven by the empirical observation that increasingly, even reasonably functional states deploy pre-existing societal groups or assemble new informal outfits to perform specific security tasks. Some scholars attribute this phenomenon to political needs of different regimes. One set claim that authoritarian rulers face a security dilemma (Svolik 2013). While they need to use repression to maintain control, strengthening formal military and police makes them more vulnerable to a coup from leaders of these organizations. Thus, autocrats invest in militias and paramilitaries outside the state structures for ‘coup proofing’ their rule (Belkin and Schofer 2005; Davis 2010; Driscoll 2015; Carey, Colaresi, and Mitchell 2016). Another set of theories show that democracies are more likely to deploy such organizations due to reputational concerns. Democratic governments are under pressure both from their domestic constituencies and from the international community to uphold basic standards of human rights in combat. Thus, deploying militias to do the dirty work of repression in conflict zones gives democratic leaders the ‘plausible deniability’ they need to protect their reputation (Campbell and Brenner 2000; Mazzei 2009; Mitchell, Carey, and Butler 2014).

Other studies emphasize structural factors to explain states’ reliance on militias. One such theory describes this relationship as the result of deep historical factors (Ahram 2011). It predicts that states that follow a revolutionary path to decolonization are more likely to see the emergence of non-state militias compared to those that gain independence by non-violent means. Following decolonization, the threat of foreign invasion can compel states to integrate militias into the formal coercive apparatus for battlefield effectiveness. When the security challenges faced by the state are mostly domestic, there is no operational impetus for such integration. Another claim is

that militias, vigilante organizations and private police, emerge due to the co-evolution of private and public violence (Obert 2018). The key idea here is that states build their coercive institutions upon the social conditions they inherit at their inception. These initial constraints shape the way long term state-building processes unfold and do not necessarily lead to a monopolizing impulse to centralize means of coercion. Thus, when the informal and formal coercive actors share the same goals, they can strengthen each other. A third perspective holds that states' relationship with different armed groups is determined by a combination of their operational usefulness and ideological overlap (Staniland 2015). Militias that are ideologically aligned with the state's goals and are operationally useful in combat against external threats are likely to be incorporated, while those that oppose the state and have no operational value are suppressed. Most state-militia relationships lie in the middle of these two extremes, ranging from collusion to containment.

This dissertation builds on the growing scholarship about relationships between formal and informal sources of coercion by examining the ways in which states depend on *civil* society to *complement* their coercive capacity. In some ways, all states expect the support of their citizens for law-enforcement. Neighborhood watches, anonymous tips, see-something-say-something initiatives, and other good Samaritan deeds play a crucial role in effective management of law and order, even in highly developed countries. This expectation of support takes the form of institutional dependence when a) a state faces constant existential security threats b) formal state security institutions to combat these threats are built around the expectation of standardized forms of support from civil society and c) the interaction between state officials and citizens is mediated through middle-men, who use their social authority to coordinate the support of communities they lead. Overtime, this dependence can lead the state to organize civil society into standardized civic structures that sit at the interface of state and

society. On the one hand, these structures are independent of the state as they perform most of their functions without much state support or intervention. On the other hand, they are linked to the state for particular kinds of security functions and can be relied upon to service the state's goals in predictable ways. In other words, instead of waiting for voluntary self-policing by intra-ethnic groups or information bridging by inter-ethnic organizations, states develop mechanisms for compelling civic organizations to perform these functions and others as required.

Across much of the developing world, states rely on various forms of civic structures for making society legible to them and for enforcing their policies through social coercion. Compared to assembling militias and paramilitaries, building civic structures from scratch is difficult. Thus, states mobilize civil society for coercive functions by drawing on pre-existing structures of social authority. This is why the origins and composition of these structures vary widely. In East and Southeast Asia, Japanese rule bequeathed former colonies with grass-roots administrative bodies in the form of neighborhood associations. The original purpose of these structures was to mobilize personnel and resources for the war effort. After independence, neighborhood associations in Indonesia, Singapore, China, Taiwan and the Philippines, have been retained by successive governments, who have tweaked their coercive functions to suit their specific security needs (Read 2012; Read and Pekkanen 2013; Tomba 2014). In South Asia, British colonial authorities managed local order through structures that were more communal in orientation. This legacy of dependence lives on through the *khap/gram panchayat* of North India (Yadav 2009; Venkatesu 2016), *jirga* in Pakistan and Afghanistan (Rubin 2006; Siddique 2013) and the *shalish* system in Bangladesh (Berger 2017). Revolutionary movements can also result in the formation of grassroots civic structures that survive to become an integral part of governance and front-line guard against anti-revolutionary activities. Examples include Iran's infamous

*Komiteh* (Shenon 1990), the Sandista Defense Committees in Nicaragua (Luciak 1990) and Committees for the Defense of the Revolution in Cuba (Aguirre 2002).

Civil society structures that are deployed for security management by states are different from organizations like militias and paramilitaries because coercion is not their primary function. In fact, they can serve as sites of genuine civic engagement and provide welfare services to communities, either independent of the state or in consort with it. These services range from collecting funds to pay for health expenses or funerals in poor families, arranging sports events and festivals for major holidays; running micro-loan schemes as well as mediation of disputes between community members.

The leaders of these structures act as an interface between the state and communities, mediating access on each side. For the citizens, they can often help facilitate access to state services like subsidies and infrastructure repairs by helping them navigate intimidating or opaque bureaucratic processes. In case of crises, they also serve as the first point of contact for community members, who rely on their judgement to determine which matters require involvement of state officials and which ones are best resolved internally. For the state, these leaders are often indispensable for grassroots socialization of major policy initiatives like family planning and vaccination drives, as well as coordination of relief efforts during natural disasters.

The multi-purpose nature of these civic structures, their reach into communities and legitimacy due to provision of genuine support and services, renders them an ideal tool for making society legible to the state. This is possible in two ways. First, civic structures are especially useful for mass surveillance against enemies that can easily blend in with the rest of the population, such as political dissidents, terrorists or separatist sympathizers. Surveillance can take the form of informal monitoring by communities and reporting to designated state officials.

It can also be institutionalized through administrative requirements such as mandatory reporting of new community members, letters of verification from the leaders for accessing essential state services as well as exit-entry logs for visitors. Second, civic structures and their leaders can help the state read local hierarchies and draw on social sources of authority for crowd control in times of crises. This is especially the case for states that have limited capacity for providing effective direct intervention in ethnic conflicts. Officials in such states may draw on the authority of both ethnic leaders for in-group policing to prevent counter-attacks and civic leaders for out-group communication to avoid anticipatory mobilization. Even in cases of mass demonstrations against government policy and political protests, leaders of civic structures can dissuade their communities from participation or in extreme cases prohibit it.

Just as grassroots civic structures can help the state exercise control over its population, they can also be called upon to mobilize the same population in support of state security goals. It is common for neighborhood level organizations to have youth wings, night watches and self-defense groups that can be brought together at relatively short notice to sweep their areas for potential suspects, guard strategic locations and provide a backup to formal security forces in times of crises. Rulers of party-based authoritarian regimes can also rely on these civic structures, especially ethnic councils, to mobilize and monitor voter support in elections and punish sympathizers of rival parties with social sanctions.

Deploying these civic structures for security management is operationally efficient for states. Compared to armed militias and paramilitaries that can be violent towards ordinary citizens, these structures can perform coercive tasks with a softer touch, reducing the risk of backlash. The benefits of drawing on civic structures are even greater for insecure authoritarian rulers. Investing in militias and other informal armed groups may provide some coup proofing

against challenges from the military or police. However, as militias grow in size and resources, they can also shift loyalties and point their guns against former allies. Civic structures, on the other hand, are at once omnipresent and fragmented. As such, their deployment to complement the state's coercive capacity has two advantages: a) they can efficiently perform their coercive tasks without the need for heavy police and military presence and; b) they are unlikely to launch a coordinated challenge to the rulers' authority.

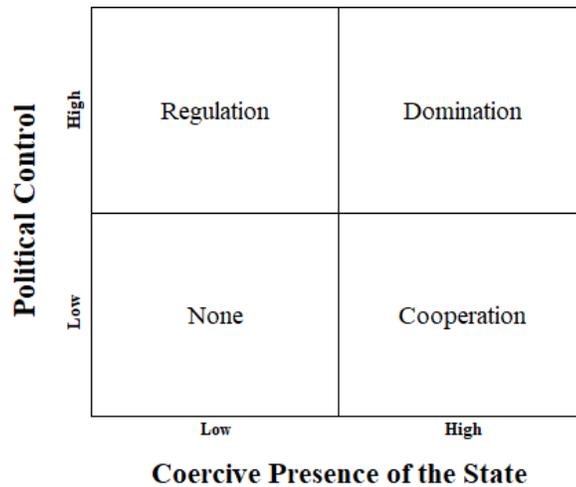
### 3.1.2 Shifting modes of compliance and the resulting trade-offs

Despite these advantages, deploying civic structures for coercive functions is not always possible. As mentioned earlier, these kinds of institutions are difficult to build from scratch. Either they evolve slowly on their own as is the case with caste, tribal and ethnic councils in South Asia, or they are formed through extraordinarily repressive means as done by the Japanese army in Southeast Asia. Once formed, however, these structures are difficult to dismantle because they perform a multitude of social and administrative functions that may be independent to the state but are essential to its interaction with citizens. This is why these structures tend to be bequeathed from one political system to another, where new rulers may repurpose them to meet emerging security and administrative needs.

As civic structures transition through different phases of political development, the state's ability to draw on their legitimacy and reach into society for security management may vary. The mode of obtaining compliance for coercive functions from civic structures depends on two factors. First is the level of political control over the leadership of these localized bodies and the second is the level of state's formal coercive presence in communities. Political control refers to the degree to which states can intervene in the appointment and dismissal of leaders, based on their willingness to perform assigned tasks. The state's formal coercive presence refers to the

penetration of these communities by formal police or military personnel, who interact directly with their leaders. Together, these two factors determine the mode of compliance that governs the deployment of civic structures for coercive functions (Figure 3.1).

**Figure 3.1 Modes of Seeking Compliance from Civic Structures for Security Management**



***Domination***

When states are able to maintain high levels of political control over civic structures along with high levels of formal state presence, compliance is sought through *domination*. Leaders of civic structures may be appointed and salaried by the state and/or their actions may be subject to direct monitoring and micro-management. This mode of compliance is rare because maintaining high levels of police presence in communities is costly. Direct appointment of leaders or too much intervention in their work can also undermine the legitimacy of civic structures, off-setting the operational advantages of their deployment. As such, compliance through domination can only be achieved by a high performing authoritarian regime that has the

coercive capacity to maintain sufficient political control, as well as the economic resources to maintain a high citizen-police ratio.<sup>85</sup>

### ***Regulation***

A second mode of seeking compliance from civic structures is *regulation* through high levels of political control and low levels of formal state presence. Just as direct appointment of leaders can undermine the legitimacy of civic structures, allowing communities to elect their own representatives freely can make these structures vulnerable to capture by opponents.

Furthermore, elected leaders' sympathies are more likely to be skewed in favor of the communities whom they represent rather than the state, making it difficult to obtain their compliance with potentially unpopular tasks. States overcome these problems by instituting mixed-systems that give communities some say in choosing their leaders but regulate their compliance through multi-level monitoring. Designated state-officials may filter candidate lists based on input from leaders at different levels to rule out individuals who may not be willing to or able to perform coercive tasks for the state. They may also have the authority to dismiss leaders for non-compliance.

The state's ability to maintain high levels of political control over the selection of these leaders, depends on the nature of the political regime. Authoritarian regimes or democracies that are dominated by hegemonic parties are able to exert higher levels of political control over the selection and approval process. Rulers in such political systems maintain some form of centralized control over security and civil bureaucracies that can make it easier for them to monitor leaders and find ways to replace them in case of noncompliance. Regulation is a more

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<sup>85</sup> Perhaps Singapore can serve as a rare example of this combination of high citizen-police ratio and high political control over civic structures for security management.

efficient mode of compliance compared to domination as it can help the state maintain control over large sections of the population, with relatively low police and military presence.

### ***Absent***

The ability to seek compliance is *absent* in states that inherit a dependence on civic structures but lack the capacity to impose political control over them and do not have the ability to mobilize high levels of direct military and police presence. This is most likely to occur when states with regulatory modes of compliance undergo political liberalization or a democratic transition. In an open political system, the election of local leaders becomes competitive and their removal or censure by bureaucrats is subject to a higher level of public scrutiny. Moreover, leaders of grassroots civic structures in democratic settings can protest their removal and seek redress in judicial or legislative bodies. The loss of ability to seek compliance from these structures on whom the state depends for security management can make a transitioning polity vulnerable to widespread insecurity and violence.

### ***Cooperation***

Recovering from loss of compliance from civic structures could involve one of two possibilities: a) in transitions that represent a clean break from the past, new political leadership could dismantle the state's dependence on these structures and end their coercive functions through deep reform of the police, military and intelligence agencies; b) when transitions do not bring about such a break, old elites may avoid deep reform and instead seek to regain compliance from civic structures through the expansion of the state's own unreformed coercive apparatus.

Increasing the level of formal coercive presence to compensate for low political control over civic structures can improve compliance. However, the mode of seeking compliance shifts from regulation to *cooperation*. This is the result of two changes. First, leaders of civic structures

face no political consequences for non-compliance, so they can be selective in how they perform their coercive tasks and can expect something in return for their services. Second, the level of interaction between the state and leaders of civic structures shifts from high-level to street-level officials, who need to earn the leaders' cooperation without having the ability to provide much in return.

At the micro level, the shift in mode of compliance to *cooperation* generates incentives for street-level police officers to provide impunity for extra-legal violence as a way to earn the goodwill of civic leaders that is necessary for combating high level threats faced by the state. The street-level cop uses his discretion to provide impunity as a private service whenever he can, because alone, he cannot earn the community leaders' trust by improving the public service delivery by his organization. What this means is, instead of enforcing the law, its street-level agents are under pressure to help communities find safe ways of breaking it. At the macro-level, this micro-dynamic cumulatively creates security trade-offs for the state as it now has to tolerate low levels of extra-legal violence against local offenses, in order to effectively combat national level threats.

### **3.2 Mechanics of impunity for extra-legal violence**

#### 3.2.1 Why do vigilantes need impunity?

Vigilantes need impunity to protect them from the risk of legal and social reprisals. As explained in the preceding chapter, vigilantism is shaped by a combination of motivations and fears. Dissatisfaction with law-enforcement, rising insecurity or perceptions of excessive leniency of the legal system may make citizens want to take the law in their own hands. Their ability to act on this desire, however, is constrained by two fears. First, vigilantes anticipate the risk of legal reprisals against them. Vigilante violence is considered unlawful in most countries

and is punishable by the law. It is also a very public act in which a large group of people witness perpetrators violently punish an alleged offender . As such, participation in violence during a lynching can result in serious consequences if the victim's family is able to pursue the legal process. Vigilantism has some social legitimacy in most developing countries where citizens are generally frustrated by the police's performance. As such, legal prosecution of vigilantes is more likely if a) the profile of the victim or his alleged offense does not fit with a broader perception of acceptable vigilantism or; b) when the victims' family is influential enough to demand justice. Second, vigilantes also fear the risk of counter-attacks from the victims' families. In the absence of legal recourse, the victims' relatives can mobilize themselves into attacking the perpetrators for revenge. The likelihood of such counterattacks is likely to be highest in ethnically diverse society that have a history of ethnic tensions.

Collective citizen rage towards state inefficiencies and lack of security provision can produce sporadic acts of vigilantism, in the form of incidents where citizens do not care about the consequences. However, for vigilantism to become a systematic tool for the regulation of local order in the way we have seen across the developing world in recent years, perpetrators need some credible assurance that they will be protected from the consequences of their actions.

### 3.2.2 What comprises impunity?

Street-level state agents can provide impunity in one of two ways. First, state agents can physically thwart large-counter attacks from the victims' families when they fear that it may lead to an ethnic or religious escalation. Effectively preventing revenge attacks requires a substantial ground presence of the state's security forces. Second, local cops can prevent legal investigations against vigilantes by using their discretion for registering and investigating criminal cases. They may teach vigilantes 'tricks' to conduct their actions in a way that demonstrates the (alleged)

offense of the victim and eliminates evidence of individual vigilantes' involvement in the violence. They may use their influence to persuade journalists or other civil society members to refrain from reporting the specifics of the incident, especially the role played by any influential leaders. Finally, street-level police can use their official powers to intimidate victims' families and dissuade them from filing legal charges or mounting a revenge attack. Families of victims that come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds are most vulnerable to such intimidation, but the relatives of well-off victims may be scared away from legal action with threats of defamation. When necessary, they may even broker a compensation from the perpetrators for the victim's family as a way to avoid further hostilities.

Impunity for extra-legal violence thus provided by state agents is both selective and revocable. State agents interacting with the vigilantes have to use their discretion to decide whether or not impunity can be offered, on a case-by-case basis. Their decisions are based on two considerations. First, street-level cops are concerned about maintaining good future relations with leaders of communities involved in vigilantism, whose support they need for meeting operational needs and performance of daily tasks. Helping the leaders find a way around the legal system, even for such a serious offense, can go a long way in building the officers' social capital. Second, such an agent must also weigh in the priorities of his superiors, whose good graces are key to his personal advancement. The preference of higher-ranking officers is to avoid any media scandals or large-scale violent mobilization that can damage their reputation with their own superiors. Thus, the street-level cop must be selective in offering impunity, based on his assessment of the victims' profile and his ability to thwart a revenge attack from the victims' family. Moreover, he must revoke impunity if the situation changes, for example a revenge attack can no longer be avoided, or the victims' family turn out to have more influence than

originally thought. It is possible that street-level state agents may charge an informal fee to the vigilantes for performing these transactions. However, given the risk of escalation attached to vigilantism and to their long-term career, their decision is less likely to be swayed by monetary compensation. As such, money may be expected more as a facilitation fee rather than as a condition for impunity.

### 3.2.2 How does the expansion of formal coercive apparatus make vigilantism more likely?

Impunity for vigilantism is produced when there is an expansion of the formal coercive apparatus in a state that needs the cooperation of civic structures for security management. This combination of legacy and change produce three mechanisms that can turn the state's formal coercive apparatus into an insurance policy for the vigilantes, making vigilante violence more likely.

First, atomization of the interaction between state security agents and communities in developing countries creates incentives for impunity. In some public service sectors such as the provision or repair of small infrastructure, direct interface of service demanding citizens and service providing street-level bureaucrats may increase responsiveness and improve the delivery of public services. In the security sector, however, the provision of public order cannot be improved by the efforts of a single, street-level cop posted in a community. Scaling down the level of interaction between the state and society in this setting means that the street-level state agent that is most directly affected by public dissatisfaction with the performance of his institution is least empowered to address them through the formal system. This in turn creates strong incentives for a street-level cop to demonstrate his responsiveness to community needs privately, through extra-legal means. When levels of public dissatisfaction with the police are

already high, this private service for communities by street-level cops takes the form of impunity for vigilantism, increasing the likelihood of vigilante violence.

Second, increased community access to street-level cops allows for trust-building through repeated interactions, which is a necessary condition for impunity to be effective. Trust is an important part of any illegal transaction, as there is no way to guarantee its enforcement. Furthermore, impunity for extra-legal violence is both selective and revocable. This means that a reasonable amount of trust needs to exist between the street-level cop and community leaders for them to develop an expectation of impunity and act on it. Embedded presence of a street-level cop in a community can help build this trust through informal conversations, social interactions and cooperation on other extra-legal deeds. Once this trust is tested through an incident where the community is successfully able to obtain impunity, it may serve as a strong signal for the future, paving the way for more acts of vigilantism.

Finally, an increase in the number of street-level police agents increases the likelihood of vigilantism for two reasons. One, a higher number of street-level agents spread out across communities means that atomized interactions are taking place with an increasing number of communities. This means that the sites in which impunity can be produced are increasing, and so is the likelihood of vigilantism. Second, a higher presence of ground-level security forces is more likely to be able to effectively thwart large-scale revenge attacks from the victims' families. As such, visible presence of a high number of security agents increases the credibility of impunity offered by their dedicated cop, encouraging communities to engage in more vigilantism.

### **3.3 Theoretical scope and alternative explanations**

Existing scholarship that examines the role of state response in explaining collective violence can be classified along a continuum that represents the level of control exercised by the

state over perpetrators (Figure 3.2). On one end of this continuum are theories that emphasize anarchy as a condition that produces collective violence. Proponents of these theories view the state as the ultimate arbiter of conflicts in society and deems its strong presence essential for order (Bates 2008). In the aftermath of state collapse, when it can no longer constrain rival ethnic groups, anticipation of violent attacks can trigger a security dilemma, creating spirals of ethnic conflict (Posen 1993). Endemic state weakness, or uneven control over its territory, can also increase the likelihood of insurgency, by lowering the opportunity cost of challenging the state (Fearon and Laitin 2003). On the other end of this continuum are explanations that emphasize the state's agency in organizing mass murder. Studies of genocides and pogroms examine cases where the state actively sanctions violence against sections of society, by mobilizing and directing civilian death squads, often alongside its soldiers (Staub 1989; Valentino 2005; Straus 2008; Kopstein and Wittenberg 2018).

**Figure 3.2 Level of state control and collective violence**



The theory presented in this chapter lies in the middle of this continuum. It claims that vigilantism is a form of violence that becomes rife because states exercise selective control over perpetrators. At the micro-level, interaction between street-level state agents and society produce selective impunity for vigilantism that is based on concerns about public scandals and the risk of escalation. The two sides read each other's changing constraints on a regular basis and adjust the boundaries of impunity, through trial and error. At the macro-level, the provision of selective

impunity and its boundaries aggregate to represent the *latitude* a state allows society for eliminating local threats, in order to keep its support for combating national menaces. Although the degree of latitude is determined by micro-level interactions, it adds up to a threshold of disorder that is acceptable to the state, beyond which it is likely to exercise its control over perpetrators to stop them.

Allowing latitude for violence, below a certain threshold, does not imply an inability to punish perpetrators, or weak state capacity. Instead, it suggests that the configuration of the state's capacity is such that some forms of violence have to be tolerated in order to combat others. This can explain why high levels of vigilantism are being observed alongside a decline in large-scale violence such as riots and civil wars. Allowing society latitude for vigilantism is also not the same as sanctioning it. Street-level state agents are rarely involved in deciding which offenses get classified by communities as worthy of violent punishment, determination of an alleged offender's guilt or the violence itself. They grant impunity by protecting perpetrators from the consequences of their actions and encouraging them in the process. This is similar to the dynamic that is often observed in state's ineffective response to domestic violence. State agents do not sanction violence by domestic partners. However, they can make such violence more likely by acknowledging the partner's authority in the domain of his household and helping him get away with it.

### 3.3.1 Why do states allow latitude for violence?

Existing literature offers two main explanations for states' selective intervention to stop violence, despite having a reasonable capacity for doing so. The first reason is apathy. For historical reasons, states may simply be disinterested in exercising control over certain territories or social domains, leaving the population to govern itself (Slater and Kim 2015). Alternatively,

state elites may shirk their responsibility to punish mob violence and crime towards socially underprivileged groups because of indifference towards their welfare. Overtime, such elites may become complicit in encouraging violence against large-sections of society by turning a blind eye to it (Kleinfeld and Barham 2018).

Similar to these explanations, my theory of impunity maintains a focus on median capacity states that have the ability to punish but choose to withhold it. It does not explain why vigilantism may occur under anarchy or why it tends to be absent in very high capacity cases. Unlike apathy-based explanations, however, I claim that state agents care about vigilantism because it carries the possibility of escalation into larger forms of violence. If median capacity states were uniformly apathetic to mob violence, they would run the risk of escalation into uncontrolled chaos, ultimately weakening state capacity over time. The reason why states are able to allow latitude for low level of disorder and still maintain order at a higher level is because they set thresholds for acceptable types and levels of violence. While there may be instances of oversight, overall these boundaries are maintained by punishing deviations. Thus, median capacity states maintain parallel realms of order and disorder not by turning a blind eye towards vigilantism, but by keeping one eye open.

The second explanation for states' selective intervention to stop collective violence is political benefit of the elected elites that run them (Wilkinson 2006). It claims that in ethnically divided societies, provision of state services, including protection from collective violence is driven by electoral logics. This logic determines the selective nature of state intervention and thus patterns of violence in times of communal tensions. An incumbent politician whose re-election bid depends on the homogenous vote bank of a majority ethnic group, is less likely to use state power at his disposal to stop riots against ethnic minorities. In contrast, a politician

whose prospects of electoral victory depend on attracting votes from the beleaguered minority is more likely to use state power to stop the violence. This electoral logic of intervention has also been used to explain the state's lack of response to other, non-violent, violations of the law (Holland 2017). Elected politicians may use their ability to withhold punishment for violation of the law as a form of public service delivery to the poor, in order to attract their votes.

My proposed theory attributes latitude for violence to institutional imperatives that outlast transient political gains by individual politicians. When states are dependent on the cooperation of civic structures for security management, a street-level cop needs the goodwill of the community he serves to seek their compliance with assigned coercive tasks. He uses his discretion to allow some infractions of the law as they allow him to maintain his ability to satisfy the priorities of his superiors. These small choices, made at the street-level, cumulatively define the security trade-offs built into the state's institutional design. Under these constraints, latitude for vigilantism has to be allowed in order to combat existential threats to state. While elected individuals in charge of the state's security forces may be able to direct vigilantism towards particular kinds of targets, their political considerations are unlikely to affect the long-term functioning of the system.

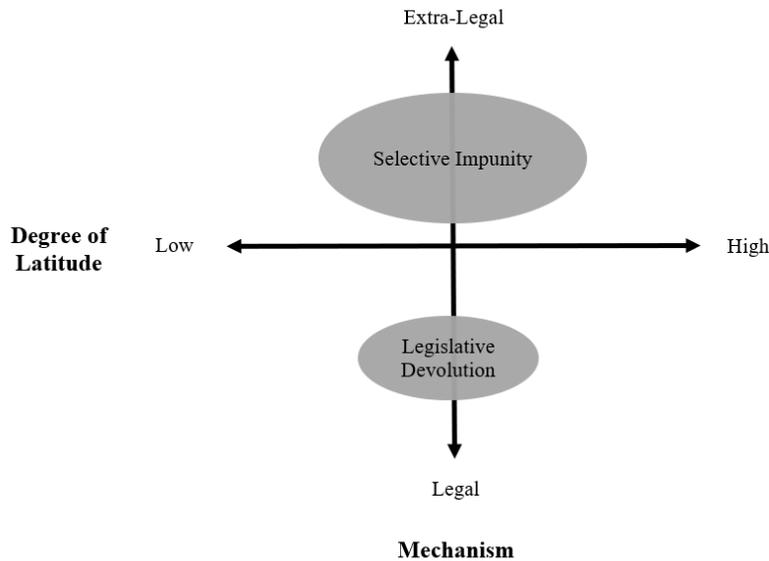
Electoral incentives for selective enforcement differ from institutional imperatives in two important ways. Electoral explanations imply a transactional logic where a decision is made in exchange for a particular outcome in the near future, e.g. intervening in riots against minorities in order to get minority vote share. Selective enforcement due to institutional imperatives is governed by a relational logic. A street-level cop does not expect a coercive service from leaders of civic structures every-time he helps them find an extra-legal solution to a problem. It is in his interest to build social capital or goodwill with the community that he can draw on when needed.

Moreover, electoral theory of selective intervention assumes that elected political elites exercise full agency over security forces, who can be ordered to intervene or stand down during collective violence. As such this theory only applies to those states where the control over the police is decentralized. Institutional imperatives for tolerating violence can exist in both centralized and de-centralized settings as they concern the structure of the state and not the interests of those who govern it.

### 3.3.2 How do states allow latitude for violence?

When institutional imperatives exist for selective enforcement, latitude for violence can be allowed through legal or extra-legal measures (Figure 3.3). Legal options for responding to vigilante demands involve delegation of power through legislative instruments that allow local communities to exercise discretion in a) defining which offenses threaten order and/or; b) determining the best ways to respond to them. In a broader sense, this strategy allows for customization of the law to local needs. A second way in which state agents can allow latitude for vigilantes is through extra-legal means, i.e. impunity. This involves by shielding violators from the legal and social consequences of their actions. Unlike delegation of power granted through legal means that tends to be programmatic and difficult to revoke, impunity is discretionary—applied on a case-by-case basis—and is easy to revoke.

**Figure 3.3 Options for allowing latitude for vigilantism**



What determines whether vigilantes' demands are met legal or extra-legal means? A number of factors seem to be at play. First, it depends on the general constitutional framework of the state. Federalized systems tend to allow more room for meeting variation in demands for harsher punishments for certain crimes. One example of this is the state's position on death penalty, which, in federal systems like the United States can be decided by individual provinces. This level of delegation is unlikely to emerge in centralized states that emphasize uniformity of criminal law. In centralized states, devolution may be allowed in some restricted domains based on local claims of morality or tradition, for example laws governing sexual relations and religious offense. Second, the kind of autonomy that can be obtained also depends on the point of contact between the state and the vigilantes. In most cases of vigilante violence, representatives of a small community interact with a street-level bureaucrat in the police force. As such, neither party has the ability to either demand or provide an amendment to the law and the only possibility is obtaining an exception in its enforcement. Vigilante demands are more likely to be

addressed through legal devolution of power when they bring together large number of communities around a specific issue and are articulated through political platforms.

Third, even when vigilante demands have been accommodated through legal means, impunity may still be needed. Programmatic devolution through legal means tends to be highly restrictive as it has to conform with the constitutional framework. While such measures can make accommodate vigilante demands by criminalizing certain offenses, they do not give vigilantes the ability to determine guilt of a suspect or decide the appropriate punishment. In contrast, extra-legal impunity can allow for a wider range of violent actions as it discretionary and negotiable on a case-by-case basis with local officials.

### **3.4 Empirical implications**

The theory presented in this chapter implies that state-presence is necessary for vigilantes to feel safe. While communities may not trust a police officer to enforce the law, they need to be able to trust him to help them break it. In a context where there are institutional imperatives for allowing society latitude for violence, expansion of the state can serve as insurance for vigilantes against the risks of engaging in violence. The presence of more policemen in more communities increases the frequency of impunity in terms of avoiding legal reprisals, but also improves its credibility as a more capable police force is better able to prevent revenge attacks.

The next three chapters will test the empirical implications of this theory based on multiple types of evidence from Indonesia. As a single country case, Indonesia has a long legacy of dependence on civic structures for vigilantism. Chapter 4 details the nature of this dependence in Indonesia and how the country has gone through different modes of seeking compliance from these structures, with very different outcomes in terms of the collective violence.

Chapter 5 the implications of my proposed theory against rival explanation from motivation-based theories of vigilantism, state-apathy and electoral logics. The first implication is that in the context of present-day Indonesia, where there is a dependence on civic structure for security management and the mode of compliance has shifted to cooperation, expansion of the state's coercive apparatus should be associated with higher levels of vigilantism. A second implication is that there should be evidence of a threshold of violence, beyond which the state does not provide impunity because the risks of escalation are too high.

Chapter 6 will provide evidence for the mechanisms through which impunity is generated. Cases where vigilantes were able to get away with violence will be compared with those where state agents were either unable to grant impunity or had to revoke it due to broader considerations of law and order. Finally, two micro-statistical tests will be performed on neighborhood-level data to test the implications of impunity as the key mechanism for vigilantism. The data will show that vigilantism is more-likely to occur in a community that has previously been able to obtain impunity. Moreover, the analysis will link vigilantism to residential neighborhoods, that are critical for negotiating impunity from the state.

## **Part 2: Politics of Impunity in Indonesia**

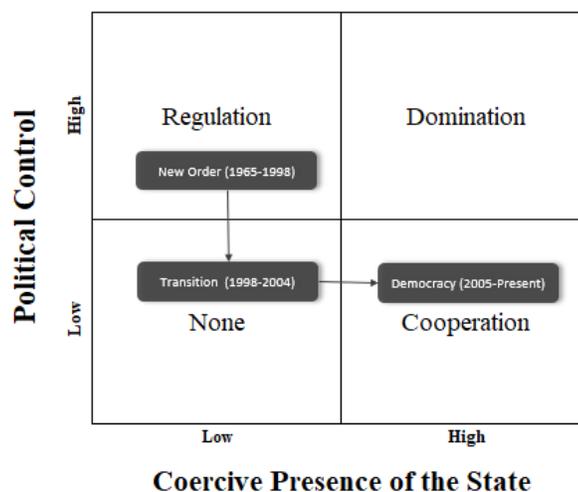
#### 4. Dependence on Neighborhood Associations and Reform

State-building in Indonesia has taken place in response to evolving levels and types of threats. Although this process has unfolded under varying political conditions and institutional constraints, one feature of the Indonesian state that has remained constant is its reliance on informal sources of coercion. Much is known about the role of *uncivil* society groups like militias and paramilitaries in enabling state repression during 32 years of authoritarian rule under the New Order. Relatively less attention has been paid to the state's lasting dependence on *civil* society structures as tools for coercion. How has the state mobilized ordinary communities to serve its shifting security priorities? How has it obtained communities' compliance for coercive tasks through various phases of political development? What has been the effect of this dependence on the configuration of Indonesia's formal coercive institutions? How has reliance on civil society shaped the state's ability to manage different kinds of violence?

This chapter examines the evolution of Indonesia's dependence on coercive functions of a ubiquitous civil society structure, neighborhood associations, collectively known as the RT/RW system (Figure 3.2). Section one explains the repressive origins of neighborhood associations in Indonesia. First set up under Japanese occupation, these grassroots bodies served the dual purpose of mobilizing economic resources for the war effort and maintaining social control to minimize popular resistance. Section two describes the repurposing of these grassroots bodies by the New Order state for mass surveillance against suspected communists and electoral domination of political opponents. Under authoritarian rule, high levels of political control over the leadership of neighborhood associations enabled the state to regulate compliance from these structures even as the state's formal presence in society remained low. Section three examines how the democratic transition and emergence of new security threats have transformed the

relationship between the state and civil society in Indonesia. Dependence on coercive functions of neighborhood associations remain intact as the state continues to need their support for managing new threats from terrorism and communal conflict. However, the mechanisms of political control over these grassroots bodies have collapsed, diminishing the state's ability to seek their compliance with essential security tasks. In order to cope with these changes, successive democratically elected governments in Indonesia have reactivated the coercive functions of neighborhood associations by expanding the presence of the formal police force. Section four discusses how this shift in the mode of compliance from regulation through political control, to cooperation through increased state presence has had a lasting effect on the state's capacity for managing violence. On the one hand, the ability to obtain fine-grained surveillance against terror suspects has enabled Indonesia to contain the threat from radical Islamic groups. Drawing on local leaders' support for in-group policing and cross-ethnic cooperation has also made it possible to prevent the resurgence of transition-era communal conflicts. However, this dependence has made street-level agents of the state beholden to communities' goodwill, incentivizing them to offer impunity for violence against local threats as a way to earn communities' cooperation in managing high-level security priorities. Cumulatively, this combination of legacy and change has produced security trade-offs, where the Indonesian state has to tolerate disorder at the local level to be able to maintain order at the national-level.

**Figure 4.1 Shifting modes of compliance from neighborhood associations in Indonesia**



#### **4.1 Creation of neighborhood associations for wartime mobilization and control**

Early attempts to draw on civil society for policing were made by the Dutch colonial authorities following the communist revolts in 1926. Unlike the localized rebellions they had faced in the past, communism had an international dimension, making it a potentially powerful unifying force against colonial rule (Shiraishi 1997). The need to swiftly forestall the spread of this ideology and recruitment of new members in the Indies, prompted a high-level reorganization of policing and intelligence gathering capacities. The top surveillance body (*Algemeene Recherche Dienst*– ARD) was reformed to develop an extensive system of local spies and informants within urban areas (Poeze 1994; Shiraishi 2003). At the same time, the colonial government prioritized the recruitment of indigenous police officers and post them in rural areas, where they were imbedded in local landscapes of power (Bloembergen 2011). This brief exercise in policing reform ended with the invasion of Japanese forces in 1942, who

brought their own unique systems of control that would have long-lasting effects on state-society relations in Indonesia.

In their new colony, the Japanese Army was faced with the dual challenges of mobilization and control. On the one hand, they needed to mobilize large sections of Indonesian population to maximize economic production for their war effort. On the other hand, they needed reliable mechanisms for social control to monitor compliance with their exploitative policies and minimize popular resistance. In a masterful study of the Japanese occupation, Aiko Kurasawa explains how these competing goals were met through rapid institution building (Kurasawa 1988). Due to its large population and agricultural production, the island of Java became the focus of Japanese efforts to organize society into an efficient production force. These measures included implementation of forced delivery systems for crops, recruitment of forced manual labor (*romusha*), mandatory participation in service associations (*Jawa Hokokai*) and youth committees (*seinendan*), rationing of food through village cooperatives (*kumiai*) as well as combat groups that would later comprise the revolutionary Indonesian Army (*PETA*).

Directing this unprecedented mass mobilization in Java required grassroots mechanisms for control. The Army achieved this by replicating the neighborhood association system (*tonarigumi*) that was already proving to be an effective form of social control in Imperial Japan. Although the *tonarigumi* system was implemented more or less across all Japanese colonies during the War, in Java it involved imposing a granular neighborhood grid on top of the pre-existing village system. Each village was to be headed by a chief (*kucho*), who supervised 3-4 sub-units (*aza jokai*). In turn each head of the *aza jokai* (*azacho*) supervised the smaller *tonarigumi* units, such that each *tonarigumi* head (*kumicho*) was responsible for 10-20 households (Kurasawa 1988, 281).

The official functions of the *tonarigumi* included socialization of government decrees and regulations, increasing the production of rice and other crops, distribution of rationed goods, surveillance of suspected spies and criminals and carrying out any other services to the military government (Kurasawa 1988, 286–87). These functions are identical to those that were assigned to the neighborhood associations in Imperial Japan. Archival evidence shows that significant efforts were made by the Japanese Army’s propaganda wing to connect the work of the associations with the Javanese concept of mutual-help (*gotong royong*). However, voluntary compliance with the Army’s highly exploitative policies was not likely to get the job done. As such, compliance with *tonarigumi* tasks was sought through strict screening and monitoring of its leaders.

The *kucho*, *azacho* or *kumicho* were not salaried officials of the Japanese Army, although they received a small stipend to facilitate their administrative tasks. They were also responsible for securing the support of all other influential individuals in their areas and coordinate with them in monthly meetings. On a day-to-day basis, these leaders had considerable autonomy over how they managed their affairs in order to meet ration and crop delivery targets. The position gave these local leaders immense power over the lives of their residents. Leaders at all three levels were elected by residents through informal polls, however, there were strict restrictions on the profile of persons who could run for these positions to ensure both their willingness and ability to accomplish these tasks. The screening process for nomination and election of the *kucho* was managed directly by Army officials at the sub-district level (*soncho*). In addition to the Dutch-era requirements of gender and criminal record<sup>86</sup> The Japanese added age (must be younger than 50), literacy, physical strength and loyalty requirements that candidates had to

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<sup>86</sup> Women were not allowed to run for the position of the village chief and neither were individuals who had a criminal record, such as gangsters or local toughs.

prove through a formal nomination and approval process (Kurasawa 1988, 602). For the first time, a four-year term limit was placed on the village chief's tenure, after which he would have to seek re-election. Furthermore, new regulations gave the *soncho* power to dismiss uncooperative leaders or punish them through other means for uncooperative behavior or failure to perform assigned tasks. Village leaders screened and elected through this process were responsible for ensuring that only 'reasonable' individuals were elected as *azacho* and *kumicho*.

This new system of administration was instituted rapidly across Java. Administrative records show that the target of 10-20 households per association was achieved by 1944: 508,745 *tonarigumi* units and 64,677 *aza jokai* units were active across the 19,489 villages comprised of 8,967,320 households. Outside of Java, the system was also implemented across select regions of Sumatra to organize rationing and security units (Reid 2014, 198). There are no indications of similar attempts in the sparsely populated regions of Kalimantan or the Eastern Islands.

Even though the implementation of the neighborhood system was largely successful in supporting the Japanese war efforts, it was not without its problems. First, was popular resistance to harsh policies. The new administrative system had put the village chiefs and *tonarigumi* leaders in the unenviable position of balancing Japanese demands with the need to protect their own people. On the whole, scholars have noted that residents understood the high costs of defiance by a leader and tolerated enforcement of rationing and security regulations (Frederick 1978, 434). Still, records show a 35% turnover rate in village leadership mid-tenure as village and association chiefs were fired by the Japanese authorities for disobedience or ineffectiveness (Kurasawa 1988, 606). In the West Javanese regencies of Tasikmalaya and Indramayu, multiple village revolts against the Japanese officials and their own village leadership, were put down with brutal military action (Kurasawa 1988, 623). Second, there was resistance to new forms of

authority. The program led to a massive re-organization of leadership in the Javanese countryside, where the villages had been dominated by traditional sources of authority, mostly religious leaders (*kiyai*). The power of the *kiyai* was partially undercut by the investment of greater authority in the village chief, who typically came from lower-ranking aristocracy (*priyai*), and the creation of cellular *aza jokai* and *tonarigumi* units under his command (Benda 1958, 155). These changes led to tensions within villages and concerns of the religious leaders had to be accommodated by giving them a balancing role in the service associations (*hokokai*).

#### **4.2 Regulation of neighborhood associations by the New Order**

The role of neighborhood associations became important once again in the post-War period. The *tonarigumi* system in Japan was dismantled by US forces, who saw them as quasi-military organizations and a significant obstacle to reform.<sup>87</sup> However, as Benjamin Read's comprehensive study shows, this system not only survived in Japan's former colonies, it proved to be an invaluable tool for a massive re-ordering of society by authoritarian regimes in China, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Indonesia (Read 2012). The neighborhood association system in Indonesia also survived after independence and was further expanded during the New Order to serve the regime's evolving security priorities.

Following the abrupt departure of the Japanese in 1945 and throughout the revolutionary war against returning Dutch forces, the administrative system in the country was in disarray. When an independent government finally took charge in 1949, it inherited a rag-tag army that was stretched thin by simultaneous regional revolts in Sumatera, West Java and Maluku Islands. In the meanwhile, the neighborhood system left behind by the Japanese continued to be used by

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<sup>87</sup> Neighborhood associations re-emerged in Japan after the US occupation. The new *chonaikai* system is relatively limited in scope and functions compared to the *tonarigumi*. The new associations mostly coordinate local residential issues and serve as a focal point for grassroots-level civil administration, especially for disaster relief. For more on current functions of neighborhood associations in Japan see (Sugimoto 2014).

district heads and governors for communicating important news and directives, given that mass media had very limited reach. Moreover, these associations became sites of fierce competition between communist and nationalist forces. The Indonesian Communist Party (*PKI*) in particular mirrored the *tonarigumi* system in its organizational structure and directed members to assume leadership roles at the neighborhood level, as a way to organize new recruits (Lucas 1991). This strategy seemed to have been at least partially successful. Communist sympathizers dominated the leadership of neighborhood associations in Indonesia's second largest city, Surabaya (Kurasawa 2013, 64) and headed approximately half of the associations in the strategic Yogyakarta regency of Central Java (Suwarno 1995). In Jakarta, the military became anxious about a similar take-over and assumed direct charge of monitoring the activities of neighborhood associations in the city as early as 1959 (Kurasawa 2013, 63).

The intensifying competition between political forces finally prompted Sukarno's dictatorial Guided Democracy government to regulate neighborhood associations with Law 19/1965 On Local Governance.<sup>88</sup> It specifies Indonesian terms for the associations that continue to be used even today. The smallest neighborhood unit is *rukun tetangga (RT)* and the mid-level ward unit is *rukun warga (RW)* or *rukun kampung (RK)*. In this RT/RW system, the neighborhood chiefs (*Ketua RT*) are to be supervised by a ward chief (*Ketua RW*), who in turn is managed by the village head in rural areas or a hamlet head in cities.<sup>89</sup> According to the law, this system is meant for administrative purposes only. Article 20 of the law explicitly prohibits leaders of these associations from maintaining affiliations with political parties: "the scope and structure [of these associations] is only horizontal and not to have vertical organizational

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<sup>88</sup> Undang-Undang No. 19 Tahun 1965 Tentang Desapraja Sebagai Bentuk Sebagai Peralihan Untuk Mempercepat Terwujudnya Daerah Tingkat III Di Seluruh Wilayah Republik Indonesia

<sup>89</sup> The literal meaning of *rukun tetangga* is 'harmony among neighbors' and *rukun warga* means 'harmony among citizens'.

affiliation outside of the village.” Passed in July 1965, this law came too late to avert Indonesia’s violent confrontation with the PKI that was to take place in October of that year.

Much is known about the role of various religious and nationalist militias in the 1965 pogroms that killed half to a million suspected members of the PKI (Cribb 2001; Roosa 2006; Melvin 2018) . While militia groups led physical acts of killing in consort with the military, RT/RW became an important source of information about potential suspects and their whereabouts. Most suspects were arrested within their neighborhoods. In some cases, military commanders ordered the RT/RW to prepare lists of PKI sympathizers in their areas. In others, residents who were afraid of being targeted by militias sought shelter with RT/RW leaders, who turned them over to the military (Sullivan 1992, 169). Leaders who were themselves communist sympathizers, or just trying to protect their residents from arrests were also denounced by their residents and arrested by the military (Sullivan 1986, 87). People who tried to escape the violence in their villages by traveling to urban areas, were ferreted out by the urban RT/RW leaders who had been ordered to report all visitors to military commanders (Kurasawa 2013, 64).

Rising to power with the promise of vanquishing a common enemy, the PKI, gave Suharto immense power to re-order Indonesian society and build institutions that would endure multiple challenges throughout his 32-year rule (Slater 2010b). The utility of the RT/RW system in supporting the state’s security needs was proven during the 1965 crisis. Re-purposing the system for long-term use became a crucial component of this institution-building process. As a result, the coercive functions of the RT/RW system evolved in response to the regime’s needs.

#### 4.2.1 RT/RW used for shifting security needs and electoral control

In the immediate aftermath of the communist killings, the regime’s chief priority was to prevent a counter-attack from PKI remnants, which required constant monitoring. Neighborhood

chiefs were tasked with maintaining lists of PKI members, sympathizers and relatives in their areas, along with any current or former prisoners. Over time, this monitoring was streamlined through an elaborate set of administrative procedures that required neighborhood officials at all levels to vouch for an individual who sought to get an ID card, marry, enroll children into schools or move to a different area (Antlov 2014, 81). As part of this process, applicants were expected to obtain a “Letter of Good Behavior” (*Surat Kelakuan Baik*) from the village head, stating that the individual had not been involved in any crime or activity that opposed the state ideology of *Pancasila*. The village head verified the applicant’s credentials by requiring signatures from the relevant neighborhood leaders. This letter, endorsed by RT/RW chiefs and the village head, was then submitted to the sub-district government office and military commander who would issue “Letter of Self Cleanliness” (*Surat Bersih Diri*) and “Letter of Clean Environment” (*Surat Bersih Lingkungan*) as confirmation of the applicant’s eligibility for state services. Former political prisoners and their relatives were often not eligible for these letters. The verification documents could also be denied to anyone who did not show due deference to local authorities.

By the 1970s, the New Order had evolved from a military regime into an electoral autocracy. Apart from monitoring ex-communists and their families, neighborhood associations were now tasked with ensuring respectable victory margins for the regime party, Golkar (Kurasawa 2013, 66–67).<sup>90</sup> To assist the neighborhood officials in accomplishing this task, the government formed small polling stations that comprised of 3-4 RTs, which were each made up of 30-40 Households. The size of the stations allowed the RT/RW leaders to ensure a large turn-

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<sup>90</sup> It should be noted that the RT/RW system was not solely responsible for engineering Golkar victories during the New Order elections. Multiple civil and uncivil groups were mobilized for this end, including violent militias like government bureaucrats and a host of local and national youth organizations.

out in their areas. It also made it possible to identify those who voted for the opposition party, through ballot numbering. A low margin of victory for Golkar was considered an embarrassment for the neighborhood leaders, who disciplined dissenters through social sanction or administrative hurdles.

Apart from elections, the RT/RW leaders were also made responsible for socializing and enforcing the government's development goals as part of the New Order's corporatist 'floating mass' (*massa mengambang*) policy. In order to neutralize potential sources of opposition from civil society, the regime sought to simultaneously de-politicize and mobilize it for support. Apolitical women's groups, youth associations, sports organizations and even hobby groups were mobilized as part of this effort. The RT/RW system became an ideal conduit of this policy given their grassroots reach in society. Neighborhood leaders ensured compliance of their residents with the government's health, sanitation and education initiatives. They also played a key role in record-keeping to help the government monitor progress. Individuals found criticizing or resisting these policies openly risked being brought to the attention of the local army commander (*dikoramilkan*) (Antlov and Cederroth 2014, 9).

In the second half of the New Order, two developments led to a re-calibration of the regime's security priorities that produced corresponding changes in the functions of RT/RW. First, there were growing signs of dissent against Suharto's policies. Not only was there discontent within the military, former regime supporters also became critical of widespread corruption and student protests gained steam. Suharto's response to this unrest has been described as 'infrastructural balancing' (Slater 2010a, 153). This strategy involved checking the relative power of competing factions within the regime through the ad-hoc adjustment of their roles by Suharto, rather than an institutionalized division of responsibilities and rewards.

Golkar's electoral dominance in the countryside was balanced by giving the military greater access to rural areas through the *ABRI Masuk Desa* program (Indonesian Armed Forces Come to the Village). By the same token, the military's power was to be checked with increased civilianization of the regime's security apparatus.

Second, the fear of a communist uprising that was the *raison d'être* for the New Order regime was fading off. In order to justify its repressive hold, the regime began mobilizing society to fight new threats. In his memoirs, written in 1988, Suharto describes the wide range of activities that were now seen as dangers to society: "Threats and danger to the national stability can come from forces that are extreme right or left. Growth of liberal ideologies that hold individualism supreme can also be dangerous. Danger is also near, if the *Pancasila* [official state ideology] is not implemented honestly and strictly" (Suharto 1988, 464).

This deliberately vague description of threats was classified into two categories for operational purposes. One comprised of organized separatist movements that were gaining ground in Aceh and East Timor. The second was 'organizations without form' (*Organisasi Tanpa Bentuk-OTB*) comprised of all individuals and groups that challenged the regime. *OTB* included a) criminal gangs that had grown due to urban migration and youth unemployment, b) political dissidents and democracy activists on university campuses; and c) Islamic resistance groups inspired by the Iranian Revolution that perpetrated a series of small terror attacks in the mid-80s.

These concerns about confronting new threats while balancing the military's power with civilian involvement in security affairs, further expanded the coercive functions of the RT/RW system. Grassroots support for counter-insurgency efforts in Aceh and East Timor was mobilized through the military's doctrine of Total People's Defense (*Pertahanan Rakyat Semesta*) (Tanter

1991). Local military commanders assembled and coordinated the activities of militias and civilian defense forces (*Keamanan Rakyat--Kamra*) in these two provinces. Additionally, the RT/RW chiefs were required to arrange civilian patrols in their areas to assist the military's operations and record granular information about the every-day activities of their residents in standardized forms.

The functions of the RT/RW system in the rest of the country were fine-tuned to assist in combating the specter of *OTB*. In 1980 a new program, the "System for the Security of the Environment" (*Sistem Keamanan Lingkungan--Siskamling*), was launched by the police to intensify and coordinate the role of RT/RW in policing vaguely defined threats from criminals, political dissidents and Islamic resistance groups (Bourchier 1990). Apart from keeping records of ex-PKI members, issue letters of good behavior and monitor electoral support for Golkar, RT/RW leaders were now required to mobilize additional resources to ensure 'public order' (*ketertiban umum*) in their areas (Barker 1998). These expanded tasks included: a) appointing civilian guards (*pertahanan sipil--Hansip*), who would be salaried by the residents but trained by the police and report directly to them; b) reviving the traditional practice of voluntary night patrols (*ronda*); c) keeping exit and entry logs of all-over-night guests in the neighborhood and; d) report all suspicious activity and persons to the village head, who would in turn contact an assigned military or police officer (R. Bertrand 2004).

Older Indonesians, who have lived through this expansion of the RT/RW system in the 80s, remember having to participate in the night patrols and reporting to the RT chiefs when visiting friends and family. However, these experiences are not recalled as heavy security exercises but as social activities that had become part of community life. In rural neighborhoods, every household was required to volunteer one member for the *ronda* on a rotational basis. Most

people ‘volunteered’ the young men in their house for the task. Cigarettes, tea and snacks for the volunteers were provided by other residents, which would be consumed over a game of cards or *conglak*<sup>91</sup>, interrupted by occasional patrolling. In urban areas, upper-class neighborhoods were secured by private guards, which continues to be the case today. In middle-class neighborhoods, white collar professional preferred hiring *Hansip* instead of arranging a night-watch. The *Hansip* were often local toughs, hired by the RT chiefs to keep them from stealing within the neighborhood.

Despite the light footprint of the RT/RW’s security activities on a daily basis and their relaxed, social aspects, the system could be galvanized into a well-coordinated tool at short notice. This capacity of the newly retooled RT/RW system became apparent during the criminal killings (*Pembunuhan Misterius–Petrus*) that took place in Indonesia’s urban centers between 1983-85. Rapid urban migration combined with a slowing economy had brought thousands of unemployed men to big cities in the 80s. Many were drawn into criminal gangs operating under military and regime officials, who used them time to time for electoral intimidation or to break up protests. As their members grew, it became difficult for the government to regulate the activities of these gangs (Barker 1999). Newspapers across the country began reporting incidents of violent crimes, prompting public anxiety about law and order (Siegel 1998). The police also feared the possible emergence of powerful criminal organizations such as the Yakuza in Japan (Djamin 1995, 240).

Later recalled by Suharto as a necessary “shock therapy” for criminals, the *Petrus* operation led to the extra-legal execution of estimated 5,000-10,000 alleged gang members by police and military officials (H. G. C. S. Nordholt 2002, 48). Civilian vigilantes were not

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<sup>91</sup> Traditional board game, mainly played in Jawa.

involved in the violence but replicating their role in the 1965 killings, the RT/RW played a role in providing critical information about suspected gang members, along with other ‘outlaws’ (*gali*) identified by body tattoos or piercings (Barker 1998). Such was the terror of the campaign among petty criminals that they would seek the assistance of their RT/RWs to take them to the police and military offices to “surrender” in hopes that it would help them escape execution.

Apart from surveillance, the New Order State also relied on the RT/RW system for making Indonesia’s highly heterogenous society legible to state agents. RT and RW chiefs were often well-liked and accessible individuals within their neighborhoods, but not always the most influential people in the area. Their ability to provide or deny access to the state vested in them some level of authority. However, real power, in terms of influence over residents’ every-day beliefs and behaviors was often wielded by elders (*sesepuh*) ethnic or religious leaders (*tokoh masyarakat*) (Antlov 1995), businessmen or even local toughs (*preman* or *jago*) affiliated with martial arts groups (Barker 2009). Moreover, in a given area, there were multiple leaders competing for influence and authority, making the social hierarchy difficult to read for an outsider, like a newly posted police or military officer. When needed, the RT/RW could help state-agents navigate this complex and varying landscape of local power effectively.

Understanding the local hierarchy and having access to it through an entry-point such as the RT or RT chief was critical for two things. First, it helped with crowd control. Ethnic and communal conflict became an increasingly serious problem for the New Order in the second half of its rule. The government sponsored transmigration program had moved millions of ethnic Javanese and Balinese from their overcrowded regions to the sparsely populated outer provinces in Kalimantan, Sumatera and Sulawesi. With government backing, the new migrants cleared land for agriculture and with hard work, was soon able to improve its lot. The local populations, in

some cases indigenous tribes, did not enjoy the fruits of these developments and remained economically marginalized in the new economy. This gave rise to frequent tensions between ethnic groups that required state officials to enforce in-group policing through local leaders. During this period, the regime also began to fear mass demonstrations, similar to the ones that brought down the Marcos regime in the Philippines. Anticipating this possibility and preventing the organization of large gatherings also required the support of RT/RW leaders who could caution their residents against participation and alert authorities in case of trouble.

Second, knowing the local notables also helped police and military leaders to draw on their resources for free labor, materials and operational funds. Much has been written about the military's off-budget economy under the New Order (H. Crouch 1975, 1979, 1988). One way in which funds were raised by local commanders for small ad-hoc projects and costs was through their contacts with local religious and business leaders. Support for road repairs, clearing sites of accidents or natural disasters, renovation of the police office was often obtained either by obliging the local influential for funds or directly through the RT/RW who could sign up residents to perform free labor.

#### 4.2.2 Regulating compliance from RT/TW

Given the New Order State's extensive reliance on the RT/RW system for security management, how did they ensure civil society's compliance with coercive tasks? Suharto's regime retained the Japanese system of political control over the RT/RW leadership and expanded its scope, both in terms of geographical coverage and specific functions. Law 5/1979 on Local Governance mandated the nation-wide institution of the RT/RW. This expanded the system beyond the islands of Java and Sumatera that had been the center of Japanese economic extraction, to the sparsely populated Eastern and Central parts of the country. An Interior

Ministry Regulation, issued in 1983, became the legal basis for enforcing the RT/RW system across the country with the specification that each neighborhood unit be comprised of 20-40 households. It also required the RT chiefs to hold monthly meetings with their residents to share important announcements, discuss their issues and make decisions about administrative matters.

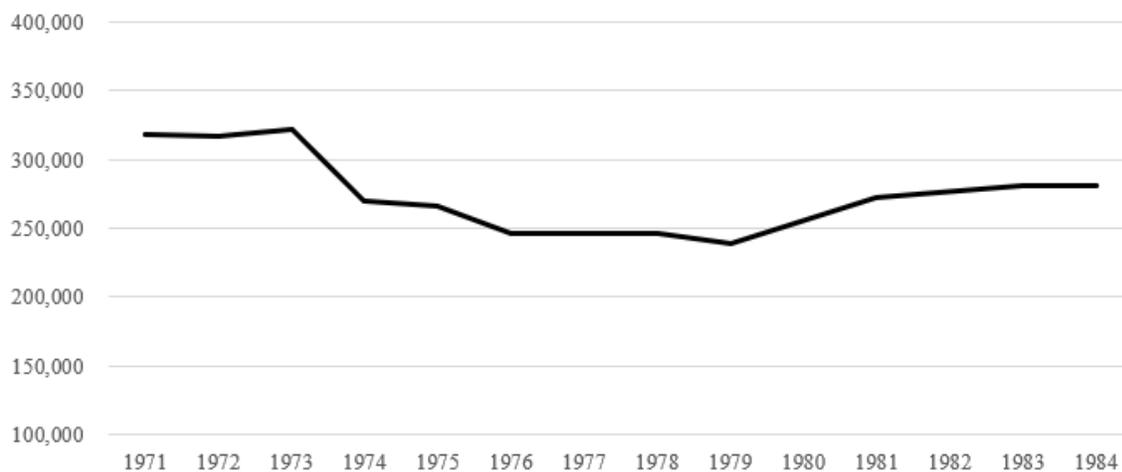
Following the Japanese model of compliance through regulation, RT/RW chiefs along with the village head were elected. However, they were answerable to the sub-district chief (*camat*), who was an appointed official of the district chief, usually a military officer. The RT chiefs were elected by an informal consensus-based poll (*musyawarah-mufakat*) by representatives of each household in the neighborhood. The RT chiefs then selected the RW chief (Logsdon 1974, 57). Village heads were elected directly by the people in rural areas but hamlet heads in urban areas were appointed. None of the candidates in these local elections were allowed to have affiliation with any political party and were subject to heavy screening by the sub-district officials (Husken 2014). Unlike the Japanese system, where the village head was responsible for ensuring the election of ‘reasonable’ RT/RW leaders, the sub-district officials in the New Order screened them directly (Kurasawa 2013, 69). Nomination papers for all positions had to be filed in a formal process, after which a list of approved candidates was released by the sub-district office. In case of village head elections, a competency test was also required, which could screen the candidates for a broad range of ‘undesirable’ activities or backgrounds. If certain RT/RW chiefs or village heads were not cooperative or tainted due to association with banned ideologies, they could be fired by the sub-district officials, often in consultation with the military (Logsdon 1978, 99). Despite being regulated and assigned a multitude of tasks, none of the RT/RW chiefs or village heads were salaried by the state. These were voluntary positions, not part of the state’s formal bureaucracy.

The Japanese model of regulation was enhanced by the New Order in two ways. First, the structure of the regime's Golkar party was arranged so that it mirrored the RT/RW system (Antlov 1995, 52–53). This way, apart from being supervised by sub-district bureaucrats and the military, the neighborhood leaders could also be subject to scrutiny by a party official of corresponding rank. Second, the grassroots regulation of the RT/RW system was linked to a powerful, centralized military coordination body that ran all major internal security operations. Between 1965 and 1987 the coercive tasks assigned to the RT/RW were coordinated by the Command for the Restoration of Security and Order (*Komando Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban–Kopkamtib*), headed by Suharto's trusted General Ali Moertopo. Following the reshuffle in 1988, the coordinating body was renamed the National Stability Coordination Agency (*Badan Koordinasi Bantuan Pemantapan Stabilitas Nasional–Bakorstanas*), headed by another Suharto loyalist, General Benny Meordani. Linking the grassroots monitoring of these associations all the way up to a national coordinating body, made it possible to attune the functions of the associations in sync with changing security needs.

Overall, this system of political control allowed the New Order regime to regulate the activities of the RT/RW system on the cheap, with a relatively low citizen to security force presence on the ground. During this time, the Indonesian Armed Forces (*ABRI*), a centralized organization reporting directly to the President, was in charge of domestic security under the Dual Function doctrine. The police served as a service branch under ABRI, apart from the air force, navy and the army. While the screening of neighborhood and village leaders was mostly supervised by military officials at the district (*Kodim*) and sub-district level (*Koramil*), every village was assigned a low-ranking soldier to serve as a community guidance officer (*Babinsa*) to monitor local activities.

Data on the total number of *Babinsa* deployed throughout the New Order is not readily available. But, piecing together overall estimates suggest that their number remained relatively stable throughout and, in all likelihood, small. Figure 4.2 shows the total force strength of the ABRI, including the police, during the peak of the New Order's power (Tanter 1991, 174). It indicates a downsizing of the formal military in the mid-to-late 70s—maintaining average ratio at about one security force member per 488 civilians. This number began to increase in the early 80s, as counter-insurgency operations in Aceh and East Timor intensified.

**Figure 4.2 Number of personnel in Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI) in the New Order**



Source: Replicated from Tanter 1991 p. 174

By 1996, the total strength of the military had reached 461,000, bringing the ratio down to 1:429 (East Asia and Australia 1997, 179). However, out of this total, 177,000 personnel constituted the police force, which was mainly confined to district and sub-district offices and had negligible grassroots presence. 220,000 personnel comprised the army, out of which, 160,000 were assigned to the army's territorial commands (Kodam, Kodim and Koramil). This number includes soldiers, administrative staff at the provincial, district and sub-district offices as

well as the rank-and-file soldiers that were deployed in Aceh, Papua and East Timor. Accounting for these administrative needs and security priorities, it is unlikely that a large number of soldiers would have been spared to act as *Babinsa* from the territorial command, to monitor Indonesia's 66,486 villages. Instead, each village was regularly visited by a *Babinsa*, who was in charge of monitoring the activities of multiple villages, even as the RT/RW system continued to be regulated at the *Kodim* and *Koramil* level.

#### 4.2.3 The balance of state-society relations

Given the extensive security functions assigned to the neighborhood associations and the political control over its leaders, can we still think of these bodies as part of a civil society that is independent of the state? Scholars of local politics under the New Order have taken two positions on this issue. One suggests that despite servicing the state's request for surveillance, the associations became genuine sites of independent collective action for communities (Guinness 2009). This perspective contends that the daily intervention of the state in people's lives was actually very low and many of the required activities, such as the *ronda*, guest registration and record-keeping were mostly for show. It was only in times of severe crises that the state enforced its presence through these bodies, but on a day-to day basis RT/RW leaders were quite lax about fulfilling security tasks (Logsdon 1974).

Looking beyond the state's 'occasional' incursions into this civil space, these studies point at the multitude of welfare services provided by the neighborhood associations, independent of state funding or help (Guinness 1986; Mukherjee 1999). In economically marginalized areas, these services included small loan schemes for women, community collections for families going through an emergency or even free literacy classes. Neighborhood associations also provided a forum for collective action, which could be used for arranging

community activities such as sports events or Independence Day celebrations. More importantly, however, the RT/RW system allowed communities a channel to make their voices heard and demand public services from state officials (Niessen 1999).

Another set of scholars dispute this positive account of neighborhood associations under the New Order and describe their functions as a ‘buffer’ between state and society (Sullivan 1992). At a higher level, the system was designed not to interfere too much in communities’ and be selective in its interventions. Communities were actually encouraged to find solutions to their own infrastructure repairs and food shortages, instead of demanding services from the state. Expectations for compliance with development programs and other every-day issues were conveyed to communities not as directives but as ‘gentle hints’ (*perintah halus*) (Antlov and Cederroth 2014). On their part, the RT/RW chiefs understood that in order to maintain their communities’ independence, the state had to be placated from time to time. On a micro-level, however, the system of multi-level monitoring instituted by the New Order gave appointed bureaucrats and military officials arbitrary power over local populations, by creating opportunities for harassment and extortion. Malevolent RT/RW chiefs who arbitrarily denied official letters and approvals were common. But, these could be managed by residents through every-day forms of resistance because such leaders lived among them (Logsdon 1978). Harassment by a sub-district or district official was more difficult to overcome and it invariably fell on the neighborhood leaders to petition or advocate on their residents’ behalf.

Balancing their role as an enforcer for the state and the residents’ expectation of help was a constant struggle for most RT/RW leaders (Sullivan 1986). The most well-liked leaders were those that developed clever tricks for navigating official processes that could help their residents overcome hurdles without inviting scrutiny of high-ranking bureaucrats. With regards to serious

security threats, however, local leaders' ability to buffer the state's demands was diminished. Given the granularity of the unit they represented versus the power of the state making demands from them, they could not negotiate the terms of state's intervention in communities they represented. As we shall see in the following section, this balance of community and state power shifted significantly after the collapse of the New Order.

#### **4.3 Seeking cooperation of neighborhood associations after *Reformasi***

The continuing role of neighborhood associations in Indonesia became important yet again after the democratic transition in 1998. In Taiwan and South Korea, the democratization process did not bring about a systematic dismantling of neighborhood associations as they had become an integral part of grassroots administration. Political liberalization did, however, diminish the state's control over the election of neighborhood leaders and put an end to their social control and surveillance functions. These associations now serve as sites of genuine civic engagement. Freely elected neighborhood leaders play a critical role in articulating and amplifying residents' demands to relevant state officials, improving government responsiveness and accountability (Read 2012).

In Indonesia, too, complete dismantling of the RT/RW system was not possible as these structures provided an essential interface between citizens and the state for routine administration. Like Taiwan and South Korea, democratization has effectively ended the state's intervention in the election of neighborhood leaders, strengthening their position vis a vis the state bureaucracy and improving grassroots representational politics. However, the democratic transformation of neighborhood associations into truly independent civic bodies has been impeded by two factors. First, the emergence of new internal security threats from communal violence and terrorism meant that the state continued to need the support of neighborhood

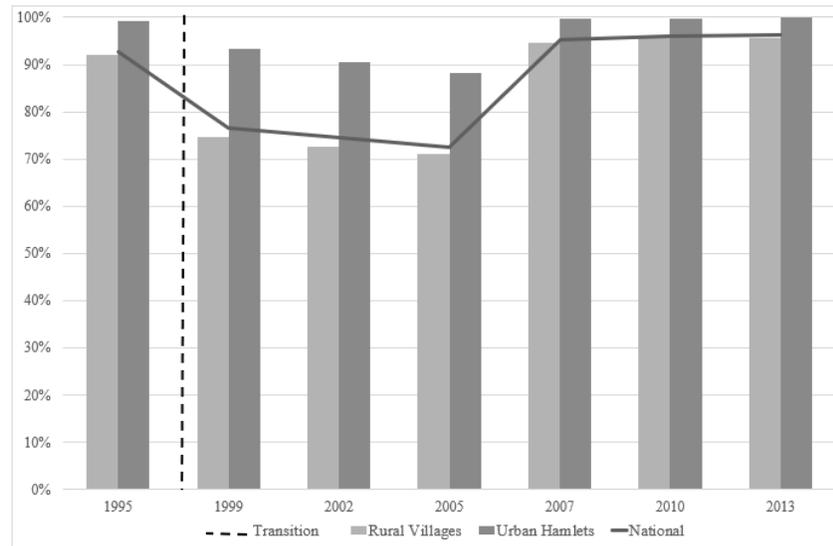
associations for security management through surveillance, in-group policing and crowd control. Second, the ‘insider’ nature of the democratic transition (Horowitz 2013) and consequent limits on democratic reform (Aspinall 2010) have made it difficult to overcome this dependence through an overhaul of the state’s formal security institutions.

While democratic reforms initially ended the nationally mandated role of neighborhood associations in security management, they have since been redeployed to combat new security threats (Figure 4.3).<sup>92</sup> Laws regulating the mandatory formation and functions of neighborhood associations, specified in *Permendagri 7/1983*, were nullified by a new Interior Ministry directive, *Permendagri 4/1999*. As a result, the number of neighborhood associations declined significantly. In 1995, 92% villages and hamlets across Indonesia reported having active neighborhood associations. In 1999, just one year after the transition, this number had fallen to 76%, as people remained cognizant of the system’s repressive past and questioned its role in a democratic setting. However, the constant need to manage communal conflicts and an increasingly severe threat of terrorism led to the reactivation of the RT/RW system. By 2007, the number of villages and hamlets reporting active RT/RWs were back to the New Order levels and have stayed stable since then.

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<sup>92</sup> Source: PODES 1996, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2014 (Data recorded in a given year refers to the measurement in the previous year). Calculated by author

**Figure 4.3 Percentage of villages/hamlets with active neighborhood associations in Indonesia**



Source: PODES

Despite the redeployment of the RT/RW system for coercive tasks in democratic Indonesia, seeking compliance from its leaders has become difficult. The *Bakorstanas*, Suharto’s powerful security coordination body was abolished entirely, ending the state’s centralized political control over the leadership of the RT/RW system. While state security agencies are still dependent on neighborhood leaders for surveillance, crowd control and operational funds, they no longer approve candidates for local elections and neither can they threaten leaders with punishment for non-cooperation.

Instead of overcoming dependence on the RT/RW system through a security sector overhaul, democratic governments have responded to new threats by superimposing the expansion of a semi-reformed police force on top of this New Order legacy. Increased police presence in democratic Indonesia has made it possible to seek compliance from neighborhood leaders for coercive tasks. However, the lack of political control over them has changed the mode of compliance from regulation to cooperation (Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1 Changing role of Indonesia's neighborhood associations**

	<b>New Order Regime</b> (1965-1998)	<b>Democracy</b> (1998-Present)
<b>Existential security threats</b>	Political Dissent Separatism (Papua, Aceh, Timor) Communism	Terrorism Communal Conflict (S.A.R.A) Separatism (Papua Only)
<b>Security functions of RT/RW</b>	Mass Surveillance Crowd control (demonstrations & communal conflict) Electoral control	Mass Surveillance Crowd control (demonstrations & communal conflict) Operational funds
<b>Political control over leadership</b>	High	Low
<b>Presence of street-level police</b>	Low	High
<b>Mechanism for compliance</b>	Regulation	Cooperation

#### 4.3.1 Communal violence and terrorism emerge as new security threats

The democratization process changed Indonesia's security priorities in two significant ways. First, it has reduced the salience of New Order-era threats to the state, namely political dissent and separatism. Early reforms drew the state away from policing pro-democracy activists and individuals suspected of communist ties. Soon after Suharto's resignation, former political prisoners were set free and discriminatory restrictions on ex-PKI members and their relatives were lifted. New electoral laws were enacted to ensure open contestation by political parties and free participation by the public in elections at all levels of government. In order to prevent political coercion, the New Order state's most repressive institutions were quickly reformed. The military's influence in domestic politics was curtailed through the separation of a national police force (*Polisi Republik Indonesia–Polri*) from its ranks.<sup>93</sup> As a national force primarily responsible for internal security, the *Polri* was given a separate budget and placed under the direct control of the President. In order to prevent future human rights abuses, the performance

<sup>93</sup> For a detailed discussion of post-transition military reform in Indonesia and remaining challenges see (Mietzner 2006, 2009; H. A. Crouch 2010)

of the *Polri* was made subject to monitoring by a civilian body, *Komisi Kepolisian Nasional (KOMPOLNAS)*.

A series of decentralization initiatives have reduced the threat of separatism. One of the most severe challenges faced by a newly democratized Indonesia was the simultaneous escalation of long-standing insurgencies in East Timor, Aceh and Papua. The humiliating secession of East Timor in 1999 put the government under intense pressure to prevent further disintegration. In 2001, Papua was granted special autonomy status that allowed the province to retain and manage a significant portion of revenues from its abundant natural resources. While these concessions have not eliminated the presence of the Free Papua Organization rebels (*Organisasi Papua Merdeka–OPM*), they have impeded its growth by undercutting local elites' support for separatism. The insurgency in Aceh proved harder to resolve and several autonomy negotiations with the Free Aceh Movement insurgents (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka–GAM*) failed. Intense fighting between the Indonesian military and *GAM* led to the death of at least 10,640 people between 1998 and 2005, when a devastating Tsunami created the opportunity for a successful peace agreement that ended the conflict.<sup>94</sup> As part of the deal, Aceh was granted special autonomy status that gave the provincial government discretionary control over revenue from its natural resources (Aspinall 2009). Additional provisions ensured former rebels' right to form a political party and allowed for the implementation of Islamic Syariah laws (*Qanun*) in the province .

Apart from special concessions for Papua and Aceh, the enactment of broader decentralization laws has prevented the emergence of separatist demands from other parts of the country. Due to concerns about ethno-linguistic regionalism, decentralization laws in Indonesia

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<sup>94</sup> Source: NVMS Dataset. Calculated by author.

have devolved power to district governments, rather than provinces.<sup>95</sup> A national formula allocates district budgets on an annual basis. District governments, comprised of an elected legislature and a directly elected executive, are responsible for spending the budget based on their development needs. Provincial governments are also composed of directly elected governors and legislatures but, have significantly less discretionary authority.<sup>96</sup>

Second, the chaos of the transition has exposed Indonesia's enduring vulnerability to two new security threats: communal conflict and radical Islamic terrorism.<sup>97</sup> At least 9,899 people were killed and hundreds of thousands more were displaced as a result of the multiple communal conflicts that erupted across the country between 1998 and 2003 (Figure 4.4).<sup>98</sup> Anti-Chinese attacks shut down large urban centers across Java and Sumatera, including Jakarta, Solo, Surabaya and Medan. Ethnic riots continued for months in Kalimantan between the indigenous Dayak population and the Madurese migrants brought as part of Suharto's transmigration program. In Maluku and Sulawesi, Christian-Muslim violence took the form of a religious war that stretched out for years. Smaller, sporadic outbreaks of violence were also observed in other parts of Indonesia. Javanese transmigrants clashed with indigenous Lampungese in Sumatera, while the danger of sectarian violence loomed large in Java after a spate of 'Ninja killings' targeted religious leaders from the largest Muslim mass organization, the *NU*.

Some have described these conflicts as the culmination of Suharto's discriminatory policies that favored some ethnic groups over others (Davidson 2009). Indeed, available data

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<sup>95</sup> Here, "districts" refers to both the rural districts (*kabupaten*) as well as urban ones (*kota*)

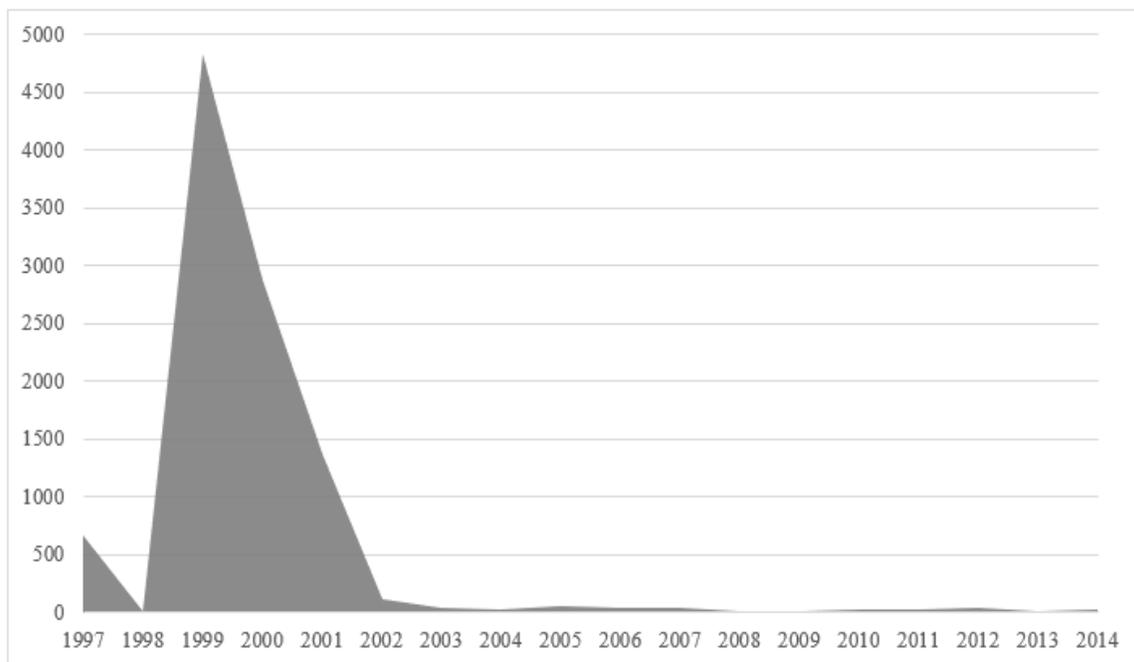
<sup>96</sup> Exceptions to this rule are the Capital Region of Jakarta, Special Region of Yogyakarta, Aceh, Papua and West Papua, where provincial governments have more powers than districts.

<sup>97</sup> Within Indonesian policy circles, communal conflict is often referred to as '*konflik horizontal*', '*konflik sosial*' or sometimes the New Order term '*konflik SARA*', where *SARA* refers to *Suku Agama Ras dan Antar Golongan* (tribes, religious communities, racial groups or other identity-based associations). Terrorism is sometimes described as '*konflik vertikal*' as it increasingly tends to target the state and its agents, particularly the police.

<sup>98</sup> Communal violence related deaths reported in NVMS Dataset: Maluku, North Maluku, Central Sulawesi, Central Kalimantan and Western Kalimantan. Deaths in Jakarta reported in UNSFIR Dataset.

shows that sporadic episodes of communal violence were already on the rise during the final years of Suharto's rule (Varshney, Tadjoeidin, and Panggabean 2008). These ethnic anxieties that had been simmering for a long time, finally reached a boiling point after the transition (Sidel 2006). Against this background of ethnic tensions, institutional change brought about by Suharto's sudden departure created incentives for settling grievances through violence. Institutional changes that have been linked to communal violence in Indonesia include a collapse of the New Order's ethnic governance model (J. Bertrand 2004), introduction of local elections that raised the stakes in political competition between rival groups (Klinken 2007; Toha 2015); and the separation of police from the military that created democratic spoilers (Azca 2006; S. R. Panggabean 2014).

**Figure 4.4 Deaths from communal conflict in Indonesia**



Source: NVMS Dataset & UNSFIR Dataset

Even though transition-era communal conflicts eventually ended, their resurgence remains a persistent threat that requires constant management (Barron, Jaffrey, and Varshney

2016).<sup>99</sup> Belligerent exhaustion ended the conflicts in Kalimantan and North Maluku. In Maluku and Central Sulawesi, the central government stepped in to broker a peace agreement between the local elites from both Muslim and Christian groups. Although these peace-making efforts terminated the violence, the underlying economic and political grievances are yet to be addressed. The uneasy nature of this peace can be gauged by the fact that residential areas, schools and businesses in these former conflict zones remain highly segregated along religious lines, even more so than before the conflict (Ansori et al. 2014). Small-scale violence remains rife and small disputes between two individuals from different religious background require constant police interventions. Moreover, post-conflict aid programs have created further incentives for small-scale communal violence as former combatants have come to see it as a way to extort money from the central government (Barron 2019). Even those parts of Indonesia that relatively were less affected by large-scale communal violence during the transition have experienced rising levels of inter-religious and intra-religious violence over the past decade. Disputes about minority houses of worship and practice of deviant sects within Islam are driving a new round of ethnic tensions in the country (Beitinger-Lee 2009; M. Crouch 2010; Buehler 2013; Hamayotsu 2013; Telle 2014; Fealy 2015, 2016a; Soedirgo 2018). Sporadic clashes between various ethnic groups and transmigrants also continue to occur from time to time (Cote 2014). Of late, clashes between villages with a history of rivalry have also posed a risk (C. Wilson 2013).

Finally, terrorist attacks from radical Islamic organizations have materialized as the most severe threat to the state in democratic Indonesia (Figure 4.5).<sup>100</sup> Clandestine groups seeking the

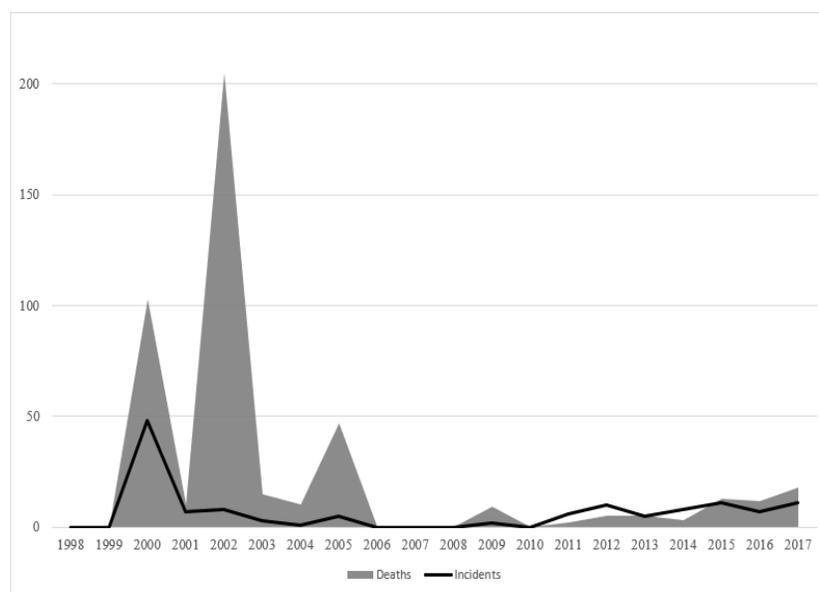
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<sup>99</sup> Available data from provinces representing half of Indonesia's population shows that since 2005, the average number of fatalities related to communal conflict has remained more or less stable at 42 per year.

<sup>100</sup> Source: National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2018). Global Terrorism Database. Retrieved from <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd> Calculations by author.

establishment of an Islamic Caliphate had been active under the New Order, but their capabilities were limited to sporadic hijackings and small bombings. The transition-era conflict raging across Maluku and Sulawesi proved to be fertile breeding ground for Islamic terrorist organizations. They began openly recruiting and training members, not just from the conflict zones, but from all over the country to fight Christian militias. Initially, radical groups maintained their operational focus on the sites of religious conflicts. In this initial phase, containing the threat of terrorism involved concerted police operations to dislodge terrorist combatants from their strongholds and maintain surveillance over a relatively small part of the country.

**Figure 4.5 Impact of radical Islamic terrorism in Indonesia**



Source: Global Terrorism Database

As the Christian-Muslim conflict subsided, terrorist organizations in Indonesia turned their attention to a much broader set of targets. Between 1998 and 2005, at least 390 people died in 72 attacks by Islamic militants. As early as 2000, Jemaah Islamiyah carried out coordinated bombings at churches across 8 Indonesian cities. Another attack in the same year targeted the Jakarta Stock Exchange building. The rise of global terrorism after the 9/11 attacks further emboldened local groups. In 2002, bombing of a night club in a popular tourist area of Bali

killed more than 200 people in the single largest terror attack in Indonesia. These deadly attacks followed by bombings of a Marriot hotel in Jakarta, the Australian Embassy and another Bali resort in 2005, demonstrated increasing sophistication of local terror organizations and their growing links with international networks. These developments early on in the transition kick-started Indonesia's anti-terror operations that have done a fairly good job in reducing both the number of attacks and their scale. Between 2006 and 2017, 60 attacks have been recorded that led to 67 fatalities.

#### 4.3.2 Complementarity of state-society coercion and continuing role of the RT/RW

The sudden eruption of violent conflict and the way it completely overwhelmed Indonesia's once feared security apparatus, raises questions about state-building in Indonesia: how could a state that had maintain an iron grip over its diverse peoples for over three decades unravel so quickly? Moreover, how could the same unraveled state be re-built in a short period of time to effectively manage looming threats from separatists, communal armies and terrorist?

In an insightful study, Yuhki Tajima attributes the transition-era communal breakdown to a 'mismatch' between the formal coercive capacity of the state and the informal coercive capacity for self-policing within society. As a substitute for state presence, traditional communities in Indonesia had long developed capacity for self-policing to prevent spirals of violence. With rapid state expansion under the New Order, communities that became exposed to the presence of formal security apparatus lost their self-policing capacity and became dependent on the state for provision of order. In contrast, those communities that remained far removed from state presence, continued to be self-reliant. This equilibrium was disrupted when concerns about human rights violations during the democratization process hindered the ability of Indonesian security forces to clamp down on mobs in a way that was common under

authoritarian rule. Empirical analysis shows that as a result of this disruption, communities that had been exposed to military and police presence became more likely to experience an incident of communal violence, as they had become reliant on the state. In contrast, those villages that did not have formal state presence still maintained informal coercive capacity for self-policing and were therefore less likely to experience an incident of communal violence. Finally, the study attributes the decline of communal violence in Indonesia to readjustment with new realities. Communities that had become previously reliant on the state realized that they can no longer do so and re-developed self-policing capacity to avert violence.

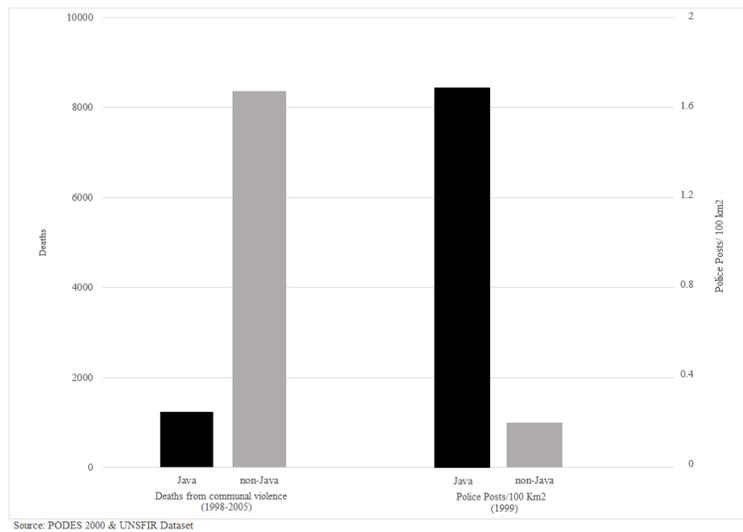
While Tajima's 'mismatch' theory may explain the probability of violence *incidence*, it does not explain variation in the *scale* of violence observed during the transition. In other words, it tells us about the features of the Indonesian state that make violence more or less likely, but not the mechanisms through which the scale of violence is regulated. Consider the regional variation in scale of communal violence and state presence during the transition (Figure 4.6).<sup>101</sup> The island of Java, which has historically been the economic core of the country and is home to more than 53% of its population, had the average police concentration of 1.7 posts per 100 Km<sup>2</sup> in 1999. Compare this to the low level of police presence in Western, Central and Eastern regions of Indonesia, where an average of only 0.2 police posts is found per 100 Km<sup>2</sup>. Even though the level of police presence in Java is eight times higher, the scale of communal violence it experienced is almost seven times less than the rest of the country. A total of 1,238 deaths from communal violence were recorded in Java between 1998 and 2005, out of which more than a thousand were recorded during the anti-Chinese riots in Jakarta. In contrast, at least 8,358 deaths from ethno-religious violence were recorded in all other parts of the country. Moreover, while

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<sup>101</sup> Police presence estimated from PODES 2000 Dataset and fatality figures from the UNSFIR Dataset. Calculations by author.

violent incidents in Java lasted for days or weeks at most, the communal wars in other regions continued for months. Thus, while high police presence in Java and the resulting mismatch may have made its villages more likely to experience an incident of communal violence, something prevented the escalation of those incidents into the kind of large-scale riots that were observed in other parts of Indonesia.

**Figure 4.6 Regional differences in police presence and transition-era communal violence**



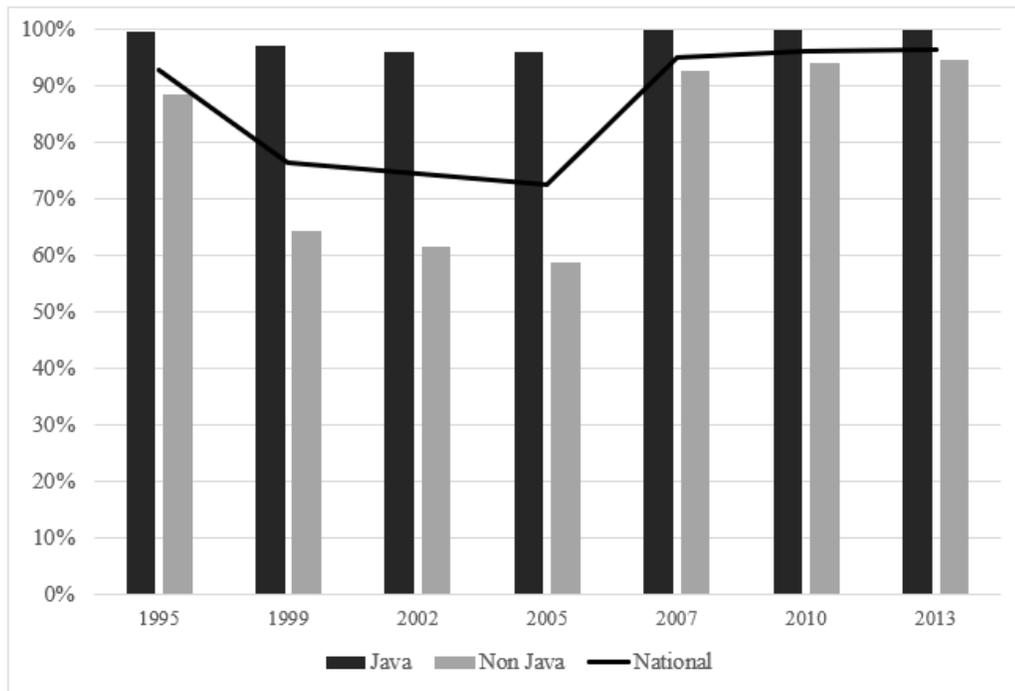
Understanding how the scale of violence escalated to unprecedented levels during the transition and how such an escalation has been prevented since, requires us to think of formal and informal coercive capacity in Indonesia as complements, not substitutes as Tajima suggests. The preceding pages described how the New Order state systematically drew on societal forces to combat security threats. While these efforts included a much broader range of actors including gangs, paramilitaries and militias, the role of the neighborhood organizations was arguably the most indispensable. This is because of the sheer ubiquity of neighborhood associations and the fact that other security institutions were built around the expectation of surveillance and support from these grassroots bodies. It can thus be said that instead of communities relying on the state for provision of order, it was the state that was dependent on society.

The democratic transition initially constrained the ability of the state to draw support from these bodies because of a) the nullification of laws requiring their mandatory functions and b) the diminishing political control over its leaders with the dismantling of *Bakorstanas*. Even so, the RT/RW system played a role in limiting the scale of violence in Java where it remained active throughout the transition. Even as the the national level of active associations fell to 76%, this number remained above 90% in Java (Figure 4.7). Eye-witness accounts of anti-Chinese riots in Jakarta show that the RT/RW leaders activated *Siskamling* patrols and prevented rioters from attacking their Chinese residents.<sup>102</sup> In rural parts of East Java, the local leaders played a similarly important role in preventing the escalation of sectarian violence (Herriman 2016). During the chaos of the Ninja killings led by NU militias, neighborhood leaders and village heads warned police and military officials of impending attacks, hid potential victims and dissuaded militia members in their area from participating in violence.

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<sup>102</sup> Saraswati, Patricia Diah Ayu. "Mengingat 98, Saat Kami Dipanggil 'Cina.'" Nasional. Accessed May 1, 2019. <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20170520001905-20-216057/mengingat-98-saat-kami-dipanggil-cina>. Lestari, Sri. "Kerusuhan Mei 1998: 'Apa Salah Kami Sampai (Diancam) Mau Dibakar Dan Dibunuh?'" May 16, 2018, sec. Indonesia. <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-43940188>.

Figure 4.7 Regional variation in levels of active neighborhood associations



Source: PODES

The severity of the threat from communal violence and terrorism, and the grassroots-level operations required for their prevention have renewed the state’s reliance on the coercive functions of neighborhood associations. Indeed, the reactivation of RT/RW system across the country in 2007 corresponds with the rise in government’s prevention efforts. Given Indonesia’s incredible diversity and localized nature of conflicts, it is difficult to resolve them in the same way that separatist conflicts have been settled through overarching political deals. Instead, prevention efforts require ground-level capacity for detecting disturbances and assessing the potential for escalation. In the event that violence is imminent or has already occurred, the support of local social and religious elites is required for crowd control. A fascinating study of recent religious conflicts in Indonesia, compares a set of cases where violent mobilization occurred with those where violence was avoided, despite simmering tensions (R. Panggabean and Fauzi 2015). It finds that the key difference between the two outcomes rested on the police’s

ability to understand the local power structures and draw on the support of influential leaders to prevent violence. This ‘support’ took different forms. In some cases, it involved dissuading their co-ethnics from mobilizing for violence and submitting to a negotiated solution of a dispute. In others, support from local leadership took the form of providing operational expenses for the extra troops that had to be deployed to prevent an attack.

The RT/RW system, can facilitate prevention efforts in two ways. First, neighborhood leaders make local hierarchies legible to the state, allowing it to draw on the support of relevant individuals. As mentioned previously, RT/RW leaders seldom hold social power in their areas. Individuals elected to this role are often liked because they are accessible and helpful, not because they are feared or respected. Local power is often held by a host of non-elected individuals collectively known as ‘community leaders’ (*tokoh masyarakat–tomas*). However, the structures of local power across Indonesia are far from uniform and individuals with different backgrounds maintain different spheres of influence. Particular religious leaders (*tokoh agama–toga*) have pull with some groups in a village, while youth leaders (*tokoh pemuda–toda*) may have their own pack of supporters. Leaders of informal ethnic (*adat*) councils may be more important in one area, while local gangsters (*preman*) may exercise influence in another neighborhood. Social authority of an individual may be determined by family or political connections. These local landscapes of power evolve over time and are not immediately visible to an outsider. Yet, the police’s ability to prevent communal violence, depends on successful navigation of these hierarchies. RT/RW leaders, who tend to be longtime residents, can help the police in this process by identifying relevant nodes of local power. Second, the RT/RW system can also serve as a source of early warning for potentially dangerous situations. Neighborhood and village leaders are aware of previous history between rival groups. They can discern which

disputes in their area require police intervention and which ones pose a relatively small risk of escalation. In times of crises, the RT/RW leaders can also be called upon to divulge information about troublemakers or persons who need to be arrested to prevent further violence.

Managing the risk posed by radical Islamic terrorism in Indonesia also requires grassroots surveillance from the RT/RW system. Early on in the transition, activities of terrorist organizations were relatively limited to sites of Christian-Muslim conflict. Even when they began attacking more prominent targets, demonstrating significant improvements in technical knowledge of explosives and coordination abilities, the police's anti-terror operations were centered around the ability to track suspects' links to known organizational networks.

Over time, however, the threat of terrorism has become amorphous. The profile of a typical terror suspect is no longer limited to a reclusive young male who has affiliations with known radical groups. Increasingly, terrorist activities including recruitment, training and attacks are being conducted by entire families. These include women and young children who can easily blend in with the population and appear to live normal lives. This change can be attributed to three factors. First, the global appeal of the ISIS has been especially powerful in Indonesia. After 2014, more than 800 Indonesians, mostly families, travelled to the ISIS-declared caliphate in Syria.<sup>103</sup> Since then, more than 500 people have been deported back to Indonesia (IPAC 2018). Second, increasing connectivity through public and encrypted social media platforms has made it easier for individuals to self-radicalize, obtain technical training and perpetrate attacks without support from a hierarchical structure (Jones 2018). This new form of terrorist threat is most

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<sup>103</sup> Barker, Anne. "“I Was a Spoiled Brat’: The Girl Who Led 25 Relatives to Move to Syria to Join Islamic State.” ABC News, March 23, 2019. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-03-23/the-girl-who-led-her-family-to-join-islamic-state/10850294>.

visible in the 2018 Surabaya bombings that were perpetrated by entire families that comprised a small cell in the pro-ISIS *Jamaah Ansharud Daulah* (JAD).

While controlling the menace of terrorism is a national security priority, in recent years it has also become an institutional imperative for the police. Increasingly, terrorist organizations have singled out police stations or individual officers for their attacks. Between 2000 and 2009, 20 terrorist attacks against the police were recorded. Since 2010, more than 136 police officers have been attacked by terror organizations and their sympathizers.<sup>104</sup> These attacks took the form of bombings as well as stabbing by lone-wolf terrorists. Presumably this focus on the police is because its elite Detachment-88 (*Densus 88*) leads the country's anti-terror operations. *Densus 88* is generally known for its effectiveness but has also been cited for brutal treatment of detainees, as well as a predilection for shooting potential suspects. The most prominent confrontation occurred in 2018, when terrorist detainees at a police facility in Jakarta broke into a riot to protest their treatment. At least 5 policemen were executed by the detainees.<sup>105</sup>

Given the growing severity of the terrorist threat and the rapidly changing profile of its suspects, fine-grained surveillance from neighborhood associations has been mobilized since 2006. Directives for neighborhood surveillance have come from the highest levels of government as well as district and city governments that are now responsible for ensuring the formation and activation of the RT/RW systems in their areas. Emphasizing the role of the RT/RW as the front guard in the country's fight against Islamic radicalism, Indonesia's Interior Minister instructed the chiefs to act as "policemen" in their neighborhoods and monitor any

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<sup>104</sup> Soeriaatmadja, Wahyudi. "Indonesia Sees Huge Increase in Terrorist Attacks on Police." *The Straits Times*, May 23, 2018. <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/indonesia-sees-huge-increase-in-terrorist-attacks-on-police>.

<sup>105</sup> Wayulo, Andyala. "Enam Tewas Dalam Kerusuhan di Mako Brimob Depok." *VOA Indonesia*. Accessed May 1, 2019. <https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/enam-tewas-dalam-kerusuhan-di-mako-brimob-depok/4385982.html>.

unusual religious activities.<sup>106</sup> At another occasion, the Minister asked the RT/RW chiefs to perform their tasks with the same diligence that was expected of them during the New Order. “Just as in the New Order, even if a glass fell in someone’s house, everyone knew about it. Starting from the RT/RW, village police, local military command and the police station as well as the district head. In the same way, [today] we must know: Who brought the glass? Was he a resident? Who broke the glass? [Find out and] report it.”<sup>107</sup>

Reviving neighborhood surveillance tasks has also become a priority for regional governments, especially in dense urban areas. The influx of thousands of migrants and the abundance of low-cost short-term rentals make industrialized urban areas an ideal hiding place for potential terrorists. With this in mind, the Bandung city mayor urged the RT/RW chiefs to scrutinize residents who are aloof, anti-social or keep their houses closed to others. He too, invoked the New Order term “people’s fence” (*pagar betis*) to clarify what kind of surveillance and reporting was being expected from neighborhood leaders.<sup>108</sup> Jakarta’s deputy governor also described the RT/RW chiefs as the people most suited to monitor the spread of radicalism as they manage the residents “from cradle to the grave” and know everything about their lives.<sup>109</sup> The mayor of Pasuruan city issued instructions to require RT/RW recommendation letters for individuals who wanted to go for pilgrimage to Makkah.<sup>110</sup> These measures were taken after the

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<sup>106</sup> Hakim, Luqman. 2017. “Mendagri: Radikalisme Perlu Dideteksi Mulai Dari RT/RW.” Antara News, November 6, 2017. <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/663185/mendagri-radikalisme-perlu-dideteksi-mulai-dari-rt-rw>.

<sup>107</sup> Faqir, Anisyah Al. 2017. “Cegah Paham Radikalisme & Terorisme, Tjahjo Minta Warga Siskamling.” *Merdeka.Com*, July 28, 2017. <https://www.merdeka.com/peristiwa/cegah-paham-radikalisme-terorisme-tjahjo-minta-warga-siskamling.html>.

<sup>108</sup> VIVA. “Cegah Terorisme, Ridwan Kamil Izinkan RT/RW Selidiki Warga - VIVA,” May 28, 2017. <https://www.viva.co.id/berita/nasional/919995-cegah-terorisme-ridwan-kamil-izinkan-rt-rw-selidiki-warga>.

<sup>109</sup> “Antisipasi Terorisme, Sandi Akan Maksimalkan Peran RT/RW.” *TEROPONGSENAYAN.Com-Mata Dan Hati Indonesia*. Accessed May 1, 2019. <http://www.teropongsenayan.com/54216-antisipasi-terorisme-sandi-akan-maksimalkan-peran-rtrw>.

<sup>110</sup> “Wali Kota Pasuruan Minta Ketua RT/RW Awasi Warganya Dari ISIS.” *Detiknews*, April 20, 2015. <https://news.detik.com/berita-jawa-timur/d-2892886/wali-kota-pasuruan-minta-ketua-rtrw-awasi-warganya-dari-isis>.

police found that one of the city's residents had gone to perform the minor pilgrimage and went to Syria to join ISIS afterwards. Following the deadly bombings in Surabaya, the mayor reinforced the guest registration system that requires visitors to report their presence to the RT chief in their area, once every 24 hours. Soon afterwards the city government launched a smartphone application that allows the RT/RW chiefs to update resident and visitor data in real-time and upload photographs of suspicious persons or occurrences.<sup>111</sup>

It should be noted that the involvement of the RT/RW system in monitoring and preventing terrorism is part of a broader effort by the government. Several mass organizations, youth groups as well as militias have also been mobilized to prevent the spread of radical ideas. However, the RT/RW system has several operational advantages over other civil society structures. First, the system is more ubiquitous and has deeper reach in society than any other organization. Second, it is more flexible and adaptive to changing needs. RT/RW chiefs monitor the activities of known suspects, such as members of radical organization and returnees from Syria. But more importantly, the system keeps the police informed of broadly defined 'suspicious' activities, such as frequent meetings attended by visitors or the arrival of residents who are dressed more conservatively than is the norm in the area. This broad reporting can help the state keep up with changing tactics of an increasingly amorphous enemy.

#### 4.3.3 Seeking compliance from RT/RW through expansion of police force

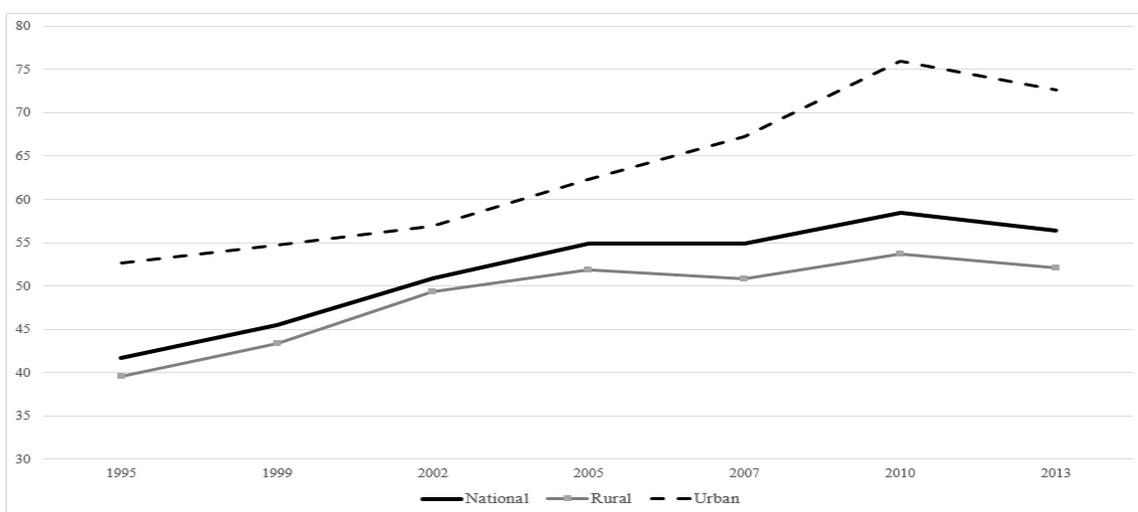
The basic structure of neighborhood associations remains the same as it was under the New Order (Appendix 8), but the granularity of the grid has declined by 35% in terms of the

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<sup>111</sup> "Cegah Terorisme, Wali Kota Surabaya Wajibkan RT/RW Terapkan Aplikasi Sipandu." SINDOnews.com, May 23, 2018. <https://daerah.sindonews.com/read/1308167/23/cegah-terorisme-wali-kota-surabaya-wajibkan-rtrw-terapkan-aplikasi-sipandu-1527052266>.

number of households represented by each RT (Figure 4.8).<sup>112</sup> Before the democratic transition, on average, an RT comprised of 40 households. In urban areas this number was 52. Today, an average RT represents 56 households and an urban RT has 72. While one RW used to represent 3 RTs in the past, now it is comprised of 4 on average. Despite some recent exceptions in large cities, most RT/RW chiefs do not receive a salary from the state and are not part of its official bureaucracy.

**Figure 4.8 Average number of households / neighborhood association**



Source: PODES

Despite this continuity in structure, democratization has transformed neighborhood politics in significant ways. First, RT/RW chiefs are no longer answerable to civil or military bureaucrats as their election is not subject to screening or approval by higher authorities (Kurasawa 2013). In most places, elections remain informal as before and candidates are not allowed to represent any political party's platform. Household representatives elect their RT chief through a rough poll or consensus and RT chiefs elect the RW chiefs. Increased openness

<sup>112</sup> The RT is the smallest unit and RW or RK as the unit responsible for multiple RTs. The RWs are in turn managed by an elected village head in rural areas or an appointed hamlet head in cities. In some villages, especially those with a large population, *dusun* is an intermediary unit between the RW and the village head. The names of administrative units have been adjusted in some places to reflect local language and tradition.

and transparency of the process has changed the profile of neighborhood leadership over the last two decades. While all RT/RW leaders were Golkar supporters before the transition, today they cast their votes for different parties. Compared to the past, RT/RW elections are also contested more enthusiastically as they provide a potential path to higher elected office in the region.

Second, the transformation of neighborhoods into genuine sites of civic engagement has enhanced the RT/RW chiefs' ability to articulate demands on their residents' behalf. Between 1999 and 2006 the coercive functions of RT/RW systems declined and these grassroots bodies were ranked by citizens as the most trusted institution in the country (Mukherjee 1999). Neighborhood associations in high income residential areas mostly serve an administrative purpose but in middle and low-income areas, they have played a critical role in imparting values of volunteerism and leadership skills (Lussier 2016). It is common for residents to bring up their issues in monthly meetings and for the RT chiefs to write letters to sub-district or district officials demanding road repairs or water pumps. Younger, more educated RT chiefs in urban areas are also increasingly aware of non-governmental sources of development funds and frequently write direct proposals to international development agencies (Kurasawa 2013). Neighborhood leadership frequently demand 'contributions' from nearby businesses, whose employees use public facilities in their area such as roads, water wells and mosques—although there is usually no formal accounting for funds so collected. Finally, RT/RW chiefs can advocate on behalf of residents who may get into trouble with the law. RT leaders are usually called alongside parents of minors caught in student brawls or to return adults found making trouble during political protests or demonstrations. While in the past, RT leaders could be called upon to divulge names of suspects in an incident, today the criminal procedure law requires their presence to monitor police searches and raids in their area.

Third, frequent and open elections at all levels of government have transformed the RT/RW chiefs into political brokers. Political operatives in democratic Indonesia have routinely relied on RT/RW chiefs to open access for their candidates in exchange for small fees and gifts (Aspinall and Sukmajati 2016). Usually, the chiefs provide this cooperation by arranging a meeting between the candidate and residents, persuading the residents to vote a certain way, or by ensuring the distribution of vote-buying funds to potential voters. In most cases, RT/RW chiefs maintain the appearance of neutrality, so as not to upset residents who support other candidates and avoid being reported to election monitoring bodies. The RT/RW chiefs also serve as volunteers to man the polling stations during national and regional elections as each polling station comprises of 3-4 RTs.

The democratization process has significantly strengthened the position of RT/RW leaders vis a vis the official state bureaucracy. As a result, it has become increasingly difficult to seek their compliance for state-assigned tasks because officials have very little leverage over them. Non-compliance with state requests by RT/RW leaders usually takes the form of quietly ignoring instructions or proforma acquiescence. In some cases, non-compliance can turn into an open confrontation between state officials and neighborhood leaders.

In 2016, such a confrontation in Jakarta revealed the absence of state's political control over RT/RW leaders. Prior to 2005, the monthly operational funds assigned to the RT/RW leaders amounted to \$10 and \$15 respectively. This miniscule amount barely covered the cost of stationary, let alone the kind of socialization drives that the RT/RW chiefs were being asked to conduct for the government's development initiatives. In the past, these leaders would find the money through resident contributions or other creative means but after the transition, they were not willing to burden their residents in the same way. In order to incentivize the compliance with

its requests, the city government increased the amount of operational funds gradually and by 2018, the amount allocated to each RT/RW had reached \$150 and \$200 respectively.<sup>113</sup>

Trouble began when the Jakarta government began demanding that the RT/RW account for how these funds were being spent. The chiefs were also required to update their activities on a digital application, no less than three times a day. The neighborhood leaders refused to comply with the request because they found the requirement too burdensome and intrusive into local affairs.<sup>114</sup> A showdown ensued. Thousands of RT/RWs protested outside City Hall.<sup>115</sup> The governor compared the RT/RW to gangsters (*preman*) and asked that leaders who found the new requirements too burdensome be replaced with more willing ones.<sup>116</sup> In response, the RT/RW leaders organized themselves into a political forum and played a critical role in campaigning to defeat the incumbent governor in his re-election bid. The newly elected governor withdrew the reporting request and further increased the operational funds allocated to the RT/RWs in the city.

The Police faced similar constraints in seeking compliance from neighborhood leaders, upon whom they had to depend for information, crowd control and also operational support. In the absence of political control over these grassroots bodies, the cooperation of their leaders could only be sought on the basis of trust. However, public trust in the police was at an all-time low within a few years of the transition. In part this was due to the institution's past affiliation with the military's repressive measures. Mostly, people did not trust the police because it was

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<sup>113</sup> Hidayat, Reja. "LPJ Keuangan RT/RW: Ahok Sempel, Djarot Rumit, Anies Mau Singkat." *tirto.id*, January 5, 2018. <https://tirto.id/lpj-keuangan-rtrw-ahok-sempel-djarot-rumit-anies-mau-singkat-cCMc>.

<sup>114</sup> Juniman, Puput Tripeni. "RT/RW Jakarta Tolak Penilaian Kinerja Lewat Aplikasi Qlue." *Nasional*, May 27, 2016. <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20160526175041-20-133669/rt-rw-jakarta-tolak-penilaian-kinerja-lewat-aplikasi-qlue>.

<sup>115</sup> Media, Kompas Cyber. "Giliran Forum RT/RW Lakukan Aksi Demo di Balai Kota DKI." *KOMPAS.com*, September 16, 2016. <https://megapolitan.kompas.com/read/2016/09/16/15451431/giliran.forum.rt.rw.lakukan.aksi.demo.di.balai.kota.dki>.

<sup>116</sup> TNR, Suseno. "Bayar Ketua RT/RW, Ahok: Daripada Mereka Jadi Preman." *Tempo*, May 31, 2016. <https://metro.tempo.co/read/775393/bayar-ketua-rtrw-ahok-daripada-mereka-jadi-preman>.

widely seen as ineffective in containing the communal-era chaos. To be fair, the initial performance of this newly separated force was largely a function of budget constraints, personal shortage and political competition from the military, which was still a much larger and dominant force. At this stage, it became clear to the senior leadership within the Police that institutional reform was necessary not just for improving the security situation, but also for its survival as an organization independent of the military's support.

The *Polri* responded to this situation in 2004, by formulating a twenty-year Grand Strategy for Reform (2005-2025).<sup>117</sup> This comprehensive document that has been the basis of police reform for the past 15 years, recognizes the low public trust in its institution as a 'crisis'. The way out, it proposes is the transformation of the public's image of the police from a coercive force to a 'service provider.' A three-phase plan is laid out to achieve this goal. During Phase I (2005-2010) trust-building is to be the police's top priority. Phase II (2011-15) is to focus on building partnerships with civil society and civilian branches of government. Phase III (2016-2025) will focus on achieving excellence in delivery of public service.

Community policing is identified as the main pillar of the Grand Strategy and subsequently, a community policing directive was issued by the National Police chief in 2005. Seeking to bypass the RT/RW system, this regulation mandates the creation of Forums for Police-Public Partnership (*Forum Kemitraan Polisi dan Masyarakat-FKPM*) in each village and hamlet of the country,<sup>118</sup> to be formed and supervised by the sub-district police chiefs (*Kapolsek*). Once such initiative launched in the Greater Jakarta area is the Group Aware of Public Security and Order (*Kelompok Sadar Keamanan dan Ketertiban Masyarakat-Pokdar*

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<sup>117</sup> Grand Strategy Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia (2005-2025)

<sup>118</sup> No. Pol SKEP/ 737 X / 2005

*Kamtibmas*).<sup>119</sup> The *Pokdar* program seeks to enroll civilian volunteers, in urban and sub-urban neighborhoods, to act as partners to the police. Enrolled volunteers tend to be young or middle-aged men from a lower to lower middle class background.<sup>120</sup> They are issued membership cards by the police and many go on to have matching membership jackets tailored. The *Pokdar* are invited to join the police troops for weekly exercise sessions at the sub-district police station (*Polsek*). The *Pokdar* volunteers are not paid but can expect to receive a small payment or a meal for when they help out with the traffic. Under no circumstances are the *Pokdar* allowed to carry weapons or take part in a security operation. Their main functions are to inform the police of unusual activity in the area and provide backup manpower on special occasions, like helping the police control traffic around the Eid holiday.<sup>121</sup>

A nationwide group assembled under the auspices of the FKPM program is the Center for Communication and Partnership with the Police (*Senkom Mitra Polisi*). The *Senkom* is a hierarchical organization with a clear leadership structure and code of conduct.<sup>122</sup> The terms of partnership between the *Senkom* and the police were first detailed via a telegram in 2007<sup>123</sup> and then formalized through a MoU agreement in 2012.<sup>124</sup> Unlike the *Pokdar*, *Senkom* members come from relatively prosperous backgrounds and have strict screening requirements. Full-time employment is mandatory condition for membership and so is a clean police record. Members are not allowed to smoke or consume alcohol.<sup>125</sup> The presence of *Senkom* members is more

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<sup>119</sup> Description based on interviews with FKPM members and leaders.

<sup>120</sup> None of the members I met had a full-time job. Most were small shopkeepers, contractors or part-time workers with flexible schedules.

<sup>121</sup> They can usually be found hanging out at the local police stations.

<sup>122</sup> The organization claims to have more than 2 million members nationwide but this is highly unlikely. Their presence was only known around neighborhoods in the Greater Jakarta Area. In other provinces they had contacts but no presence.

<sup>123</sup> No. Pol.: ST/526/V/2007

<sup>124</sup> Nomor : 236 / PP-SK.MP/VII/2012

<sup>125</sup> At *Senkom*'s National Convention, which I attended in 2017, the no smoking rule was observed even by members whom I knew to be chain-smokers. In Indonesia, this is quite remarkable.

prominent in industrial areas but their tasks are the same. They are encouraged to sign up volunteers, subject to approval by the local *Kapolsek*. The volunteers are to act as the police's eyes and ear on the ground by informing them of any suspicious activity and provide back up to the police in public order operations—mainly with regards to traffic.<sup>126</sup> Despite having no official role within the police structure, *Senkom* members sport uniforms that are almost identical to the police's elite Mobile Brigade unit (*Brimob*). Volunteers in some areas drive cars with markings that are difficult to distinguish with official police cars. Each member is issued a card by the organization, which carries the signature of the *Kapolri* himself.

Outwardly signs of links with the police are a matter of pride among the *Pokdar* and *Senkom* members. Their access to the local police and legal knowhow also helps them earn money as a 'facilitator' (*Makelar Kasus–Markus*). Small businessmen or neighbors who may have a problem with the police can call on these FKPM members to facilitate a negotiated solution. They can also offer consultation on how to file a charge and get response from the police by using their contacts.

Unsurprisingly, these attempts to bypass the RT/RW system by creating new sources of social cooperation have been to no avail. First, recruiting and controlling volunteers at a national scale is a mammoth task, especially in the absence of a clear and present threat like Communism in 1965. Second, the kinds of individuals who sign up for these programs are very unlikely to have any social authority or reach in their areas. Finally, while the RT/RW chiefs keep an eye on things as part of their daily business with the residents, FKPM's mono affiliation with the police earns them a reputation of being police spies that ordinary people just want to avoid.<sup>127</sup> Most

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<sup>126</sup> Some individual members of *Senkom* have signed up for training under the Defense Ministry's Defend the State Program (*Bela Negara*).

<sup>127</sup> Residents referred to *Pokdar* and *Senkom* members as 'intel' or 'informan'

importantly, the police still has very little leverage over members of these groups. The system of screening and approvals mimics the New Order era restrictions on RT/RW leaders but in effect, there are no consequences for FKPM members for not fulfilling the police's expectations.<sup>128</sup>

Faced with the impossibility of creating a new structure for societal support as effective as the neighborhood associations, the Indonesian police has shifted the focus back to improving compliance from the RT/RW chiefs. This time, by expanding the ground presence of its own Community Police officers. This strategy is reflected in the *Polri's* budget, which has increased five-folds between 2005 and 2015 (Figure 4.9).<sup>129</sup> In 2005, ten years after the transition, *Polri* operated on an annual budget of approximately \$831 million. By 2015 annual police spending had reached nearly \$4.5 billion. Over this ten-year period, more than two-third of the budget has been spent on personnel expenses (salaries), which has dramatically increased the police's force strength. In 2004, the police to civilian ratio in Indonesia was 1:700 as the police force comprised of approximately 297,000 police personal (Siregar et al. 2015, 121). By 2015, this number had exceeded 430,000 and the ratio reduced to 1:597.<sup>130</sup> Indonesia is presently the world's 5<sup>th</sup> largest police force after India, China, Russia and the United States.

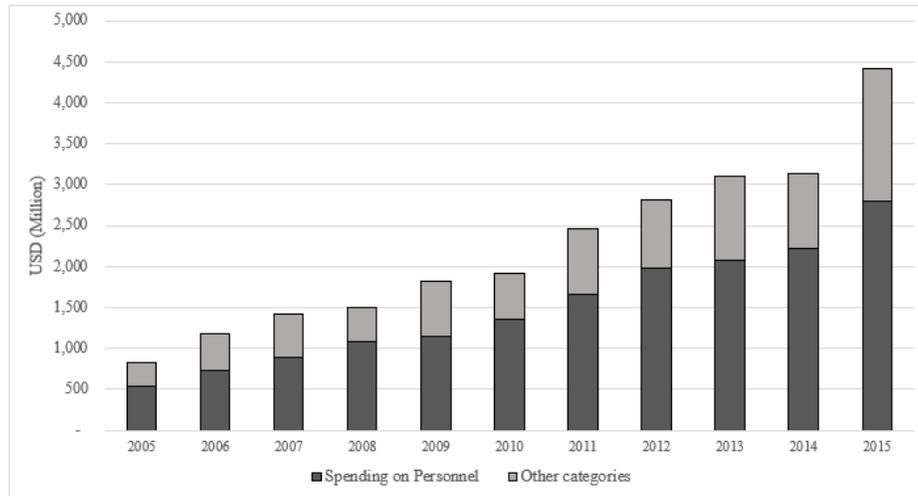
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<sup>128</sup> Both sides frequently express dissatisfaction with the other. Sub-district police officers tend to think of these groups as a liability because some of their overzealous members have overstepped their bounds to engage in policing tasks like chasing traffic violators and causing an accident. FKPM members also complain about how the police is stingy, asking them to do a host of things but refusing to share any of their funds.

<sup>129</sup> Source: Extracted from the Central Government's Annual Financial Reports (LKPP0 Prepared by the National Audit Agency (BPK)

<sup>130</sup> Jaya, Gede Nadi. "Kapolri Sebut Personel Polisi Di RI Terbanyak Nomor 2 Di Dunia." Merdeka.Com, September 16, 2016. <https://www.merdeka.com/peristiwa/kapolri-sebut-personel-polisi-di-ri-terbanyak-nomor-2-di-dunia.html>.

**Figure 4.9 Increase in the budget of the Indonesian National Police**



Source: LKPP-BPK

At the center of these expansion efforts is the police's Community Guidance Unit (*Satuan Pembinaan Masyarakat--Sat Binmas*), which has received the largest share of new recruits for its Community Policing program.<sup>131</sup> In the past, The *Binmas* Unit was primarily responsible for maintaining police ties with lucrative businesses, certifying and regulating guards hired by private security companies. As such, most of Binmas members were stationed at the national or regional headquarters. Since 2007, *Binmas* has been expanded with the addition of street-level community liaison officers (*Bhayangkara Pembina Keamanan dan Ketertiban Masyarakat--Bhabinkamtibmas*). Unlike other police officials whose daily presence is limited to the sub-district police station, a *Bhabin* is tasked with managing community relations at the grassroots level. The goal is to assign one *Bhabin* to a single village/hamlet, for a period of one year or more. However, the number of *Bhabin* in the force are still not enough to cover all villages and hamlets. This is why some *Bhabin* have been able to establish their presence through a post, usually located within the village/hamlet offices. Others, tasked with monitoring multiple

<sup>131</sup> "Pasukan Terbanyak Polri Adalah Bhabinkamtibmas - Bangka Pos." Accessed March 27, 2019. <http://bangka.tribunnews.com/2018/12/06/pasukan-terbanyak-polri-adalah-bhabinkamtibmas>.

areas at the same time, remain stationed at the *Polsek* and make occasional rounds to meet communities in their assigned areas.<sup>132</sup>

Initiated in 2007, the *Bhabinkamtibmas* program is a significant innovation for a national police force, whose members had previously been largely confined to their regional offices and had little daily interaction with citizens. However, this localization of the police should not be mistaken for its decentralization as security governance in Indonesia remains highly centralized. Regulation of criminal offenses, judicial policy and religious issues is strictly reserved as the exclusive domain of the national government.<sup>133</sup> The centralized structure of the *Polri* has also been retained (Appendix 9). Regional executives or law-makers have no say in the selection, promotion, compensation or posting of police officials in their areas as all decisions are made internally, within the *Polri*. Furthermore, annual budget allocation to the *Polri* is made at the President's request, subject to approval by the national parliament. Allocation of these funds for specific operations, offices and service branches are also made internally, while annual spending reports are submitted to a national audit agency (*Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan–BPK*). While regional governments do allocate additional operational budget to support police operations during regional elections, they do not exercise much budgetary or operational influence on the police.

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<sup>132</sup> The profile of the *Bhabin* has changed significantly over time. After the community policing program was launched in 2007, a small number of low-ranking non-commissioned officers were assigned to this post. Over time, however, the position of a *Bhabin* has become an entry-level job for non-commissioned officers. Due to the large influx of new recruits every year, increasingly the *Bhabin* tend to be young, energetic individuals deeply concerned with pleasing their superiors for career advancement. On rare occasions older members of the force with disciplinary problems or a bad service record may be thrown (*dibuang*) into the *Bhabin* program, a form of demotion.

<sup>133</sup> Local governments can and do enact regulations about morality or customs but a) these laws can be annulled by the Interior Ministry and b) the municipal governments do not have the power to arrest, detail or charge individuals with any crimes. This is why most of these regulations affect places of business or worship that can be sealed for violation.

The expansion of grassroots police presence through the *Bhabinkamtibmas* program sought to improve public trust in the police, by improving the force's responsiveness to local issues and complaints. The program, which piloted first with the support of several international donor agencies, expected the *Bhabin* to perform two kinds of functions in their designated communities. First, they were expected to improve the flow of information between the public and the police. The *Bhabin* were encouraged to participate wholeheartedly in community occasions and activities to familiarize themselves with the issues in their area and build trust with the local residents so that they feel comfortable approaching the police to report any suspicious activities. The *Bhabin* were also tasked with socializing the police's other reform initiatives and policies to the public to improve the force's image. Second, these street-level officers were to improve the speed of police's service delivery in the area through 'problem solving'. This involved a) encouraging citizens to resolve small disputes through mediation and lighten the police's workload to deal with important issues, such as violent crime, communal conflict and terrorism and; b) enabling citizens to seek help at the local sub-district police station when they needed to report a complaint.

This initial phase of reform and related budget increases brought the police in closer contact with communities. However, lack of broader reform in how budgetary resources are collected and spent has made it virtually impossible for the street-level cop to respond to public demands with improved service. Studies of police reform in Indonesia identify two kinds of perennial budgeting problems (Jacqui Baker 2013; Muradi 2014). First is the prioritization of personal over operations. In its drive to expand the police's ground presence across the country, the *Polri* has consistently allocated more than two thirds of its budget for salaries and only about 12 % is spent on operational expenses for transport, electricity, maintenance and most

importantly, criminal investigations (Jacqui Baker 2013, 139). Second is the centralized process of budget allocation within the police. Successive studies of *Polri* financing have shown that 25% of the budget is reserved for the National Headquarters in Jakarta and only 7% is allocated towards meeting the operational needs of the territorial offices across the country. Even from this miniscule amount, funds are skimmed at every level of the transfer and according to some estimates, only half of the allocated money ever reaches a *Polsek* (*ibid*).

These allocation issues have constrained the local police's ability to win public trust through the provision of public services. Even if a *Bhabin* in a community is responsive to his residents' needs and is able to help them seek help at a police station, the performance of the police at the station is constrained by the limited availability of funds, which they may not be willing to spend on ordinary cases. Second, the lack of availability of funds at local stations has made it necessary for police officers at all levels to meet their operational requirements by seeking off-budget sources of support. The ability to raise sufficient funds for local operational expenses is one of the most critical criteria for promotion and career advancement in the police.

For senior and mid-level commissioned officers, becoming operationally self-sufficient involves developing friendships with local businessmen, and influential leaders, who can 'participate' in police's operations by contributing donations for infrastructure repairs, transport vehicles, operational expenses as well as personal income. In return for their contribution, donors can expect police officers' 'understanding' and support in matters involving their interests. Extortion of criminal outfits in their areas, such as prostitution hubs, illegal alcohol shops and gambling dens by the police is also common.<sup>134</sup> The research shows that single contributions from these two sources can range anywhere from \$ 10,000 to \$50,000, a portion of which is

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<sup>134</sup> These mechanisms are known as *Partisipasi Teman -Parman* (Friendly participation) and *Partisipasi Kriminal-Parmin* (Criminal participation) respectively.

passed up to superiors (Muradi 2014, 149). These partnerships allow regional police heads to meet their basic operational needs, fulfil unexpected urgent tasks and most importantly, build a reputation as a resourceful person. However, these complicit relationships severely compromise the officers' neutrality and professionalism.

For a street-level cop, the need to raise local funds deepens his dependence on the goodwill of local communities and their leaders. The street-level process of raising off-budget funds is essentially the same but much smaller in scale. Community leaders who are happy with a *Bhabin* may contribute payments of \$100-200 a month to pay for petrol, food or other expenses. Even more important than collecting regular contributions is the *Bhabin*'s ability to cobble together funds and manpower for unanticipated orders from above. Clearing road accident sites, socializing a new directive about banned outfits, conducting sweeping to look for suspicious residents, refreshments for meetings to negotiate a conflict between rival groups are examples of just a few instances where a street-level officer would be expected to pick up the tab by his higher ups.

In addition to funds, the street-level cop is highly dependent on community leaders for support in gathering information about suspected terrorist activities or using their influence for crowd control in times of crisis. Even though an officer is placed among a community, it is very rarely the case that he is a member of the same community. Although the police in recent years has prioritized hiring 'local boys for local jobs', this means that the *Bhabin* is likely to be from the same province, and able to speak the local language, but not a resident of the same area. This means two things: the *Bhabin* is unlikely to fully understand the local hierarchies in his assigned communities and needs the RT/RWs help in navigating them, at least initially. He also needs to be able to rely on the RT/RW to report suspicious activity or brewing conflict to him, as

residents are unlikely to approach the officer directly. The *Bhabin* most important task is to filter the information received from community leaders and discern which issues need to be brought to the attention of superiors.

This combination of expectations and constraints incentivizes a street-level *Bhabin* to respond to community needs through extra-legal means. On the one hand, the placement of a *Bhabin* in a community and his dependence on their goodwill for the completion of operational tasks and funding, make him responsive to the community's needs. On the other hand, the lack of macro-level reform in the police force as a whole severely constrains the ability of the *Bhabin* to respond to community needs through the legal system. As such, he is often compelled to generate the cooperation of community leaders by helping them solve their problems privately.

Facilitating impunity for vigilantism is one such form of private service that is being performed by street-level *Bhabin* for the communities they serve. This service can involve an ex-ante promise to let vigilantes get away with violence, especially if the target is a community insider. In most cases, however, the *Bhabin* helps the vigilantes in the aftermath of a lynching. This can be done by assisting communities in collecting evidence of the victims' guilt and by dissuading the victim's family from pressing charges. In cases when vigilantes fear a revenge attack, the *Bhabin* plays a critical role in escalating the matter to higher authorities, in order to consolidate police forces in the area and thwart the attack. Thus, while the Grand Strategy may not have been able to build the public's trust in the police's ability to enforce the law, it has taught them that some police officers can be trusted to help them break it. This side-effect of Indonesia's half-baked state-building efforts are driving the patterns of vigilantism and are likely to continue doing so unless serious institutional reform can reorient the police force to focus on public service delivery, rather than trading private favors.

#### **4.4 Re-balancing of state-society relations and its effects**

The legacy of dependence on civic structures in Indonesia continues, but change in the mode of compliance from regulation under the New Order to cooperation after the transition has shifted the balance of power between the state and civic leaders. In the past, RT/RW leaders were under pressure to balance the needs of their residents and the demands of the state. Placating the state was necessary for maintaining their positions and preventing further government interventions into residents' lives. Today, the state is obliged to balance its national security priorities with the law-and-order demands of local communities. In an ideal setting, these demands would be met through improved public policing. In developing democracies like Indonesia, the limited nature of police reform prevents improvements in public service delivery and forces front-line bureaucrats to satisfy community needs privately, through extra-legal means. For a street-level cop, this shift translates into a need for earning community goodwill by providing impunity for vigilantism against local offenses. Cumulatively, this combination of legacy and change has produced security trade-offs, where the state has to tolerate disorder at the local level to be able to maintain order at the national-level.

The empirical implication of this shift is that the expansion of the state's formal coercive presence has increased communities' ability to obtain credible impunity for vigilante violence. The expectation of impunity and its selective fulfilment by local cops has driven the upward trend of vigilantism in democratic Indonesia. This prediction is tested in Chapter 5 by analyzing sub-national patterns of vigilantism between 2005-2015, a period that corresponds with the *Polri's* expansion. In Chapter 6, qualitative and quantitative evidence is provided to shed light on the mechanisms through which impunity is generated for vigilantes.

## 5. Side-effects of State-rebuilding

Existing theories emphasize the state's absence, or its weakness as the cause of vigilantism and claim that citizens take the law into their own hands as a way to cope with inadequate provision of order by the state. In contrast, I claim that vigilantes actually need the state's presence to protect them from legal reprisals and revenge attacks by victims' families. Vigilantes are able to leverage the state's coercive presence for this protection when the state is dependent on civil society's support for security management. Street-level cops, who are beholden to communities' goodwill for accomplishing their daily tasks, provide impunity for vigilante violence against local threats in exchange for cooperation with the state's national-level security goals. My theory predicts that in a context of dependence, expansion of the state's formal coercive apparatus increases the likelihood of vigilantism as it improves communities' ability to obtain credible impunity. Furthermore, because impunity offered by street-level policemen is contingent on the risk of further escalation, I predict that beyond a certain threshold of violence, increasing state presence makes vigilantism less likely.

This chapter tests my theoretical claims by drawing on sub-national variation in vigilantism across Indonesia, a country with a history of dependence on civic structures for security management. Section one explains the process through which quantitative data on vigilantism was collected and describes the trends and patterns of vigilante violence observed in Indonesia since the *Reformasi*. Section two summarizes the predictions of my theory against rival explanations and derives a set of testable hypotheses. Section three presents the empirical strategy for panel analysis of data on vigilantism from 245 districts across Indonesia, between 2005 and 2014. Section four presents the results from multiple estimations. The findings support my theoretical claims and show that the rapid expansion of Indonesia's community policing

program has increased the likelihood of vigilantism. They also show that the positive relationship between local police presence and vigilantism is reversed after levels of violence escalate beyond a certain threshold, indicating the selective nature of impunity for vigilantism.

## **5.1 Rise of a new coercive force in Indonesia**

### 5.1.1 Measuring vigilantism

The National Violence Monitoring System (NVMS) database contains event-level data on incidence and impact of violence in Indonesia between 1998 and 2014. With a total of 239,586 individual incidents, coded for over 30 unique variables, the NVMS dataset is the world's largest violence event dataset for any single country. Due to funding constraints and source material availability, the spatial and temporal coverage of the dataset is uneven (Appendix 1). However, complete data is available between 2005 and 2014 from 16 provinces that comprise half of Indonesia's population, representing all major islands and ethnic groups. Most of the analysis in this study draws on this complete portion of the dataset.

The NVMS data has been collected from over 174 local and national newspapers. Prior to data collection, extensive source assessments were conducted in order to map the availability and quality of both media and non-media sources. These assessments confirmed that subnational print media, while not perfect, were the best source for information on violence in Indonesia. Two strategies were adopted to minimize the weaknesses of media sources. First, multiple newspapers were collected from each province based on a mapping of district coverage, violence reporting policies and political affiliations of media sources. Second, where media coverage was low or reporting was dubious, non-media sources were used to supplant and triangulate the data. Following source selection, researchers were sent to each province to collect all available archives by photographing each page of every newspaper. Over 3 million newspaper images

were digitized during this process. Trained coding teams in Jakarta then combed through the digitized archives and clipped articles related to incidents of violence. A standardized coding template was completed for each incident, often based on information from multiple articles. Details of the data collection methodology have been published by the authors of the NVMS dataset (Barron, Jaffrey, and Varshney 2016)<sup>135</sup>

The NVMS dataset used a broad definition of violence: a discrete event where one party deliberately uses physical violence to cause harm to another. Each violent event in the dataset was first classified as crime, conflict, domestic violence or police shooting. Conflict incidents were further disaggregated, based on the kind of issue that is at stake in the dispute, such as elections, identity, vigilantism and resource etc. This coding scheme (Appendix 2), allows me to observe relative shifts in different kinds of violence and analyze how changes in one kind of violence affect the others.

Regardless of how it was classified, a standard set of indicators were recorded for each event. The location and date for each incident was recorded in a way that the data can be aggregated down to the district level and according to years, months or days. Additionally, I GIS-coded sub-sections of the data from four urban centers, allowing for more fine-grained analysis of violence patterns.<sup>136</sup> For each incident, the database also records the number of victims (severely injured and dead), affiliation of actors involved (perpetrators and victim), proximate trigger of the violent event, weapons used as well as whether or not the security forces

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<sup>135</sup> The coding key is available in supplementary materials sections <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-east-asian-studies/article/when-large-conflicts-subside-the-ebbs-and-flows-of-violence-in-postsuharto-indonesia/635855F35B69B63F0A6B50CE39C1BE46#fndtn-supplementary-materials>

<sup>136</sup> These cities are: Greater Jakarta Area, Surabaya, Medan and Manado

intervened to stop the violence from progressing. A summary of relative composition of different types of violence is presented in Appendix 3.

Incidents of vigilantism in the NVMS dataset were identified based on the definition adopted in this study: the *collective use of extra-legal violence by private citizens to respond to actual or perceived transgressions of established legal or social norms*. This definition includes forms of violence that are most frequently associated with vigilantism in Indonesia, such as *razia* (sweeping/raids), *blokade* (blockade/barricade) and *penegroyokan* (mob beating), triggered by the allegation of a specific offence.<sup>137</sup> Violent raids and blockades led by the police and the military officials in the course of regular law-enforcement activities are excluded from this definition along with incidents of individualistic murder, assault, rape or kidnapping. Finally, collective forms of large-scale violence such as *kerusuhan* (riots), *bentrokan* (group clashes) and *demonstrasi/unjuk rasa rusuh* (violent demonstrations) are excluded from this definition because they are not geared towards punishing a specific individual offender for a particular transgression.

### 5.1.2 Patterns of violence in democratic Indonesia

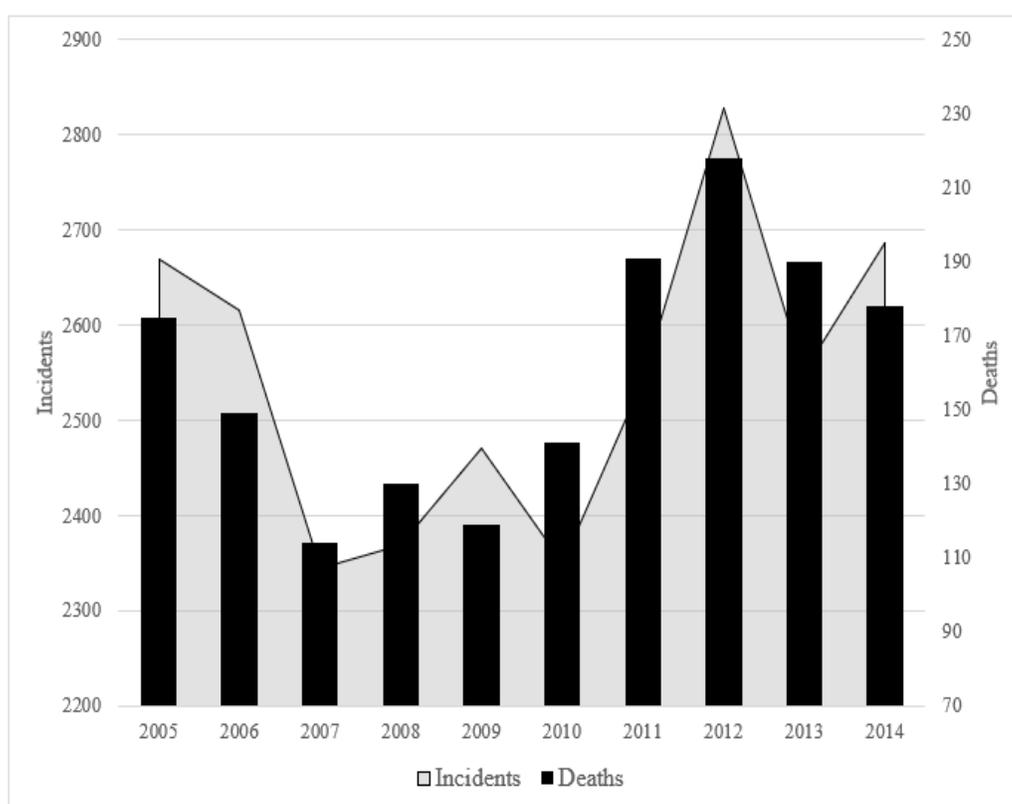
The NVMS data reveals two important trends in the frequency and composition of vigilantism in Indonesia over the past two decades. First, it shows that since 1998, there has been a continuous rise in the frequency of vigilante violence. The initial spike in vigilantism during the transition years accompanied the outbreak of large-scale violence, specifically communal riots and insurgent violence. By 2005, levels of large-scale violence had declined by 79% but vigilante violence has continued to rise at a steady pace. Between 2005 and 2014, the NVMS

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<sup>137</sup> These are ‘insults’, petty theft/property damage, murder/assault, renegeing on debt, witchcraft, road accident, sexual indiscretion/misdemeanor, engaging in immoral activities such as sale of alcohol, gambling and prostitution, violation of local building codes (usually targets minority places of worship) as well as a residual category of *gangguan ketertiban umum* (public order disturbances).

dataset recorded 33,262 victims of vigilante violence across 16 provinces that represent only half of Indonesia’s population. Victims include 1,605 individuals who died and 31,657 people who were seriously wounded<sup>138</sup> as a result of 25,421 incidents of vigilante violence. Vigilantism fell to its lowest levels in 2007 and peaked in 2012, representing a 20% increase in frequency incidents and a 91% in deaths (Figure 5.1). During this period, the total victims of vigilante violence far exceed the number of casualties from large-scale violence. Vigilantism accounts for 53% of all casualties that result from collective violence in the country since 2005, while communal riots and electoral clashes combined account for 15 % of the victims. (Table 5.1)

**Figure 5.1 The rise of vigilante violence in democratic Indonesia**



Source: NVMS Dataset

<sup>138</sup> Indonesian newspapers report the seriousness of the injury by indicating the physical condition of the victim as *bebak belur* (beaten black and blue) or *sekarat* (near death).

**Table 5.1 Impact of vigilantism relative to other forms of collective violence (2005-2014)**

	<b>Incidents</b>		<b>Deaths</b>	
<b>Collective Violence</b>	<b>44,665</b>		<b>3412</b>	
Vigilantism	26,088	58%	1635	48%
Land Conflicts	5,897	13%	814	24%
Communal Conflicts	3,781	8%	589	17%
Electoral Conflicts	2,774	6%	95	3%
Government Protests	3,136	7%	68	2%
Other	2,989	7%	211	6%

Source: NVMS Dataset

Vigilantism is not an entirely new phenomenon in Indonesia. Several studies have documented sporadic beating of thieves and lynching of accused sorcerers during the New Order and even during Dutch colonial rule (Colombijn 2002; Siegel 1993; Guinness 1986). However, there is a general consensus among scholars that the levels of vigilantism observed since the transition are dramatically higher than anything that has been observed before (Dijk 2002; Welsh 2008; ICG 2012; Tyson 2013). Systematic data on vigilante violence is not available before 1998 but limited quantitative comparisons support these assertions. For example, the UNSFIR dataset records an annual average of 5.2 incidents of thief lynching and 3.2 incidents of witch killings in East Java between 1990 and 1997. After the transition, these figures are reported as 572 and 7.2 respectively.<sup>139</sup> (Table 5.2)

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<sup>139</sup> Author's calculations based on the UNSFIR dataset collected by (Varshney, Tadjoeeddin, and Panggabean 2008)

**Table 5.2 Relative increase in vigilantism after the New Order**

Incidents of vigilantism/year East Java		
	New Order (1990-1997)	Democracy (2005-2014)
Theft	5.2	572
Sorcery	3.2	7.2

Source: UNSFIR & NVMS Dataset

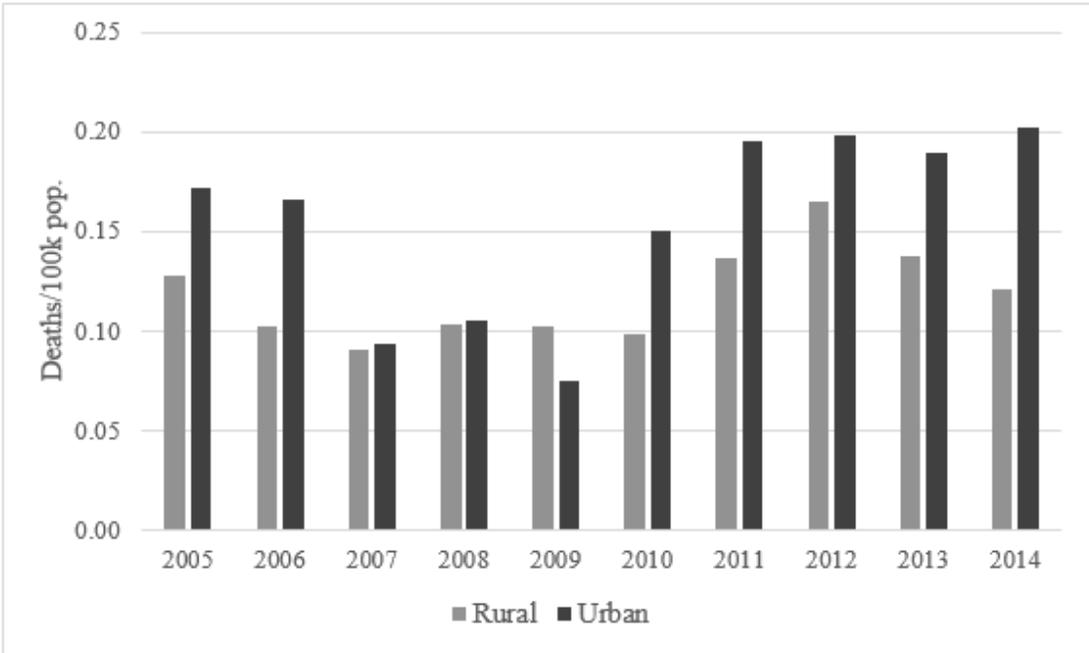
The data show that vigilantism is widespread but unevenly distributed throughout Indonesia (Figure 5.2). All of the 245 districts covered in the dataset registered at least one incident of vigilante violence between 2005 and 2014, while 80% of the districts recorded at least one deadly lynching. Across these districts, the magnitude of violence is highly skewed: 75% of the total incidents and deaths related to vigilantism were concentrated in just 20% of the districts. In the past, vigilante violence was mainly associated with the countryside, but it has gradually spread to Indonesia's modern urban centers. Even after controlling for the vast population disparity between urban and rural areas, the data show that today, vigilantism is three times more likely to occur in an urban district. Moreover, vigilantism has become more deadly in urban areas over the years (Figure 5.3).

**Figure 5.2 Victims of vigilante violence across Indonesian districts: per 100K people (2014)**



Source: NVMS Dataset

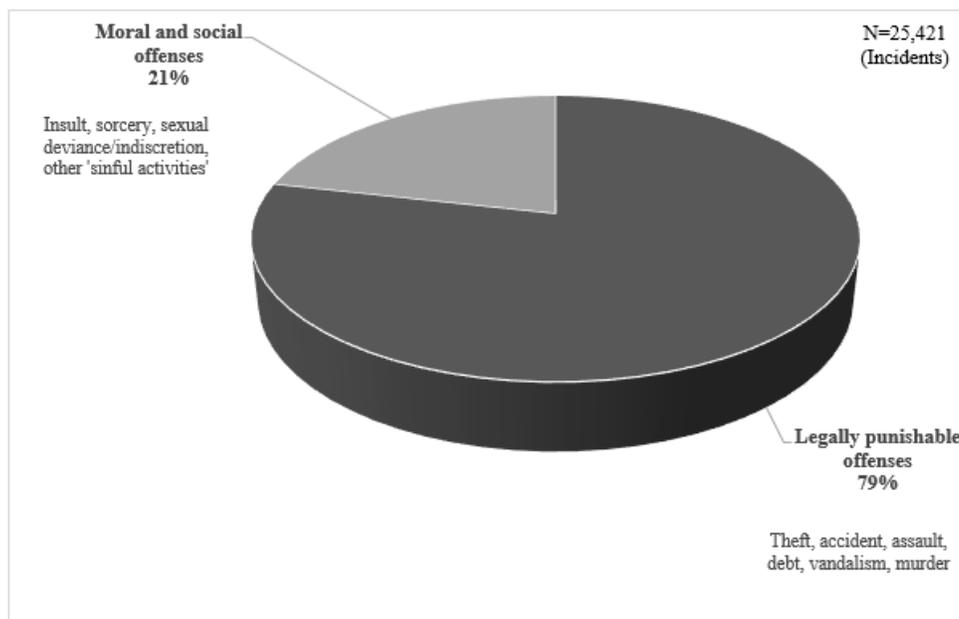
**Figure 5.3 Increasing deadliness of urban vigilantism**



Source: NVMS Dataset

Second, in addition to the considerable human toll exacted by the increasingly frequent use of vigilante violence, two qualitative changes denote its increasing political salience. One is that the template of vigilante violence has been gradually scaled-up to punish a much broader range of moral and ideological transgressions. The vast majority of vigilantism is still directed against offenses that are formally punishable in the criminal code, mostly theft and rape (Figure 5.4). However, vigilante violence is increasingly being used to punish alleged adulterers, homosexuals, prostitutes, gambling hubs and places that sell food during the fasting month. While vigilantism against thieves and sorcerers is most deadly, individuals accused of moral offenses are subjected to forced detention, stripping and parading naked on public streets, severe beatings and forced expulsion from their homes. Mob attacks on ‘places of sin’ usually involve vandalism, forced closure and extortion.

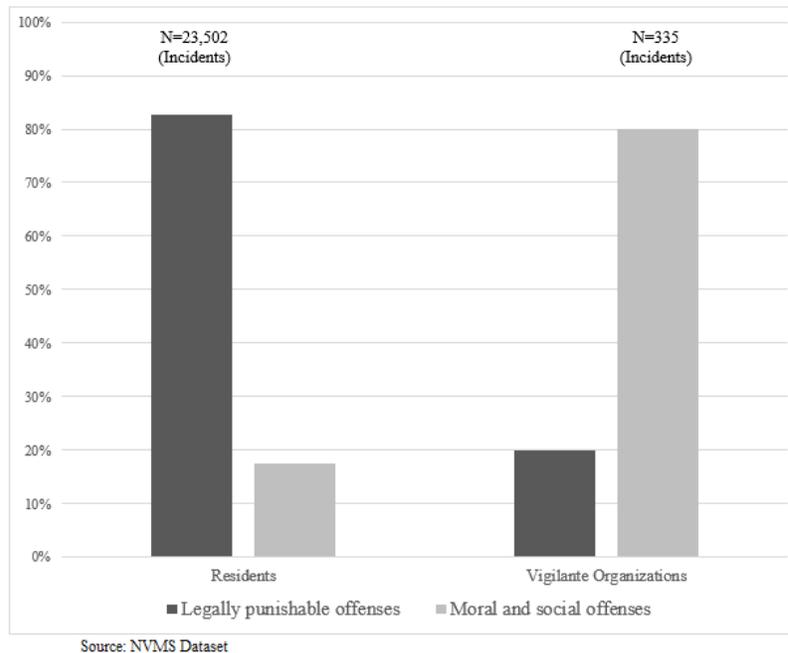
**Figure 5.4 Composition of vigilante violence by type of trigger: Incidents (2005-2014)**



Several studies have noted the prominence of religious organizations in leading this new phase of vigilantism in Indonesia (I. D. Wilson 2008; Jones 2015; Mudhoffir 2017), the NVMS data shows that over 88% of all vigilante attacks are perpetrated by ordinary citizens, who do not have a clear affiliation with such groups. In fact, they are residents of the particular neighborhood where the incident occurs. Even though vigilante organizations are involved in a very small number of incidents, they tend to be high profile ones involving controversial issues. Mobs, armed with bamboo sticks and spears, show up at academic events suspected of disseminating communist materials or gatherings of ‘deviant’ minority religious sects and forcefully disperse the participants. Of late, specialized ‘cyber armies’ affiliated with various social and political organizations have popped up to scan social media platforms for pejorative views about their particular creed or leaders. Once an offender is detected, the cyber group issues a ‘warrant’ calling for a citizen arrest. Local sympathizers of the group arrange a search party, detain the accused and threaten physical violence or expulsion in order to demand a written confession and a public apology. In most cases of vigilantism against political and ideological targets, the threat of violence is rarely enacted because the victims comply with the mob’s demands.

In contrast, ordinary residents tend to use vigilantism against local issues as they arise. This difference is reflected in the data. Over 80% of incidents of vigilante violence perpetrated by residents are triggered by criminal offenses, that are punishable by the law. Vigilante organization stay away from punishing criminal offenses and maintain their focus on high profile social and moral issues (Figure 5.5).

**Figure 5.5 Composition of offenses managed by different actors: Incidents (2005-2014)**



## 5.2 Debating drivers of vigilantism

### 5.2.1 Motivation-based theories

In order to explain patterns of vigilantism in modern society, most of the existing scholarship focuses on identifying factors that motivate citizens to take the law into their own hands. While these theories have been discussed in detail in Chapter 2, they are worth summarizing to lead into the empirical analysis. The basic claim of motivation-based theories is that public dissatisfaction with the law or its enforcement causes vigilantism. However, different sources of public dissatisfaction have been articulated by various studies.

The first is the ‘marginalization hypothesis’ (Auyero 2007; Goldstein 2004; Arias and Goldstein 2010). It claims that public disillusionment with formal policing is most pronounced in economically marginalized areas, where discriminatory practices of the state limit communities’

access to effective law-enforcement services. This gap in public service provision prompts poorer citizens, to make up for deficient provision of order by the state, through vigilante action:

H1a: Adverse economic conditions make vigilante violence more likely.

Another set of explanations propose the ‘insecurity hypothesis’ (B. Baker 2002b; Higazi 2008; Welsh 2008; LeBas 2013; Bateson 2013). They claim that rising perceptions of insecurity can force citizens to bypass the state’s formal institutions and manage local order through extra-legal violence. Sources of insecurity may include an unusual rise in violent crime or experience with widespread communal breakdown that overwhelms the state’s ability to provide basic order or even bring into question its neutrality.

H2a: Previous or ongoing exposure to high levels of insecurity makes vigilante violence more likely.

A third set of theories advance the ‘state substitution hypothesis’ capacity (Godoy 2006; Kaldor 2007; Bates 2008; Tajima 2014b). Weak state presence or the uneven projection of state power across its territories create ‘brown areas’ that lie beyond the state’s coercive reach. In such places, citizens adopt vigilantism as a means of managing their own security. In order to assess whether weak coercive capacity of the state is still a significant driver of vigilantism in Indonesia, I test the following hypothesis:

H3a: Weak coercive presence of the state increases the likelihood of vigilante violence.

Finally, proponents of the ‘critical citizenship hypothesis’ claim that vigilante violence is motivated by popular rejection of the law itself (Jensen and Buur 2004; Smith 2019). The rise of a liberal rights regime, often brought about by democratic transitions, imposes greater restrictions on the use of repressive measures by state actors. These changes can build the

perception that the state is too lenient on offenders and vigilantes engage in violence as way to exercise “critical citizenship” and correct the excessive liberal bias of the formal legal system.

H4: When the law and its enforcement results in relatively lenient punishment for proven offenders, vigilante violence becomes less likely.

### 5.2.2 Proposed theory of impunity

I have argued that motivation-based theories can explain why communities that are dissatisfied with the state look for informal means to deal with local disturbances. They do not, however, explain why communities in Indonesia and elsewhere are increasingly responding with vigilante violence instead of other, non-violent measures, despite the high level of risk involved in vigilantism. In other words, they do not tell us why fornication is being punished violently by beating and stripping offenders in public instead of family sanctioned marriage? Or, why are thieves increasingly burned alive instead of being subjected to traditional forms of public shaming (*arak*)?

My theory of selective impunity, presented in Chapter 3, fills this gap in the literature by explaining how vigilantes mitigate the risk of reprisals against them by obtaining protection from state-agents. Because street-level policemen in Indonesia are highly dependent on communities for basic operational and surveillance needs, they have incentives to protect vigilantes in their area by withholding legal action against them and thwarting revenge attacks from their victims. In exchange, they gain the goodwill of communities’ they serve. In times of need, this goodwill can be relied upon to collect funds for operational or personal use. More importantly, by demonstrating their ability to solve the communities’ problems and by making their legal troubles go away, street-level cops gain the trust of local leaders. Good relationships with local influential make it easier for a cop to perform routine policing tasks such gathering surveillance

about suspect individuals or activities. The cooperation of local leaders is also important for preventing mass mobilization for large protests and even more so during a potentially dangerous ethno-communal conflict.

By conceptualizing vigilantism as a risky activity and analyzing the factors that allow its perpetrators to mitigate these risks, the empirical implications of my theory run contrary to the motivations-based explanations. First, I predict that expansion of the state's coercive presence in a place like Indonesia makes vigilantism more likely because a) it scales down the interaction between state and society, incentivizing street-level cops to offer private impunity instead b) access to local cops improves trust, which is necessary for a community to act on expectation of impunity and c) increases the credibility of impunity by improving the state's ability to prevent revenge attacks.

In effect, high numbers of local policemen who are willing to and able to offer credible impunity serve as insurance for vigilantes, who can punish alleged transgressors without the fear of reprisals.

H3b: Expansion of the state's coercive presence makes vigilantism more likely.

Second, I posit that vigilantism should be higher in areas that are relatively more prosperous, as street-level policemen stand to gain more operational support in exchange for impunity.

H1b: Improvements in economic conditions increase the likelihood of vigilante violence.

Finally, with respect to levels of insecurity, my theory suggests that when the risk of ethno-communal risk is high, street-level policemen are less likely to protect vigilantes as their actions may result in further escalation of violence.

H2b: Exposure to high levels of insecurity makes vigilantism less likely.

### 5.2.3 Other rival explanations

Apart from motivation-based explanations and my proposed theory of impunity, a third perspective is that apathy of the state to certain kinds of violence or towards particular territories may be what is encouraging vigilantes. I test for this possibility by exploring whether or not the data indicates a threshold of violence beyond which the state no longer grants impunity and vigilantism becomes less likely. Finally, a fourth explanation proposes that electoral concerns of local politicians drive patterns of collective violence. Incumbent politicians order or withhold the state's security apparatus from intervening in violence depending on whether or not their intervention will generate the necessary vote banks for an election victory. This logic cannot be tested in Indonesia because local politicians do not control the police, which is a nationalized force answerable directly to the President (Appendix 8).

### **5. 3 Empirical Strategy**

The predictions of my proposed theory along with rival explanations is summarized in Table 5.3. In order to test the proposed hypotheses, I construct a district-year panel that contains relevant indicators for the dependent variable, vigilante violence along with measures that capture sub-national variation in economic marginalization, insecurity, the state's coercive presence along with the leniency of code and its enforcement. The panel contains observations recorded between 2005 and 2014, from 245 districts in 16 provinces that represent over half of Indonesia's population from all the major island groups.<sup>140</sup> To account for district splitting during this period, I have collapsed districts to their 2005 boundaries, by individually tracing the 39 splits, summing count variables across parent and child districts; and taking population

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<sup>140</sup> This complete panel (2005-2014) is available for Aceh, North Sumatra Lampung, the Greater Jakarta Area (*Jabodetabek*), East Java, NTB, NTT, Central Kalimantan, West Kalimantan, Maluku, North Maluku, South Sulawesi, North Sulawesi, Central Sulawesi, Papua and West Papua.

weighted average of non-count variables. The measurement and collection of indicators used in the panel is described below. Table 5.4 presents summary statistics.

**Table 5.3 Summary of proposed hypotheses**

	Predicted effect on vigilante violence				
	Economic Development	Insecurity	State's Coercive Presence	Leniency of Law Enforcement	Threshold of Acceptable Violence?
<b>Proposed: Impunity for Vigilantes</b>	+	+ -	+	-	Yes
<b>Alternative 1: Motivations for Vigilantism</b>	-	+	-	+	●
<b>Alternative 2: State Apathy</b>	+	+	●	●	No
<b>Alternative 3: Electoral logics</b>	Does not apply to Indonesia. Police force is centralized.				

**Table 5.4 Summary statistics**

	# Observations	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Frequency & availability
<b>Dependent variables</b>						
Incidents of vigilante violence	2,450	10.37	25.36	0	387	Annual (2005-2014)
Victims of vigilante violence	2,450	13.57	33.01	0	497	Annual (2005-2014)
Deaths from vigilante violence	2,450	0.66	1.40	0	13	Annual (2005-2014)
# Villages that report taking community-driven security measures	980	110.82	104.33	0	907	Triennial (2005, 2008, 2011, 2014)
<b>Explanatory &amp; control variables</b>						
Unemployment rate	1,957	6.37	4.09	0.11	48.15	Annual (2007-2014)
Poverty Gap	2,449	3.40	2.93	0.06	24.78	Annual (2005-2014)
Household expenditure (USD per capita)	2,437	32.44	17.00	7.51	160.64	Annual (2005-2014)
Victims of riots	2,450	1.90	15.03	0	470	Annual (2005-2014)
Post-conflict district? (1=yes)	2,450	0.42	0.49	0	1	Time-invariant
Number of police posts	980	19.18	13.24	0	141	Annual (2005-2014)
Successful police intervention in riots (#incidents)	2,450	0.29	1.53	0	34	Annual (2005-2014)
Victims of police shootings	2,450	4.91	20.61	0	454	Annual (2005-2014)
Conviction rate in shariyah courts (Aceh only)	76	0.71	0.30	0	1	Annual (2011-2014)
Urban district? (1=yes)	2,450	0.24	0.43	0	1	Time-invariant
Population	2,450	505,916.20	632,143.60	12,607	5,331,078	Annual (2005-2014)

### 5.3.1 Dependent Variable

The main indicators for vigilantism have been calculated from the NVMS Dataset, described earlier in the chapter. I use both fatalities and the number of gravely injured persons as indicators of vigilantism. Deaths are a more robust measure of vigilante violence as they are less vulnerable to reporting biases and space constraints faced by local newspapers that serve as the source of the NVMS dataset. However, using only deaths can also bias the results for two reasons. First, it is very often the case the newspaper reports of lynching mention that a victim of lynching was taken to the hospital in a critical condition. However, these reports are rarely updated when the victim succumbs to his injuries. During qualitative fieldwork, I learned that many of these individuals do die after being transported to a hospital. In fact, some law enforcement officials and communities only do this as a formality to avoid a citation for murder. Using only deaths as a measure would underestimate the actual impact of vigilantism. Second, some forms of high-impact vigilantism, such as incidents in response to blasphemy or ‘vice’ are typically not deadly. They involve an explicit threat of violence, physical injuries or even property damage, but do not result in a death. Using deaths exclusively as a measure would effectively count these kinds of incidents out.

An alternative measure of vigilantism is obtained from the Village Potential Survey (PODES) Dataset compiled by the Indonesian government, every three years. In every iteration of the survey between 2005 and 2014, village heads are asked to report whether their residents have taken any collective measures to improve security in the area. These measures include establishment of a community security post, community patrols, appointment of voluntary guards, mandatory registration of visitors. Based on responses to this question, I count the

number of villages in each district that have reported taking any such measures in a given survey-year.

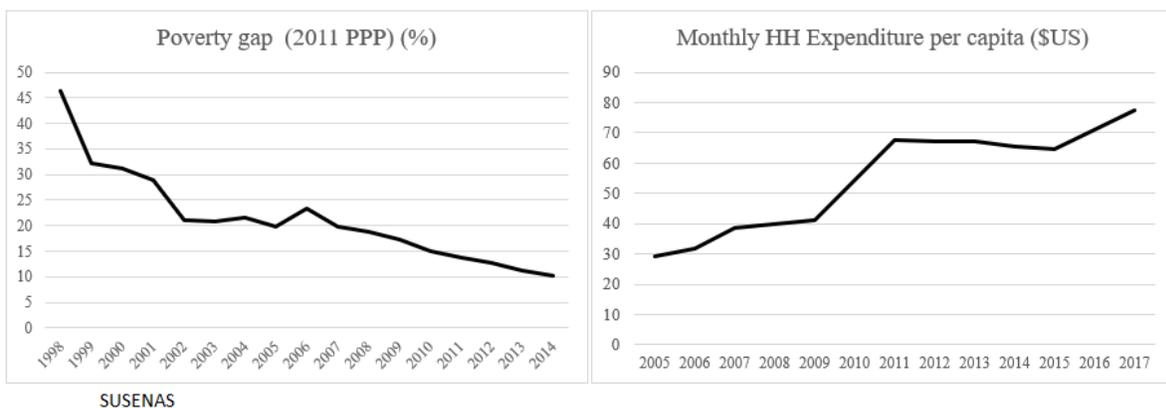
### 5.3.2 Explanatory Variables

#### Economic marginalization

I measure economic conditions of communities in a given district through the combination of three measures drawn from the National Socio-Economic Survey (SUSENAS) that is conducted by the Indonesian government on an annual basis. I use household per capita expenditure as an indicator of the level of economic prosperity experienced by communities in a given district-year. Unemployment rate is used as an additional indicator of anxiety experienced by communities about their economic future. Finally, the Poverty Gap index is used to measure the severity of poverty experienced by the economically marginalized sections of society.

If we consider economic marginalization as a driver, Indonesia seems an unlikely candidate for observing high levels of vigilante violence (Figure 5.6). The remarkable economic growth in the country over the past decade has consistently boosted per capita monthly household expenditure \$29 in 2005 to \$65 in 2014 and reduced the Poverty Gap in half during the same period. Furthermore, unemployment rate is down from 9% in 2007 to 5% in 2014.

**Figure 5.6 Economic prosperity in Indonesia**



## **Insecurity**

The level of insecurity experienced by communities in a given district-year is measured in two ways. First, I use a binary variable to mark the districts in Aceh, Sulawesi, Maluku, Kalimantan and Papua that experienced protracted insurgency and ethno-communal wars during Indonesia's democratic transition. This anticipates the possibility that vigilante violence become more likely due to the legacies of previous exposure to devastating social conflict that led to the formation of violent networks. Second, I estimate the number of victims from ethno-communal riots from the NVMS dataset as a proxy for contemporary level of insecurity. This is to account for the proposition that communities are more likely to engage in vigilante violence if widespread insecurity in their area has overwhelmed the state's security apparatus.

As discussed at length in Chapter 3, overall, security conditions in Indonesia have improved dramatically between 1998 and 2014. Since the termination of ethno-communal wars in its eastern regions riot-related deaths reduced by 90% from their peak in 1999. Since then, incidents of collective violence have been consistently low with the exception of clashes during the 2012 Aceh gubernatorial race. Terrorism has appeared as a new security challenge for the country but attacks have been relatively sporadic.

## **State's coercive presence**

Two indicators are used to measure the level of state's coercive presence. The main one is the number of police posts in a given district-year, calculated triennially from the PODES dataset between 2005 and 2014. In the absence of sub-national force strength data,<sup>141</sup> number of police posts provide a reasonable indication of the presence of street-level policemen in an area. Different from police 'stations' (*polsek*) that are responsible for managing one or several sub-

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<sup>141</sup> The Indonesian National Police does not release information about the number of active policemen for sub-national units. National figures are available for select years.

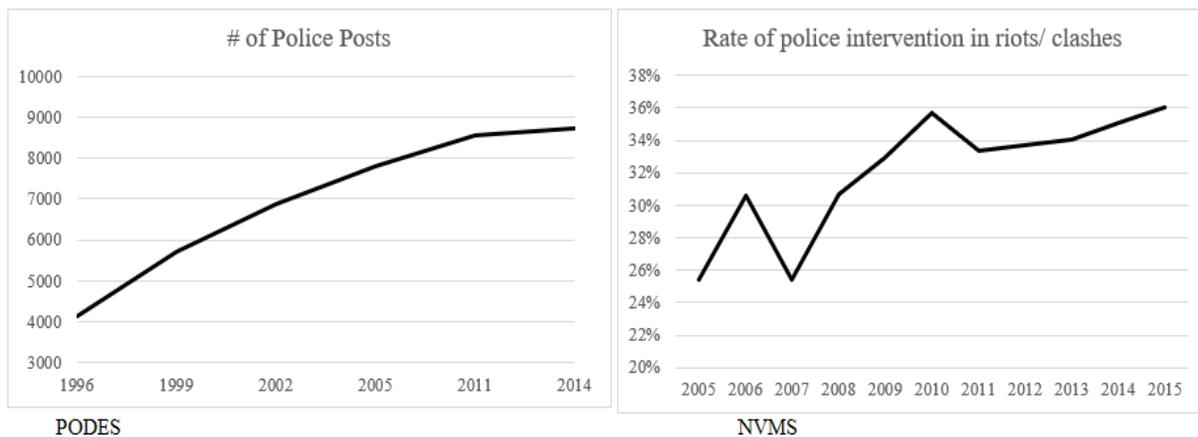
districts within a district, police ‘posts’ are usually situated within the village head or hamlet chief’s office. These posts are staffed by a single low-ranking policeman (*bhabinkamtibmas*) as part of the National Police’s community policing program. Compared to police stations chiefs (*kapolsek*), the *bhabinkamtibmas* are more accessible to community leaders due to their proximity and frequent social interactions. In case of a security incident, the *bhabinkamtibmas* is as the first point of contact between the community and the police. On a daily basis, he decides which issues can be resolved locally and which information or disputes need to be escalated up to the *kapolsek*.

While the number of police posts indicate the level of state’s coercive presence, they do not tell us how active this presence is. In order to estimate the level of police activity, I draw on the NVMS dataset to calculate the number of successful interventions made by the police in incidents of riots, in a given district-year. Successful intervention refers to the dispersal of violent crowds after the arrival of police personnel at the scene and often involves on-the-spot arrests. A higher percentage of successful intervention in riots indicates that the police is not only present in a given area but also has the ability to prevent violent events from escalating further.

Contrary to what we would expect in a country that exhibits high levels of vigilantism, the Indonesian state’s coercive presence has increased dramatically over the past decade (Figure 5.7). Following its separation from the military, the budget of the National Police force increased by a factor of six between 2005 and 2014. Because expansion of personnel strength has been a major priority for the police, over 65% of the budget allocation has been spent to fund salaries. From 250,000 force members in 1998, the national police’s strength today is more than 400,000 (Jacqui Baker 2015 p. 121). A majority of new recruits in the police are assigned to the Community Policing Program (*Bhabinkantibmas*). The police posts established under this

program aim to place at least one dedicated policeman in every village/hamlet across the country. As a result, the number of local police posts, manned by the *Bhabinkantibmas* have risen from 4,000 in 1998, to over 9,000 in 2014. Apart from expansion of personnel, the intervention data from the NVMS dataset also shows marked improvements in the Indonesian police’s ability to successfully disperse violent crowds during large incidents such as riots. In 2005, the police could intervene successfully in 25% of riots. By 2014, it rose to 36%.<sup>142</sup>

**Figure 5.7 Expansion of state’s coercive presence in Indonesia**



### **Leniency of criminal justice system**

Measuring variation in the severity of punishment for crimes stipulated in the law and its enforcement is difficult in a single-country study. This is because criminal laws are usually uniform across the nation. I work around this problem in two ways. First, I estimate sub-national variation in harsher enforcement of the national laws by counting the victims of police-shootings in a given area, based on the NVMS dataset. These record incidents where an active duty police officer shot a suspected criminal either during pursuit or due to alleged resistance to arrest,

<sup>142</sup> It is important to note that these numbers refer to successful interventions made by the civilian police and not the military. The NVMS dataset also tracks interventions in riots and large-scale disturbances by the military. Although much lower compared to the rate of police intervention, military intervention has risen from 2% in 2005 to 10% in 2014.

resulting in an immobilizing injury or death. The NVMS dataset is not able to make a distinction between shootings that follow the codified standard operation procedures of the police and those that qualify as excessive use of force. However, high levels of police shootings can provide a relative indication of police's willingness to use violent force against criminal suspects in a given district-year.

Second, I draw on Aceh's special status within Indonesia to measure the effect of a more punitive legal code on the likelihood of vigilantism. As part of the peace agreement to end the civil war in Aceh, the national parliament approved special autonomy provisions for the province. This allows the provincial government in Aceh to devise laws and enforce punishment in accordance with Islamic jurisprudence, for offenses that are not regulated in the national criminal code. These laws known as the *Qanun Jinayat*, have been in effect since 2006 and stipulate public canning for a range of moral offenses such as sale and consumption of alcohol, fornication, adultery, sodomy and lesbian acts. Special *syar'iyah* courts that adjudicate *jinayat* related cases have been established in each district. I have collected data on the sentencing rates from these district-level courts to capture sub-national variation in harshness of the legal regime.<sup>143</sup> Overall, available data shows that the average conviction rate by *syar'iyah* courts has risen from 61% in 2011 to 80% in 2014.<sup>144</sup>

### **Control variables**

I use two main controls in the analysis. Population data from the National Census and annual projections from the National Statistics Agency (BPS) are used to account for vast

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<sup>143</sup> Sentencing data is available for the years 2011-14 from the Mahkamah Syar'iyah Aceh (<https://www.ms-aceh.go.id>)

<sup>144</sup> Note that while many district governments across Indonesia have passed religious by-laws that prohibit certain activities such as construction of minority houses of worship or mandate the wearing of certain kinds of clothing by women (Bush 2008; Buehler 2016), these regulations cannot be enforced with the threat of punitive measures by district officials or municipal guards and are as such mostly symbolic/administrative in nature.

population difference between districts. A binary variable, used to distinguish between urban and rural areas, is also included to ensure that effects of economic conditions, insecurity and state coercive presence are not due to imbalances between urban and rural settings. Classification of urban areas is based on the Kota/Kabupaten designation used by the BPS in 2005, such that to be a city, at least 50% of the population in a district needs to reside in an urban setting.

## **5.4 Estimation and Results**

### 5.4.1 Main Results

In order to test the predictions of my theory vis a vis motivation-based explanation of vigilantism, I estimate the effect of economic conditions, insecurity and coercive presence of the state on the likelihood of vigilante violence. I use a fixed-effects negative binomial estimator to account for the over dispersion in my count-based dependent variable: victims of vigilante violence. The results from this base model are presented in Table 5.5.

Results in the first column show that household per capita expenditure and unemployment are positively associated with vigilantism but Poverty Gap shows a negative effect on the likelihood of vigilante violence. The signs of these coefficients provide support for my prediction that vigilantism becomes more likely with improvements in communities' economic conditions (H1b). In order to understand the substantive effect of these coefficients, I generated predicted counts of vigilante violence, based on varying levels of household expenditure and Poverty Gap across district-years (Figure 5.8). These indicate that holding all else constant, increasing the household per capita expenditure from the level observed in Bima City (\$20) to that of Mataram City (\$90) increases the expected level of vigilante violence from 2 to 3.5 victims per district/year.<sup>145</sup>

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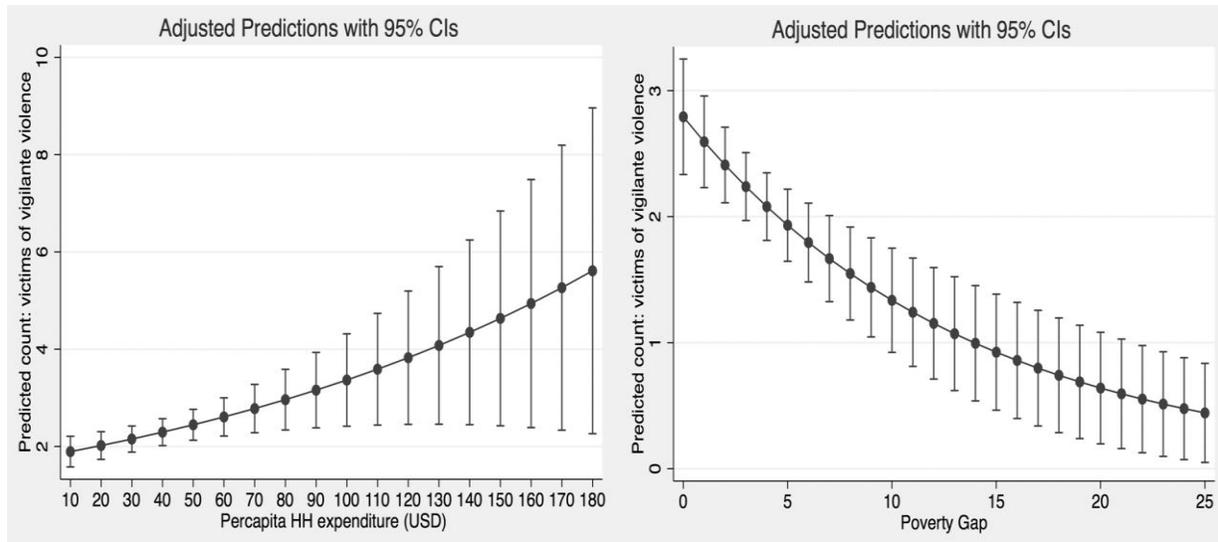
<sup>145</sup> The values for both cities are cited from the year 2013.

**Table 5.5 Main results (Base Model)**

<b>DV</b>	<b>H1</b>	<b>H2</b>	<b>H3</b>	<b>H4</b>
	<b>Victims of vigilante violence</b>			
<b>Units: District-year (2005-2014)</b>				
Poverty Gap	-0.0737*** (0.0202)	-0.0424** (0.0205)	0.0480* (0.0289)	-0.0524** (0.0210)
Unemployment rate	0.0176** (0.00693)	0.0150** (0.00714)	0.0433*** (0.0146)	0.0169** (0.00688)
Household expenditure (USD per capita)	0.00639*** (0.00210)	0.00268 (0.00245)	0.00246 (0.00364)	0.00782*** (0.00210)
Urban district? (1=yes)		0.479*** (0.150)	0.113 (0.277)	
Post-conflict district? (1=yes)		-0.345** (0.140)	-0.0284 (0.254)	0.00337** (0.00159)
Victims of riots		0.00408*** (0.00153)	0.00544* (0.00301)	-0.0000135* (0.00000791)
(Victims of riots)^2		-0.0000157** (0.00000775)	-0.0000145 (0.0000123)	-0.574*** (0.132)
Number of police posts per Km2			3.839*** (0.991)	
Victims of police shootings				0.0102*** (0.00185)
Population	0.000000389*** (5.94e-08)	0.000000287*** (6.70e-08)	0.000000393*** (0.000000113)	
Year Dummies?	yes	yes	yes	yes
Intercept	0.347** (0.156)	0.555*** (0.169)	0.0659 (0.267)	0.684*** (0.163)
chi2	139.4	166.1	67.18	165.7
Prob > chi2	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
N	1870	1870	642	1870

Standard errors in parentheses \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

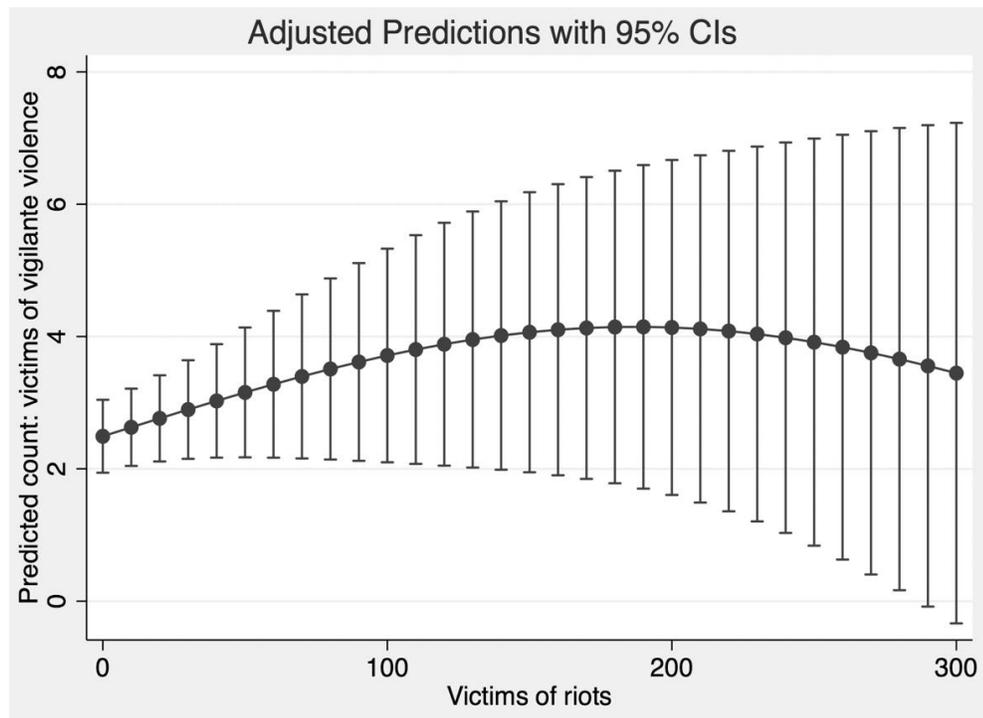
**Figure 5.8 Predicted levels of vigilantism based on varying economic conditions**



The second column estimates the effect of insecurity on vigilantism. Consistent with the predictions of my theory (H2b), the results show that the likelihood of vigilantism is lower in post-conflict districts compared to districts that were not exposed to protracted ethno-communal wars or insurgency during Indonesia’s democratic transition. This difference is statistically significant, even after controlling for the differences in population, economic conditions and the urban-rural composition. Apart from the legacy of exposure to social conflict in the past, this estimation also includes victims of riots as a measure for contemporary levels of insecurity due to ongoing conflicts. A squared term is included to anticipate a non-linear relationship between levels of insecurity and vigilantism. The positive sign of the linear coefficient and the negative sign of the quadratic term indicates that the likelihood of vigilantism increases with higher levels of insecurity at a decreasing rate up to a certain point, after which vigilantism becomes progressively less likely. Figure 5.9 plots the predicted levels of vigilante violence in a given district-year at varying levels of riots. It shows that holding other variables constant, increasing

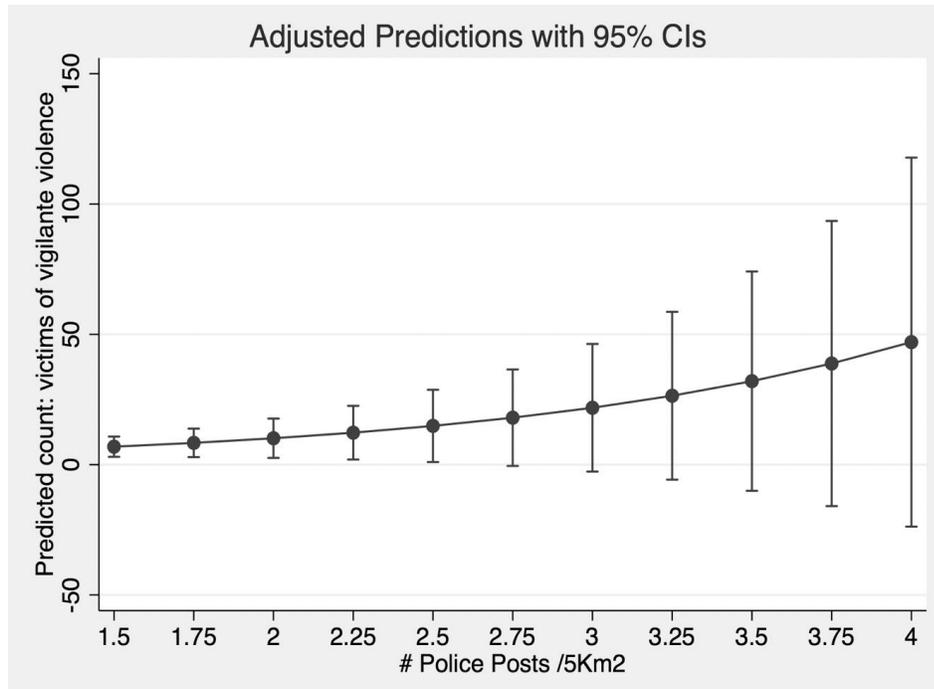
the level of riots those experienced by Tangerang City (20 victims) in 2011 to those of Central Lombok (110 victims) doubles the likelihood of vigilantism from 2 victims per district-year to 4. This is consistent with the prediction of motivation-based theories (H2a). However, after a threshold of about 150 riot victims, increasing the level of riots to those observed in Ambon in 2011 (185 victims) the predicted level of vigilantism decreases from 4 victims to 3 per district-year. This is consistent with the prediction of my theory that when the risk of large-scale violence is high, street-level policemen are less likely to grant impunity for vigilantism as even small incidents can rapidly escalate out of control.

**Figure 5.9 Predicted levels of vigilantism based on varying intensity of riots**



The third column estimates the effect of changing coercive presence of the state on the likelihood of violence. Consistent with my prediction (H3b), the results show that increasing the number of police posts has a positive and statistically significant effect of the likelihood of vigilante violence. The predicted count plot (Figure 5.10) shows that in a city like Malang (1.5 police posts/ 5 Km<sup>2</sup>), holding all else constant while raising the level of police presence to that of Depok (2.5 posts/5Km<sup>2</sup>), increases the predicted count of vigilantism from 10 victims to 20 per district-year. Further increasing police presence to the level of Central Jakarta (3.5/5Km<sup>2</sup>) increases the count to 35 victims per district-year.

**Figure 5.10 Predicted levels of vigilantism based on varying levels of police presence**



The fourth column investigates the effect of harsh law-enforcement on the likelihood of vigilantism. The results show that contrary to the prediction of motivation-based explanations (H4), high number of police shootings that indicate the state's willingness to use harsh measure

to combat disturbance, make vigilantism more likely. I performed a simple t-test in order to assess whether there are significant differences between levels of vigilantism in the Aceh province, where the legal code stipulates harsher punishments for moral offenses, and the rest of the country. The test shows no significant difference with regards to overall levels of vigilantism. However, I find that victims of vigilantism triggered by moral offenses, are 3 times higher in Aceh--at statistically significant levels. Within Aceh, I estimate the effect of sentencing rates by the syar'iyah courts on levels of vigilantism (Table 5.6). The results show that higher levels of conviction in a given year, make vigilantism more likely.

**Table 5.6 Estimating the effect of harsher punishments on vigilantism (Aceh)**

DV	Victims of vigilante violence	Victims of vigilante violence: 1 yr lag	Victims of vigilante violence: 2 yr lag
<b>Units: District-year (2005-2014)</b>			
Household expenditure (USD per capita)	0.0190** (0.00918)	0.0318** (0.0136)	0.0305*** (0.0118)
Unemployment rate	-0.0437 (0.0503)	-0.0759 (0.0594)	-0.0458 (0.0833)
Poverty Gap	-0.312* (0.159)	-0.223 (0.155)	-0.280* (0.156)
Population	0.00000632*** (0.00000109)	0.00000583*** (0.00000129)	0.00000570*** (0.00000127)
Sentencing rate by syar'iah courts	-0.224 (0.412)	0.610 (0.484)	0.807* (0.479)
Intercept	0.762 (0.884)	-0.0653 (1.015)	-0.463 (0.953)
chi2	32.47	19.84	20.89
N	59	43	31

Standard errors in parentheses \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

### 5.4.2 Robustness Checks

As explained previously, data on the main dependent variable used in this estimation, victims of vigilante violence, was use collected using local media sources. As such there is a possibility that the results in the base model are being driven by biased media reporting. I check for this possibility by estimating three alternative models (Table 5.7). First, I re-estimate the base-model by replacing the ‘victims’ indicator, which includes both injuries and deaths from vigilantism, with just deaths. Media reporting assessments conducted at the time of data collection for the NVMS project indicated that editors are more consistent in reporting incidents of deadly violence, compared to those where a death could not be immediately confirmed. Re-estimation with this more stringent measure yields the same results, even though the size of the effect is smaller. Second, I re-estimate the base model for only urban districts, where the quality of media coverage is more even. Even within the urban sample, increase in the number of police posts raises the likelihood of vigilantism. However, large errors are found to be associated with estimates of other coefficients. Finally, I re-estimate the base model by using an alternative measure of vigilantism that is not derived from media reporting but from the PODES survey: the number of villages that self-reported taking community-driven security measures such as daily patrols and night watches. I find that the direction of the effect observed in the base model, largely holds for this alternative specification.

In order to check whether the estimation is robust to alternative specifications of the state’s coercive presence, I re-estimate the base model by using successful police intervention in riots instead of the number of police posts (Table 5.8). I find that the results still hold.

Finally, I check for the possibility of reverse causality. It is difficult to think of a theoretical reason why high levels of vigilantism would lead to improved household income or

reduced Poverty Gap. However, it is possible that the selection of sites for the additional police posts are driven by concerns about high levels of vigilantism. It is also possible that high levels of riots are being observed as a result of widespread vigilantism. In the absence of an adequate instrumental variables, I address these concerns by re-estimating the base model with a 3-year lag between the dependent and the explanatory variable (Table 5.9). I find the direction of the effect remains the same.

**Table 5.7 Alternative specification of the DV**

DV	Deaths from vigilante violence	Victims of vigilante violence	# Villages that report taking community-driven security measures
Units: District-year (2005-2014)		Urban districts only	
Poverty Gap	0.0181 (0.0544)	0.0127 (0.0488)	-0.00192 (0.00940)
Unemployment rate	0.0805*** (0.0256)	0.0487** (0.0223)	0.0139*** (0.00514)
Household expenditure (USD per capita)	0.0145** (0.00587)	-0.000678 (0.00510)	0.00284** (0.00144)
Victims of riots	0.00731 (0.00559)	0.00446 (0.00345)	0.000187 (0.00130)
(Victims of riots)^2	-0.0000130 (0.0000204)	-0.0000131 (0.0000135)	-0.0000103* (0.00000549)
Number of police posts per Km2	0.0201*** (0.00751)	4.010*** (1.026)	0.00615*** (0.00214)
Urban district? (1=yes)	-0.0189 (0.251)		1.536*** (0.459)
Post-conflict district? (1=yes)	-0.272 (0.506)	0.268 (0.453)	-0.846*** (0.215)
Population	0.000000809*** (0.000000189)	0.000000370*** (0.000000125)	0.000000108* (5.82e-08)
Year dummies?	yes	yes	yes
Province dummies?	yes		
Intercept	-1.618*** (0.541)	0.397 (0.548)	2.938*** (0.155)
chi2	208.0	39.75	138.1
Prob > chi2	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
N	732	177	732

Standard errors in parentheses \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

**Table 5.8 Alternative specification of the state's coercive presence**

<b>DV</b>	<b>Victims of vigilante violence</b>	<b>Victims of vigilante violence</b>
Units: District-year (2005-2014)		
Poverty Gap	0.0474 (0.0290)	-0.0561*** (0.0210)
Unemployment rate	0.0445*** (0.0143)	0.0183*** (0.00691)
Household expenditure (USD per capita)	0.00304 (0.00334)	0.00585*** (0.00215)
Victims of riots	0.00570* (0.00297)	0.00455*** (0.00169)
(Victims of riots)^2	-0.0000152 (0.0000123)	-0.0000198** (0.00000948)
Post-conflict district? (1=yes)	-0.0226 (0.255)	-0.370*** (0.141)
Number of police posts per Km2	3.964*** (0.942)	
Successful police intervention in riots (#incidents)		0.0157* (0.00945)
Victims of police shootings		
Population	0.000000398*** (0.000000112)	0.000000324*** (6.67e-08)
Year dummies?	yes	yes
Intercept	0.0527 (0.265)	0.510*** (0.168)
chi2	67.38	157.1
Prob > chi2	0.0000	0.0000
N	642	1870

Standard errors in parentheses \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

**Table 5.9 Estimation of base model with lagged variables**

DV	Victims of vigilante violence: 3 yr lag	Victims of vigilante violence: 3 yr lag	Victims of vigilante violence: 3 yr lag
Units: District-year (2005-2014)			
Poverty Gap	-0.0568** (0.0256)	-0.0576** (0.0226)	-0.0843*** (0.0222)
Unemployment rate		0.0119 (0.00856)	0.00793 (0.00818)
Household expenditure (USD per capita)	0.00996* (0.00579)	0.0159*** (0.00365)	0.0127*** (0.00284)
Victims of riots	0.00634* (0.00362)	0.00494* (0.00291)	-0.00176 (0.00180)
(Victims of riots)^2	-0.0000298 (0.0000248)	-0.0000490** (0.0000242)	0.00000392 (0.00000713)
Post-conflict district? (1=yes)	-0.0145 (0.261)	-0.678*** (0.203)	-0.692*** (0.161)
Number of police posts per Km2	1.958** (0.984)		
Successful police intervention in riots (#incidents		0.0465*** (0.0163)	
Victims of police shootings			0.00491** (0.00217)
Population	0.000000318*** (0.000000114)	0.000000269*** (8.54e-08)	
Year dummies?	yes		
Intercept	0.358 (0.279)	0.653*** (0.225)	0.940*** (0.185)
chi2	46.15	138.6	116.7
Prob > chi2	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
N	643	1155	1404

Standard errors in parentheses \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

## 5.5 Discussion

Prevalent theories of vigilante violence explain it as the desperate reaction of economically marginalized citizens, who are forced to take the law into their own hands in order to substitute for an incompetent state. The results presented in this chapter challenge these views. The data show that growing economic prosperity and expansion of the state's coercive presence are facilitating high levels of vigilantism in Indonesia. These findings are consistent with my theory that explains vigilante violence as a function of communities' ability to leverage impunity from the state. In a state like Indonesia, improvements in communities' access to the police coupled with their increasing economic power, improves their ability to seek credible impunity for extra-legal violence. In effect, high numbers of street-level policemen can make vigilantes feel safer, enabling them to engage in routine acts of vigilante violence without the fear of reprisals.

## 6. Mechanics of Impunity

My theory posits that expansion of the state's coercive presence can increase the likelihood of vigilantism in countries like Indonesia that have a history of dependence on civil society for security management, by making it easier for communities to obtain credible impunity for extra-legal violence. I also claim that the impunity for vigilantism offered by state agents, in exchange for communities' cooperation in supporting the state's security priorities, is conditional on the anticipated risk of further escalation of violence. Analysis of district-level variation in vigilante violence, presented in the preceding chapter, supports these claims by showing that the rapid increase of street-level police presence has indeed made vigilantism more likely in democratic Indonesia. It also shows that the positive effect of increasing police presence on the likelihood of vigilantism begins to decline beyond a certain threshold of violence, indicating the selective nature of impunity.

This chapter weaves together qualitative and quantitative data from Indonesia to support the claim that impunity is the mechanism that links expansion of police presence with high levels of vigilantism. Section one, draws on observations from 14 months of fieldwork to show a) how impunity is produced as a result of street-level interactions between local cops and the communities they serve. Section two presents evidence from specific case-studies of vigilantism to identify ways in which local police officers use their authority to protect vigilantes from the consequences of engaging in violence, both before and after an incident of vigilantism. It also examines the limits of impunity and the considerations of escalation that go into granting or withdrawing protection for vigilantes. The comparison of multiple cases of vigilantism shows that a) local police presence is critical for vigilantes to seek credible impunity and b) impunity for vigilantism is tied to residential neighborhoods, whose leaders play a leading role in

negotiating protection from the police. Section three shows how the expectation of impunity is the main driver of vigilantism, by drawing on GIS analysis of hamlet and neighborhood-level data on vigilantism from Indonesia's largest urban center and capital city, Jakarta. Findings from this micro-level quantitative analysis show that the likelihood of vigilantism in a given hamlet is determined by signals of impunity, generated by vigilantism in nearby areas amid high police presence. They also show that this expectation is linked to the residential status of a neighborhood and does not travel well to commercial or other public spaces. Section four concludes by discussing the implications of these findings in terms of the state's ability to calibrate impunity and contain levels of localized violence.

### **6.1 How does street-level police presence produce incentives for impunity?**

The democratization process in Indonesia has led to a rebalancing of the relationship between state and society. The history and implications of this shift have been discussed in detail in Chapter 4. They are reviewed here briefly in order to help us understand how these macro changes have affected the daily, street-level interactions between police and the communities they serve and incentivize the provision of impunity for extra-legal violence.

Under the New Order, neighborhood leaders were obliged to appease state agents by complying with their requests for coercive tasks. In exchange, they could hope to prevent state interference in other, everyday aspects of their residents' lives. This balance tipped heavily in the state's favor and hinged primarily on the state's ability to interfere in the selection of local leaders and punish them for non-compliance. The democratic transition effectively ended the state's ability to regulate neighborhood leaders, even as its dependence on their cooperation for coercive tasks remains intact due to looming threats of terrorism and communal violence. No longer able to compel locally elected leaders into doing its bidding, the state has sought to cope

with this change by expanding the presence of its own formal police force. An increasing number of street-level officers placed within communities, are expected to solicit the cooperation of local leaders for enforcing the state's security priorities. How does this dependence make street-level policemen beholden to the communities they serve and produce incentives for impunity? Let us examine the sequence of causes that lead to this outcome.

#### 6.1.1 Lack of institutional reform and the career trajectory of street-level police

The lack of institutional reform within the police means that a *Bhabin*'s career trajectory is linked to how much he can do with how little. As explained in Chapter 4, the Indonesian police has maintained a top-heavy structure of operational budget allocation since its separation from the military in 1999. This means a vast majority of police resources are concentrated at the national and provincial headquarters that handle important criminal cases, lead anti-terror operations and prepare contingency for major incidents such as communal riots or violent demonstrations. In contrast, the subdistrict *Polsek* that constitute the lowest precinct in the territorial command, are always pressed for funds to meet operational needs. Lack of resources at the *Polsek* hinders routine criminal investigations, information gathering on potential law and order issues and regular complaints processing. It also makes it difficult for local police to respond to unforeseen situations that range from clearing road accident sites to the enforcement of ad-hoc policy directives.

Despite facing severe shortage of operational funds, the *Polsek* across Indonesia are being assigned an increasing number of *Bhabin* by the National Police Headquarters (*Mabes Polri*). These non-commissioned officers are the largest group of new police recruits. They are also at the very bottom of the hierarchy and among the lowest paid members of the force.<sup>146</sup> At

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<sup>146</sup> The average monthly salary of a *Bhabin* ranges between \$100-250 depending on years of service and the area. This amount roughly corresponds with the legal minimum wage in respective areas. Until 2014, an additional

the *Polsek*, the *Bhabin* are managed by the Community Guidance Unit (*Binmas*) and each individual officer is tasked with managing between one to four villages or hamlets. Unlike the rest of the *Polsek* staff, the *Bhabin* are not posted at the precinct but only come in to report a few times a week. For the rest of the time, they are on call and are expected to set up a post within their assigned area, usually at the office of the village or the hamlet chief. In theory, the *Bhabin* are expected to act as the police's front guard (*ujung tombak*). They are responsible for a) grassroots enforcement of national police directives and b) improving citizen trust through early detection and timely solution of communities' problems. As such, the *Bhabin* are required to make daily rounds, take part in community activities and be prepared to respond to community complaints and emergencies. In practice, however, a successful *Bhabin* is one who knows how to get his job done without increasing his superiors' case-load or requesting additional funds.

#### 6.1.2 Legacy of dependence on RT/RW system for operational needs

The lack of institutional reform combined with the legacy of the RT/RW system means that the *Bhabin* needs to be resourceful in drawing on local community leaders' cooperation in order to do his basic tasks. The support of local leaders is even required for enforcing headquarters' directives related to high-priority security threats. This could be observed during the Summer of 2017 when the *Bhabin* in the Greater Jakarta area were directed to detect and monitor the presence of terror suspects and members of radical Islamic organizations. Two developments prompted these orders. A series of massive protests organized by hardline Islamic groups had forced the national police's hand in filing criminal blasphemy charges against Jakarta's Christian-Chinese governor, and eventually led to his electoral defeat. Emboldened by their ability to draw millions of protestors on the street, these groups planned regular show-of-

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allowance of \$10 was provided for operational costs. In 2015, the monthly allowance for operational funds was raised to \$100.

force rallies in preparation for the upcoming Presidential elections in 2019. The government responded by announcing plans to classify one of the groups, *Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI)*, as an anti-state radical organization and forcefully disband its activities.<sup>147</sup> Amid ongoing efforts to disband the *HTI*, the police was targeted in several terrorist attacks in provinces of East Java, Jakarta and North Sumatera. The deadliest attack was a suicide blast at a Jakarta bus stop in late May, which killed three on duty police officers and injured a dozen others. The Indonesia Chapter of ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack. Within 24 hours the police confirmed the identity of two deceased bombers. These events intensified the National Police's efforts to monitor 'radical' elements in Jakarta and its surrounding areas.

The *Bhabin* were tasked with implementing preventative measures.<sup>148</sup> Specifically, they were instructed to a) map the presence of *HTI* members to prevent organization of large protests against the imminent ban<sup>149</sup> and; b) detect the presence of the bombers' ISIS affiliates and sympathizers<sup>150</sup>. Implementing these directives involved three types of activities for which support of community leaders was critical. First, as has been the case in the aftermath of previous terror attacks, the *Bhabin* were instructed to re-activate the New Order-era *Siskamling* program

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<sup>147</sup> The ban was eventually imposed on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017 through Regulation in lieu of Legislation (Perppu), even though the police operations against the organization had been underway for months. The formal charge against HTI was that its goal to establish an Islamic caliphate was at odds with the official state ideology of Pancasila and that it was spreading radicalism in society. It should be noted, however, that despite adhering to an extremely conservative version of Islam, the HTI has never been involved in any terrorist activity or other violent actions.

<sup>148</sup> The *Bhabin* are rarely ever involved in anti-terror combat operations, which are managed by the headquarter-based Special Detachment 88 (*Densus 88*).

<sup>149</sup> Saudale, Vento. "Polisi Batalkan Acara HTI di Bogor." *beritasatu.com*, April 23, 2017. <https://www.beritasatu.com/megapolitan/426764/polisi-batalkan-acara-hti-di-bogor>. Adiyatna, Yudi. "Meskipun Legal, Ormas HTI Diwaspadai Di Tangerang Selatan." *Tangerangnews.Com*, May 6, 2017. <http://tangerangnews.com/tangsel/read/20220/Meskipun-Legal-Ormas-HTI-diwaspadai-di-Tangerang-Selatan>. Ronald. "Rekomendasi Intelijen, Polisi Tolak Izin Acara HTI Di Balai Sudirman." *Merdeka.Com*, April 22, 2017. <https://www.merdeka.com/peristiwa/rekomendasi-intelijen-polisi-tolak-izin-acara-hti-di-balai-sudirman.html>.

<sup>150</sup> "Polisi Tangkap 7 Terduga Teroris di Sejumlah Daerah." *BenarNews*, June 19, 2017. <https://www.benarnews.org/indonesian/berita/polisi-tangkap-terduga-teroris-06192017152202.html>.

as a way to monitor movement of suspicious individuals who may be on the run.<sup>151</sup> This required the RT/RW chiefs to instruct their residents and find volunteers for night patrols. The neighborhood leaders were also asked to register all overnight visitors in their area every 24 hours and report their presence to the police.

Second, the *Bhabin* were required to ‘sweep’ their areas for potential terror suspects or members of radical organizations.<sup>152</sup> The prime target of these grassroots operations were rental properties and boarding houses near industrial hubs that usually get an influx of new migrants every few months. According to officers posted in such areas, the role of the RT/RW is critical in helping monitor spaces where residents do not know each other. An officer posted in the Tangerang industrial zone explained the challenge as one of legibility. “People come here from all over the country. One can call it mini-Indonesia. In a regular area people know their neighbors for decades but here people are coming and going all the time. The RT chief usually knows these things because he can require people to report to him when they move in and move out.”<sup>153</sup> Another *Bhabin* who was involved in sweeping operations in Bogor city to make a list of new migrants, also emphasized the need to coordinate with the RT/RW leaders. “I know where the big boarding houses are but, residents also rent a room in their house to a student or a worker. The RT knows which houses in his area need to be checked. If he doesn’t know, at least he knows who to ask.”<sup>154</sup> He also explained that according to the police’s standard operating

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<sup>151</sup> “Bom Jakarta, Bogor Siaga dan Kembali Hidupkan Siskamling.” Publik Bogor (blog), May 29, 2017. <http://publikbogor.com/2017/05/bom-jakarta-bogor-siaga-dan-kembali-hidupkan-siskamling/>. antaranews.com. “Warga Bekasi Intensifkan Siskamling Sesuai Instruksi Polisi.” Antara News, May 27, 2017. <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/631785/warga-bekasi-intensifkan-siskamling-sesuai-instruksi-polisi>.

<sup>152</sup> Bogor, Ops Polres. “Bhabinkamtibmas Polsek Ciawi Cek Kontrakan Warganya | Polres Bogor.” Accessed May 19, 2019. <https://bogor.jabar.polri.go.id/posts/bhabinkamtibmas-polsek-ciawi-cek-kontrakan-warganya/>. “Cegah Teroris, Polsek Cileunyi Lakukan Ini.” Tribun Jabar, July 12, 2017. <http://jabar.tribunnews.com/2017/07/12/cegah-teroris-polsek-cileunyi-lakukan-ini>.

<sup>153</sup> Interview # 16, Male, Bhabinkamtibmas, Cikupa Polsek, Tangerang District, May 8, 2017.

<sup>154</sup> Interview # 33, Male, Bhabinkamtibmas, Central Bogor Polsek, Bogor City, May 17, 2017.

procedures, the RT chief's presence is required for searching a private residence.<sup>155</sup> "Sometimes we receive reports about bachelors (*jombloh*) who don't make an effort to be friendly (*silaturahmi*) with others and keep their doors closed..... If our superiors want us to check, we take the RT with us because he is the one with authority (*berwenang*) in his area."

Third, the *Bhabin* organized socialization drives to request monitoring of religious activities in residential areas, such as the arrival of a new preacher or suspicious prayer sessions.<sup>156</sup> Local leaders' cooperation was required for hosting these meetings, ensuring attendance, arranging for snacks and taking follow up actions. A hamlet chief in Bogor City recalled receiving such requests from the police. He explained the decision he took as a result, "We gathered all the RT/RW leaders and decided not to allow any prayer sessions involving outside guests. It is not that we want to prevent people from worshiping, but religious activities behind closed doors can look suspicious (*mencurigakan*). Why would anyone hold a Quran recitation (*pengajian*) and not invite his own neighbors?"<sup>157</sup>

Apart from implementing national policy directives, community leaders' support is also needed for the *Bhabin*'s second most important job: resolving local disputes through mediation to relieve the *Polsek*'s case load. According to the officers interviewed at fieldwork sites across the country, a wide range of felony issues can be resolved informally but doing so requires the agreement and support of the local community leaders. The RT/RW chiefs not only need to convince the parties in a dispute of the merits of mediation, they also need to acknowledge local

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<sup>155</sup> A National Police Regulation (Perturan Kepala Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia No. 14 Tahun 2012) formally requires the RT/RW to be present during the search of a resident's private property and that the neighborhood leaders be notified in case of an arrest.

<sup>156</sup> Tangerang, Polresta. "Hadiri Peringatan Isra Mi'raj, Bhabinkamtibmas Polsek Pasarkemis Serukan Warga Agar Waspada Paham Radikal." Tribata News Banten (blog). Accessed May 19, 2019. <http://tribatanews.banten.polri.go.id/hadiri-peringatan-isra-miraj-bhabinkamtibmas-polsek-pasarkemis-serukan-warga-agar-waspada-paham-radikal/>.

<sup>157</sup> Interview # 27, Male, Hamlet Head, North Bogor, Bogor City, May 9, 2017.

agreements and enforce them. Street-level police officers generally identified going through the RT/RW as the correct way of arranging a mediation, with the possibility of involving the hamlet or village head if the parties are unable to reach an agreement. In these sessions, the RT/RW leaders draft an agreement and also provide an official stamp (worth 30 cents) to make the agreement official, although not legally binding.<sup>158</sup> As noted previously in Chapter 2, local leaders routinely broker these kinds of mediation agreements to avoid the formal legal system, with or without police help. However, the presence of a police officer can induce unwilling parties to agree to mediation as he can impress upon them the uncertainty of the legal system and its pitfalls.

The issue that is most systematically addressed through mediation is domestic violence, small disputes between neighbors or petty theft and fraud. During my fieldwork, I found that the *Bhabin* were systematically discouraged from bringing domestic violence cases to the *Polsek* for processing and consistently cited it as an example of a ‘minor’ (*sepele*) case that is an unnecessary burden on the legal system. A retired police officer and a renowned criminologist insisted that the police’s strategy to resolve these cases through mediation is in women’s own interest: “Sometimes women get emotional and complain that their husbands have mistreated them. A police officer’s job is to be rational and resolve the situation in a way that benefits the whole family”.<sup>159</sup> This is where the role of the RT/RW leaders becomes important. They can chastise the accused husbands and dissuade wives from making formal complaints that would lead to an arrest and deprive the family of their livelihood. Sometimes, the police works with the local leaders to ‘help’ women reach this conclusion, by locking up an accused husband in a cell

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<sup>158</sup> This procedure is now so common that online templates for RT/RW agreement/statement letters are available for download on social media sites.

<sup>159</sup> Interview # 65, Male, Retired police officer and Criminologist, September 11, 2017, Jakarta.

overnight, so that “the wife comes back to have him released when she realizes that the kids need to eat.”

It should be noted that local *Bhabin* are not expected to resolve long standing communal disputes or broker peace agreements between warring youth gangs in their areas. They are, however, required to use their discretion wisely for deciding which emerging issues can be taken care of locally and which ones need to be brought to a superior’s attention. Miscalculation either way can damage a *Bhabin*’s professional reputation and impede his career advancement. Knowing the local leaders, especially the RT/RW and village/hamlet officials, is essential for the *Bhabin* to be able to read the local hierarchies and social fault lines. It also helps him understand whose help to seek for crowd control in case of an imminent clash or demonstration.

In Bogor, the RT/RW chiefs along with local religious leaders played a critical role in dissuading their residents from joining the Defense of Islam 212 rallies to protest allegedly blasphemous remarks by Jakarta’s governor. The *Binmas* supervisor at the Bogor City Police Station reported that his *Bhabin* communicated with the local leaders in their areas, who in turn told their residents about the risk of violence in these rallies. Local *imams* also prevented protestors from gathering in local mosques and planning their departure. As a result, he explained “By the grace of God, not many people from our city went to join these rallies.”<sup>160</sup> Similar measures are routinely taken by the police to reduce crowd size in Jakarta during protests organized by labor unions. The *Binmas* head of the Tangerang District Police Station, a heavily industrialized area that is home to a large number of factory workers, explained how the police reduces the risk of ‘anarchy’ by minimizing the number of people who depart to Jakarta for May Day rallies. The strategy is to work with the factory owners to arrange free fishing activities at a

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<sup>160</sup> Interview # 10, Male, Community Guidance Division, Bogor City Police, Bogor City, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

nearby lake in the morning. The RT/RW leaders are asked to socialize these activities and persuade their residents to join the festivities. “Instead of going to Jakarta and getting tired in the heat, most workers appreciate having a little fun with their families on their day off.”<sup>161</sup>

Resourceful officers are also expected to find community support for meeting their operational expenses. One *Bhabin* posted in a middle-class suburban hamlet near Jakarta explained that because he is responsible for monitoring multiple hamlets, he needs reliable transportation. When a wealthy individual donated several motorbikes to his supervising *Polsek*, he received one too. However, he is responsible for finding the funds to pay for maintenance and daily petrol costs, which he is able to raise through connections with well-to-do individuals and businesses in his area. In Lombok, I found that whenever an officer catches a criminal who needs to be taken to the station or a victim who needs to be taken to a hospital, it is expected he will come up with the funds to cover the transport costs himself. A local officer explained that he has good relations with his community so when he is in a fix, he can ask them to chip in or borrow a resident’s car. “Our operational funds don’t even cover our own transport” he noted.<sup>162</sup>

The lack of any contingency funds means relying on residents and their leaders to help find resources for unforeseen expenses. A *Bhabin* in Bogor district found himself in a fix when some young men in his hamlet were detained during a large demonstration in Jakarta on suspicion of disorderly conduct. The Jakarta cops did not have any room to hold them, so they called to send someone to pick them up. “I was tasked to do it so I went to the *Ketua RT* and asked his help in arranging transport because they are his residents. We brought them back to the

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<sup>161</sup> Interview # 25, Male, Community Guidance Division, Tangerang District Police Station, Tangerang District, May 8, 2017.

<sup>162</sup> Interview # 101, Male, *Buru Sergap* (arrest division), West Nusa Tenggara Provincial Police Headquarters, Mataram, Central Lombok, July 31, 2017.

*Polsek* first but let them go after [the *Ketua RT*] vouched for their families and promised they would not do it again.”<sup>163</sup>

### 6.1.3 Need to generate community goodwill with out-of-system measures

In many ways, being able to draw on the community’s support for policing *is* the *Bhabin*’s main task. Indeed, resourcefulness as a criteria for career advancement is widely known among police officers at every level of the force and is well documented in other studies of policing in Indonesia (Jacqueline Baker 2012; Muradi 2014). For the *Bhabin*, however, it is a job requirement and an explicitly stated policy goal in police precincts across Indonesia. Saving resources by getting things done through community support is also routinely cited as the main reason for expanding the *Bhabinkamtibmas* program.<sup>164</sup>

Because the *Bhabin*’s performance is judged on the basis of their ability to mobilize community resources for policework, they are required to keep monthly logs of their activities, documenting their efforts to obtain communities’ goodwill and support; and the cases they have solved outside of the formal legal system (Appendix 10). These logs show how many door-to-door trips a *Bhabin* makes to get to know the residents and leaders in his area; the number of social events he attends as well as the number of public lectures and talks he holds to socialize the police’s national priorities.

Since obtaining the support of the RT/RW leaders is no longer possible through political control, the local *Bhabin* need to be able to maintain good relations with these leaders in order to

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<sup>163</sup> Interview # 21, Male, Bhabinkamtibmas, Tanah Sereal Polsek, Bogor City, May 6, 2017.

<sup>164</sup> Kemitraan Knowledge Resource Center. “Policy Brief: Accelerating the Achievement of Nawacita Agenda on Law and Security.” Kemitraan: The Partnership for Governance Reform, 2017. According to this estimate, problem-solving by the *Bhabinkamtibmas* over a two-year period has saved the police equivalent of \$1.2 billion in operational costs related to investigation of crimes.

call on them for help when needed.<sup>165</sup> In the context of a fully reformed police force, the goodwill of communities and their leaders would be generated through the improvement of the police's public service delivery. These improvements would involve ease of reporting, swift response to emergencies, timely investigation of cases and delivery to the courts system for further processing.

The irony in Indonesia is that the same system that pushes a street-level *Bhabin* to obtain the support of the community by generating their leaders' goodwill, also prevents the improvement of public service delivery for these communities. Part of this problem is a function of the level of interaction: a low-level officer alone cannot solve the crime problems of the community he serves. Mostly, however, the problem is that the police's lowest level precincts are grossly unequipped to respond to citizens' complaints. Thus, even if the *Bhabin* were to try to help a rape victim or a fraud victim to register a complaint at the *Polsek* and help find justice, the case is likely to get buried in the load.

Unable to improve the public service delivery, the *Bhabin* rely on out of system measures to build community goodwill. This is possible through two types of activities that are not mutually exclusive. First, some *Bhabin* go to great lengths to take up creative, non-policing related activities to build a good reputation in the communities they serve. These include running mobile libraries<sup>166</sup>, helping with road repair projects<sup>167</sup>, providing potable water in a shortage<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> The dynamic is different with regards to obtaining support from other kinds of local leaders. Small business owners, especially those of Chinese descent, are especially vulnerable to extortion by the police.

<sup>166</sup> Andriatna, Septian. "Inspiratif! Polisi Di Tangerang Modif Motornya Jadi Perpustakaan." Detiknews, November 23, 2017. <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-3655159/inspiratif-polisi-di-tangerang-modif-motornya-jadi-perpustakaan>.

<sup>167</sup> Unknown, Diposting oleh. "Bhabinkamtibmas Galung Lombok BRIGPOL M. ROBBY, Bantu Masyarakat Perbaiki Sarana Jalan." Accessed May 18, 2019. <http://www.polrespolman.com/2016/09/bhabinkamtibmas-galung-lombok-brigpol-m.html>.

<sup>168</sup> "Desa Mernung Mendapatkan Bantuan Air Bersih dari Bhabinkamtibmas Polsek Cepu." Infodesanews.com - Bersama Membangun Indonesia (blog), September 24, 2017. <https://infodesanews.com/desa-mernung-mendapatkan-bantuan-air-bersih-dari-bhabinkamtibmas-polsek-cepu.html>.

or holding free literacy classes.<sup>169</sup> A *Bhabin* posted in a village in Central Lombok reported meeting with stiff resistance from his residents when he first arrived. They had had a bad experience with the previously posted police officer. He tried all the conventional ways to communicate with the local leaders but did not get anywhere as they just ignored him. In the end he decided to ditch his police uniform and make rounds in the village as a peddler, supplying subsidized potable water refills to be able to make himself useful and build trust with the community. “The ladies (*ibu ibu*) were the key to making inroads in the village,” he explained, “they gathered in the morning to chat while cleaning each other’s hair. So, I would join them after delivering the water and that way I could learn all the village gossip. If they needed something from town I could get it on my next trip. Eventually, they could see that I meant well and began inviting me over to their social events.”<sup>170</sup> The extraordinary efforts of this *Bhabin* were acknowledged in the form of a prestigious award by the National Police Commission that is given to a handful of dedicated officers every year.

Second, because street-level officers know the deficiencies of the legal system better than anyone else, they are best placed to advise their residents and their leaders on how to work around the system, as a private service. On a routine basis, this service may be provided if one of the residents has gotten into trouble with the law. A *Bhabin* may accompany the residents’ family or the RT to ‘facilitate’ his release in the same way that private consultants (*Makelar Kasus–Markus*) hanging out at police stations do. He may also advise the resident on the technicalities of the law, what kind of statements to make, what to avoid. More than anything

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<sup>169</sup> “Tingkatkan Pelayanan, Bhabinkamtibmas Koordinasi Ketua RT Terkait Rencana Membuka Rumah Belajar Bagi Anak Yang Kurang Mampu.” <http://tribratanewspapuabarar.com/2017/06/03/tingkatkan-pelayanan-bhabinkamtibmas-koordinasi-ketua-rt-terkait-rencana-membuka-rumah-belajar-bagi-anak-yang-kurang-mampu>.

<sup>170</sup> Interview # 94, Bhabinkamtibmas, Pujut, Central Lombok, August 2, 2017.

else, however, the *Bhabin*'s help becomes invaluable for protecting the community when its members engage in an act of extra-legal violence against a local offender. Impunity for vigilantism is one such form of private service that street-level cops provide to communities, in order to keep their goodwill for higher priority tasks.

## **6.2 What are the pathways to impunity and the factors that limit its provision?**

My theory posits that impunity offered to vigilantes by street-level state agents is selective, based on the risk of violence escalation, public opinion as well as personal career advancement. This section compares case studies of vigilantism compiled during 14 months of fieldwork in Indonesia. It examines the considerations that can lead to denial, provision or revocation of impunity to show how state agents withhold legal action against vigilantes and protect them from revenge attacks.

### 6.2.1 Ex-ante indication of impunity from legal prosecution

As previously explained in detail in Chapter 2, an incident of vigilantism may precipitate in response to a spontaneous trigger, such as the discovery of theft, but the violence is rarely instantaneous. In fact, the process of violence is a deliberative one, in which the perpetrators attempt to gather information that can help them minimize the risk of consequences of engaging in violence. One way in which vigilantes mitigate the risk is by investigating the identity of the alleged offender: Does the suspect fit the profile of a usual offender, whose death would not lead to a public scandal? Does he have family connections or a group identity that can trigger revenge attacks against the vigilantes?

Another critical way in which vigilantes can reduce the risk of reprisals is by asking for impunity from state agents, prior to the act of violence. Such impunity may be sought during the deliberative process in hamlets or villages where the local leaders have close ties with law-

enforcement officers. However, the comparison of three cases of vigilantism below shows that ex-ante indication of impunity from the police is subject to broader considerations of order.

***Impunity as a default setting: Praya Tengah, Central Lombok (Case #7)***

Impunity for extra-legal violence was obtained during the commission of a deadly lynching that took place in Lajut Village, Praya Tengah, Central Lombok district of West Nusa Tenggara province on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2017. Reportedly, a man from outside the village was caught stealing a goat at a resident's house. Upon being discovered, the alleged thief ran away to the paddy fields, where he was caught by a group of residents and beaten to death. The Praya Tengah subdistrict has experienced at least 10 incidents of vigilantism since 2007, out of which three have taken place in the Lajut Village, including the incident under consideration here.

I met with the lead perpetrator of the lynching (IR), a *dusun* head in Lajut village, during my fieldwork. While interviewing a police officer (AD) in the provincial capital Mataram, I mentioned the Lajut incident that had taken place just two months ago. AD recalled the lynching and asked me if I wanted to meet the person “who did it” (*pelaku*). He said he knew the person well and offered to introduce (*mengantar*) me to him. Within a few minutes, AD contacted IR, chatted socially and told him that he wanted to introduce a friend. That evening, we met at a restaurant of IR's choosing near the town close to his village.<sup>171</sup>

Unsure about how much a perpetrator would be willing to share in the presence of a police officer, I began the conversation with IR by asking his views about the security challenges faced by residents in his village.<sup>172</sup> He identified theft as the main problem that plagued the

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<sup>171</sup> The interview (#100 & 101) with IR and AD, quoted in this section took place over the course of a day on July 31<sup>st</sup> 2017 in Praya Tengah, Central Lombok.

<sup>172</sup> IR possessed a college degree in law and was very well-spoken. Instead of working in the city as most graduates choose to do, he had decided to come back to village life. He had traveled to Jakarta several times and mentioned names of specific neighborhoods to demonstrate his familiarity with the capital city, which is a 3-hour flight away. IR was also well-versed in legal procedure and government rules. He repeatedly mentioned his connection to the District Head, District Police Chief (Kapolres) as well as the Kapolsek. He also had very firm

entire island of Lombok, since the *Reformasi*. Initially a number of *pamswakarsa* (private militias) emerged on the pretext of fighting crime.<sup>173</sup> In exchange for monthly membership fees, they promised to help residents locate stolen cattle or motorbikes. This model did not work for long as the militias soon transformed into an extortion racket and began employing thieves across the island. “One of their units would steal from the residents and another would ‘find’ it after the victim made an additional payment on top of the monthly contributions.”, IR explained. AD added that from the police’s perspective, the *pamswakarsa* became a security threat. Not only did they fight among themselves but also attacked villages that refused their activities.<sup>174</sup> Furthermore, the *pamswakarsa*’s involvement in communal disputes between Muslim residents and Hindu minority presented a persistent challenge to the police. As a result, a series of police operations have been conducted against the leaders of *pamswakarsa*, significantly diminishing their influence in the area.<sup>175</sup>

IR explained that now, instead of being ripped off by the *pamswakarsa*, citizens could take care of their own security and repel criminal intruders by working together with the local police. In his own village he worked with the local *Bhabin* along with the head of their village (also an active duty police officer) to form a Village Security Body (*Badan Keamanan Desa–BKD*).<sup>176</sup> In addition to the *dusun* head, IR was also the head of the *BKD*, which comprised of a

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views about the drivers of crime in his area. He insisted that petty thieves in the area are not poor people with no choice, but lazy young men, who want to improve their life style with the speed with which one orders fast food (“Kentucky”).

<sup>173</sup> For more detailed studies of *pamswakarsa* groups in Lombok see (ICG 2003; Telle 2013; Tyson 2013; Telle 2014)

<sup>174</sup> The most serious incident took place in 2003 when members of a *pamswakarsa*. *Ambhibi*, attacked a village where some of their members had been beaten a day before. *Ambhibi* members were intercepted by the villagers and executed.

<sup>175</sup> AD took the lead in arresting the leader of one such group, who was sentenced to many years in prison and is now trying to get into politics.

<sup>176</sup> IR explained that the new Village funds received by the Village heads allow for funding proposals between IDR 20 million to 60 million (\$1,500-\$5,000) for specific activities that village residents deem necessary.

total of 20 people, 2 representatives from 10 *dusun*, where each *dusun* comprises of 40 households. By submitting proposals to the village head, IR had managed to get his *BKD* members handy talkies and a transponder for himself. This equipment allowed *BKD* members to respond quickly to a threat and IR to monitor the situation not just in his village but also receive news from surrounding areas. “This equipment helps us catch the thieves in time— so we can directly execute them,” he exclaimed, prompting laughter from AD.

IR narrated the June lynching incident and his role in the violence, while seated next to AD. He recalled it as the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the fasting month, because he was resting at home in the evening when members of the *BKD* came to tell him that a thief had been caught. A member of the *BKD* had discovered the thief and alerted others who gathered in a matter of minutes. There was a brief investigation, during which the suspected thief was beaten and asked questions about his identity. During the interrogation, the suspect divulged the name of a local accomplice, who had invited him. “That is how he managed to sneak in before sunset when we set up our guard posts. He was waiting at the accomplice’s house, waiting for night fall and an opportunity to steal.”, IR explained.<sup>177</sup> During the questioning, IR called the local police to inform him that they had caught a thief and briefly described his identity. According to IR, the officer responded: “Bro, don’t tell me about this now. Just tell me when he is dead. I’ll come pick him up.” This is when he instructed the *BKD* members to “finish him.”

IR defended his actions by noting the deterrence effect of the lynching: there had not been any security incident in his village for the past two months. He was also quick to explain the police’s position in this matter. “Why would the police want to take a criminal and pay for feeding him and hospital costs? If we let him live it is inconvenient (*merepotkan*) for everyone.

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<sup>177</sup> Local accomplices are so frequently used by outside thieves that residents have come up with a specific term to describe them “*maling gubuk*”.

If he is dead, all we need is a sack to put his body and the police just comes to take it to the morgue.” When asked about whether the police expected him to gather any evidence of the accused’s guilt, he did not seem too concerned. “If we have the physical evidence, of course we hand it over. If not, how hard is it to put the guy’s arms around an old TV and take a few pictures?”<sup>178</sup>

IR did acknowledge, however that the *Bhabin* does face scrutiny from his superiors if an incident like this happens in the area. “Of course, they ask him, but he can also say that he was not able to get to the location on time.” IR concluded that as long as there was no follow-up trouble, the superior officers were also ‘understanding’. AD agreed with this characterization of the police and noted that they could even be relied upon to talk to the victims’ families and reason with them. “The family’s reaction is at first to conceal their loved one’s wrongdoing (*menutup aib*). The thief’s wife first insisted that her husband did not come to our village to steal, just to visit his friend. But we told her that the ‘friend’ is a known thief, so it is not a mystery what they were up to.” In a manner typical to other vigilantes who describe the reaction of the victims’ families as cooperative, IR claimed that once the wife saw all the facts, she said she no longer blamed the people who killed her husband but wanted revenge from the man who took him to the village to steal.<sup>179</sup>

According to IR, this particular incident was typical of the way they handled these kinds of situations in the past 10 years. Previously, he had to deal with other lynchings in his own village, one involving a thief who was also killed; and another involving a ‘heretic’ preacher, who was beaten up and handed over to the police. As in this most recent case, no charges were

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<sup>178</sup> This refers to pictures of lynched thieves that are commonly published in newspapers, showing them holding a small, usually not very valuable item, such as a gas canister or an old (dial knob) television set.

<sup>179</sup> The local accomplice was not killed but beaten up and handed over to the police. He is still serving time in prison.

filed against IR or his affiliates in the previous cases. Moreover, IR also helps neighboring villages catch criminals now that he has access to cellphones and handy talkies. He described an incident a few months earlier when two thieves were trying to escape from the residents who had caught them red-handed in the next village. He received the news from his friend that the two were heading up from the South so, he sent his *BKD* members to intercept them and hand them over to the residents for a beating.<sup>180</sup>

In IR's view, what has made it possible for residents to respond decisively to crime is the presence of the local *Bhabin*. "I salute whoever started the *Bhabinkantibmas* program to dedicate an officer to a village. Having one officer in the village, who understands *our* issues is better than having 500 posted at the *Polres*, who don't know us." Apart from the *Bhabin*, IR said that he was also lucky that their village head was an active policeman and that his own sister was married to the *Bhabin* in the next village.<sup>181</sup> Overall, he felt very satisfied (*puas*) with the police's performance, noting the need to understand that the police cannot solve all of the communities' problems themselves. "Most people just find it easy to blame the police for everything. We need to understand that even if they catch a criminal, the law is so lenient that he will be out in a few months." In IR's view, it was better to work with the police to search for a solution rather than blaming them.

#### ***Jurisdiction dispute and revocation of impunity: Pondok Gede, Bekasi (Case #15)***

In the early hours of May 21<sup>st</sup> 2017, residents of Jatiwaringin hamlet, Pondok Karya, Bekasi City, attacked a convoy of motorbike gang members that had been making violent

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<sup>180</sup> Referring to this incident JawaPos.com. "Lihat Nih! Saat Warga Marah Hakimi Penjambret Sadis yang Tertangkap." JawaPos.com (blog), May 15, 2017. <https://www.jawapos.com/jpg-today/15/05/2017/lihat-nih-saat-warga-marah-hakimi-penjambret-sadis-yang-tertangkap/>.

<sup>181</sup> This *Bhabin* had become famous for winning an award from the National Police Commission, for his service to the community.

incursions into their area for the past few months. The gang had made several night-time raids into the area during which its members vandalized residents' properties and shops on the main road and injured several young men who tried to intervene. That night, armed with bamboo sticks and kitchen knives, the residents attacked the gang's convoy. Some of the members were arrested by the citizens and delivered to the police station, while others were chased across a bridge back to Jakarta.<sup>182</sup> One alleged member of the gang was lynched during this chase and died before he could be taken to the hospital.<sup>183</sup> In a way similar to the incident in Lujut, residents of Jatiwaringin had obtained a promise of impunity from local police before the violence began. Unlike Lujut, however, this impunity was revoked in the aftermath of the incident and residents accused of involvement in the lynching were charged with collective violence and pre-meditated murder. Previously, at least 20 incidents of vigilantism have been recorded in the Pondok Gede subdistrict, out of which 5 took place in the *Jatiwaringin* hamlet between 2011 and 2013. This was the first known arrest that was made in connection to a lynching in the area.

I first met the residents of Jatiwaringin on September 5<sup>th</sup> 2017, at the Jakarta Timur courthouse, while they were waiting for the police to bring the eight teenagers accused of having lynched the deceased gang member. They were wearing matching T-shirts with the text *Aksi Bela Kampung* (Action for Defending our Home). They were also carrying signs and placards claiming that their children were being wrongfully punished for practicing their basic right to self-defense. One resident, a woman who turned out to be the sister of one of the teenagers, carried a sign with this message: "Warning: If your home is attacked by a motorbike gang, do not

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<sup>182</sup> The bridge demarcates the administrative boundary between East Jakarta District and Bekasi City.

<sup>183</sup> Destryawan, Dennis. "Bikin Resah Warga Jatiwaringin, Anggota Geng Motor Dikeroyok Sampai Tewas." *Tribunnews.com*, May 22, 2017. <http://www.tribunnews.com/metropolitan/2017/05/22/bikin-resah-geng-motor-keroyok-warga-sampai-tewas-di-jatiwaringinjakarta-timur>.

resist. If you resist, you will be put in jail. Our children are the example.” Although they were loud outside the courthouse, the group sat quietly during the trial session, which turned out to be rather short. A police officer from Pondok Gede *Polsek* testified that he discovered the dead body but did not see any of the teenagers around it at the time. Another witness of the prosecution, a food cart owner, who was due to testify could not be presented that day. The chief judge set another date before ending the session. Outside the courthouse, I met the lawyer (ZK), who was representing all eight teenagers. He informed me that the trial was taking place in East Jakarta courthouse, instead of Bekasi because the lynching took place on the other side of the bridge, outside of the Pondok Gede Police jurisdiction. He insisted that his clients had done nothing wrong and invited me to join a strategy session with the families the next day.<sup>184</sup>

The families shared their version of events when I met them in a middle-class neighborhood in Jatiwaringin, located just behind a commercial lane.<sup>185</sup> Representative from the families of the accused were present along with the RT chief, a religious leader and members of a local youth group (*Karang Taruna*), who were friends of the accused teenagers. ZK led the strategy session to explain what to expect in the next few weeks and instructed the families to keep showing up at the courthouse in large numbers with the signs and posters. According to him, the judges were sympathetic because the accused were young and otherwise well-behaved. If the public opinion could be turned in the boys’ favor, it could tip the judges’ decision in the end. His legal strategy was to argue that the prosecutor had no eye witnesses, except a food vendor, who had gone back to his village in Java. “We have already admitted that the boys

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<sup>184</sup> Interview # 62, Male, Lawyer, Courthouse, East Jakarta, September 5, 2017.

<sup>185</sup> Interview # 63, Residents of Jatiwaringin, Pondok Gede, Bekasi City, September 6, 2017. I was told that the families of the accused took turns hosting the meetings, except the two who were too poor to afford it.

participated in the incident that night with the rest of the residents but there is no evidence to prove that they lynched the victim.”, ZK explained for my benefit.

After the meeting, ZK and the parents explained that their children had participated in the attack not out of their own initiative but because they had been encouraged to do so by the local leaders and the police. They further explained that gangs from East Jakarta frequently make incursions into Pondok Gede, sometimes to fight with other gangs who also gather in this area. Because Jatiwaringin hamlet is situated on the border between Bekasi and East Jakarta, it is the worst affected by the gang’s activities. Gangsters from Jakarta cross the bridge and come straight onto the main commercial road that runs through the hamlet. On their way, they vandalize shops and houses, using bamboo sticks and samurai swords. During one such incursion in January 2017, some gang members attacked a few teenagers that were hanging out in front of the shops. One 15-year old boy was stabbed and had to be hospitalized in a critical condition. He was the younger brother of one of the teenagers accused of perpetrating the lynching in May.

Following the stabbing incident in January, the gang incursions became so frequent and violent that shopkeepers were afraid to keep their businesses open after dark. The police arrested a few people but could not hold off such frequent incursions because the gangsters came from another jurisdiction. The residents of Jatiwaringin, organized through their RT/RW chiefs, who met with the hamlet head (*lurah*) and subdistrict head (*camat*) to ask for a solution.<sup>186</sup> Two days before the May 21<sup>st</sup> incident, the *camat* called a meeting to discuss the matter in his office. It was attended by the RW chiefs, the *lurah*, mass organization representatives (*ormas*) as well as leaders of youth organizations. In this meeting, it was decided that during the gang’s next

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<sup>186</sup> Unlike the village heads (*kepala desa*) in rural areas, who are elected by the residents, the *lurah* in urban hamlets are appointed by the subdistrict heads (*camat*). In effect, RT/RW are the only elected leaders before the Mayor.

expected incursion on Saturday, the residents would guard the main road and protect their territory to send the gang members back. The families insisted that their children were not the only ones out there fighting on the street, but all the residents participated in the action that was endorsed by the *camat*.

This version of events was confirmed by an *ormas* member (NR), who had attended the meeting with the *camat* and had also participated in the attack that night.<sup>187</sup> He confirmed that the RT/RW and *lurah* had complained to the *camat* several times to ask for his help in dealing with the situation. The police was of little help as it only had 30-50 people at the *Polsek* at any given time and calling back-up from the *Polres* was not possible everyday. The police also could not initiate an operation against the gang because they were based out of East Jakarta and beyond the jurisdiction of the Pondok Gede police. Having attended the May 19<sup>th</sup> meeting mentioned by the parents, NR confirmed that the *camat* had endorsed the plan to guard the road on Saturday night. In fact, he had encouraged the residents to be prepared to give the gang members the necessary ‘deterrence effect’.

NR also mentioned a second meeting that took place the night of the attack, which was led by the *Kapolres* of Pondok Gede along with the *camat* and the subdistrict military commander (*Koramil*). The RW chiefs and *lurah* were also in attendance. “We met at 12:00 am at the duck restaurant. That is when the *Kapolres* confirmed that the gang is planning an incursion later that night. We were to wait for them on the main road.” In the previous meeting, the *camat* had been unclear about what kind of weapons the residents may use to defend themselves during the action. In this second meeting, the *Kapolsek* authorized them to bring bamboo spears and small knives, to deal with the gangsters, who were expected to bring their

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<sup>187</sup> Interview # 67, Male, Member of Mass Organization (FBR) and resident of Jatiwaringin, Pondok Gede, Bekasi City, September 13, 2017.

own weapons. The residents' representatives, along with 20 policemen from the *Polsek* also discussed the best positions to hold along the road.

According to NR's recollection, confirmed by others, about 40 gang members showed up in a convoy around 3am on May 21st. "More than a thousand of us were ready for them so we attacked just as they came in." Some of the members were chased back up the bridge but others were cornered by the residents into narrow alleys. Some residents wanted to ambush them.<sup>188</sup> Others felt that they were too many to kill and thought it was better to hand them over to the police. As the news of the attack in Jatiwaringin spread, a much larger convoy of gang members arrived from Jakarta around 5:30 in the morning. Intense fighting between the residents and the gangsters took place near the bridge. "It was like a war, even though the sun had already come up and it was bright outside," NR recalled showing photographs of the fighting. Eventually the police backup arrived from the Bekasi City *Polresta* and the fighting ended.

In the middle of this chaos, the body of the lynching victim was discovered by the Jakarta police, on their side of the bridge. He had been beaten and stabbed. His ear had also been sliced off, indicating a revenge motive. The next day the Jakarta police sent their officers to arrest the eight teenagers in Jatiwaringin and charged them with collective violence (Article 170 (1) of the Criminal Code) and premeditated murder. According to the prosecutor, there had been a long, ongoing spat between the deceased and the teenagers since the stabbing incident in January. On the night of the attack, the accused were waiting for the victim with a plan to kill him and deliberately chased him to the other side of the bridge to take revenge for the previous attack on one of their brothers.

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<sup>188</sup> NR showed photographs of the gangsters held between two houses in the hamlet, with their hands tied together.

The *Kapolsek* of Pondok Gede, who had endorsed the attack, was unavailable for an interview. I was, however, able to meet with the *camat* (JR), who had been involved in the plan from the beginning.<sup>189</sup> In the first half of the interview, JR denied any involvement in the attack and insisted that as a government servant, he was against the ‘anarchic’ action by his residents. He acknowledged the gang incursions as a serious problem in the area but contended that their frequency had reduced due to active police response.<sup>190</sup> JR further pointed out that based on what he had heard, the boys had a personal dispute with the victim and their actions were not part of the residents’ plan to defend themselves.

In the second half of the interview, while discussing his previous administrative experiences, JR began recounting the ‘brave’ measures he took to resolve the law and order problems in his areas. Unaware that he was contradicting his previously expressed views, the *camat* described specific instances of vigilantism that he had personally led. First, he described the anti-vice squads he had formed as the *lurah* in an East Bekasi village. He would lead the squad at night to violently punish unmarried couples found dating in public places. Second, he described the lynching he led as an RT in his own neighborhood. One day his residents caught three motorbike thieves red-handed. “We caught two of them but one got away. After we beat them the police showed up and noticed that the two were still breathing. That’s when I suggested to the police to run them over with a car so it looked like they died in an accident while being chased.” It was clear from his self-recounted experience and subsequent views, that the *camat* believed in doling out severe punishment for offenders and knew how to work with local police to implement this goal.

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<sup>189</sup> Interview # 72, Male, subdistrict head (*camat*), Pondok Gede, Bekasi City, September 19, 2017.

<sup>190</sup> This assertion was laughed off by other residents who showed recordings of new attacks just over the past few weeks.

ZK acknowledged that he knew about the second meeting with the *Kapolsek* in which he authorized the residents' attack against gang members.<sup>191</sup> In his view, his clients were in this unfortunate predicament only because the lynching had taken place on the wrong side of the bridge. Even more regrettable was the fact that a compromise with the victims' family could not be brokered because of the Bekasi *Kapolres*' long rivalry with the East Jakarta *Kapolres*. "They are both after the same promotion and a high-profile case like this will certainly help the East Jakarta *Kapolres*. That's why they keep refusing a peace agreement. Otherwise the police knows how to persuade the family of the deceased." Even so, ZK complained that all the officials who sanctioned the attack had just 'washed their hands' off the whole affair, blaming everything on the teenagers. He especially blamed the *camat* and the *Kapolsek* for not keeping their promise to the residents. When asked whether he planned to use the instructions issued in these meetings as part of his defense against murder charges, ZK said he did not think it was a good idea to drag others into it because it could have bad consequences for the family. He was convinced that there was not enough concrete evidence against his clients. The one key witness that the Jakarta prosecutor was relying on had disappeared. This gave him hope that the case could be won on the basis of the lack of evidence. He was proven right. In December 2017, after about seven months of detention, the accused teenagers were set free by the court, which issued a non-guilty verdict.<sup>192</sup>

***Public opinion and denial of impunity: Rajabasa, Bandar Lampung (Case ##)***

While community leaders may reach out to law-enforcement during an incident of violence, the provision of impunity is not a given. In some cases, the police may advise

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<sup>191</sup> Interview # 66, Male, Lawyer, Courthouse, East Jakarta, September 12, 2017.

<sup>192</sup> The court documents for this case could not be obtained as the family of the victim was planning to challenge the ruling in a higher court.

community leaders of the risk associated with a violent incident and ask them to protect a potential victim from the mob and prevent violence against them. Unlike incidents of vigilante violence that are routinely published in local newspapers and online media, these cases of ‘near-misses’ are difficult to find, as they are essentially non-events and do not generate media interest.

The RT chief of a neighborhood in the Rajabasa subdistrict of Bandar Lampung City (BD) narrated such a near-miss incident that took place in his neighborhood in April 2017.<sup>193</sup> The residents of his hamlet apprehended a teenager, about to escape the home of a resident with two canisters of cooking gas. When BD was called to the scene, the other residents had tied the suspects hands behind his back and were interrogating him. He said he was from South Lampung and admitted to having stolen other (small) goods from the neighborhood over the past few weeks. Sensing the residents’ anger towards the suspect and fearing an imminent attack, BD, who is a journalist by profession, called a high-ranking officer that he knew personally at the *Polresta* Bandar Lampung.

BD explained that although he has lived for a long time in Bandar Lampung, where incidents of vigilantism are common, this was the first time he was personally in charge of dealing with such a situation.<sup>194</sup> When asked what made him contact the police, he explained that he was worried that his residents may be getting themselves into some trouble if they killed the suspect. He did not contact a *Bhabin*, because his hamlet does not have one.

According to BD, his police contact at the *Polres* asked him what the suspect had stolen and whether he appeared to be a Lampungese ethnic. “There was no ID card (*KTP*) on him, but he looked *pribumi* (Lampungese)”, said BD, who is himself of Javanese descent and lives in a

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<sup>193</sup> Interview # 135, Male, RT chief, Rajabasa, Bandar Lampung, August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2017. The interviewee could not recall the exact date of the incident only that it was the third week of April.

<sup>194</sup> At least 452 incidents of vigilantism have been recorded in Bandar Lampung City between 2005 and 2014.

predominantly Javanese neighborhood. The officer told him to hold off the residents and that someone will be over shortly to pick up the suspect.

While he waited, a crowd of residents began to gather around the suspect, some of them yelling and cursing. BD was concerned because “the young boys (*anak anak*) who had caught him looked like they were ready to finish him.” He considered moving the suspect to his home but worried that it may lead to protest or commotion. In the end, BD came up with an unusual solution to calm down the crowd, “I asked the boys to tie him [suspect] to a pole and told the residents to form a que (*antri*) and give him one slap (*tampar*) each before moving on.” BD stood in front of the suspect and regulated the “slaps” until the police arrived about half an hour later and took the suspect away.

BD was not sure why his police contact asked him to secure the suspect. In fact, he was not sure what had happened to the suspect afterwards because no one asked him for a report or a testimony. His guess was that the Lampung police may have been trying to avoid negative news as it was embroiled in a serious scandal at the time. A few weeks before this incident, some officers on a patrol fatally shot 5 unarmed Lampungese teenagers and posted pictures of themselves posing over the dead bodies on social media.<sup>195</sup> “Or maybe he thought if the boy died the Lampungese may attack us,” BD explained.

### 6.2.2 Ex-post efforts to protect vigilantes

Given the police’s concerns about maintaining good relations with the communities that they serve and the incentives to provide impunity as a private service to earn their cooperation, the default response of the police is to protect vigilantes. However, this protection can be

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<sup>195</sup> Sohuturon, Martahan. “Keluarga 5 Remaja Yang Ditembak Polisi Lampung Melapor Propam.” Nasional, May 3, 2017. <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20170503161340-12-211984/keluarga-5-remaja-yang-ditembak-polisi-lampung-melapor-propam>.

withdrawn based on broader considerations of order. If impunity from legal prosecution is not explicitly sought prior to engaging in violence, vigilantes may be able to obtain it afterwards. Ex-post efforts to withhold prosecution of vigilantes by lobbying on behalf of the perpetrators to dissuade the families from filing legal charges and protect them from revenge attacks.

This section discusses public opinion and the risk of violence escalation as the two main considerations that govern the police's decision to withhold legal action against vigilantes in the aftermath of an incident. All the cases discussed below have been selected from regions that exhibit high levels of vigilantism but resulted in different responses from the police. Comparing the variation in police's response to incidents that took place in areas where communities generally expect to get away with vigilante violence can help us see the limits of impunity offered by state agents.

### ***Public opinion and constraints on impunity***

When communities engage in repeated acts of vigilantism and keep getting away with it, they come to expect post-hoc protection from the consequences of engaging in extra-legal violence. As a result, communities may push the boundaries of acceptable forms, levels and targets of violence that may result in the need to correct the equilibrium by withdrawing impunity. This dynamic can be seen in the cases discussed below that took place in areas where vigilantism is rife, and expectation of impunity is widespread. Yet, as communities become bold and go beyond acceptable levels of violence, concerns about public backlash force police officers to deny, revoke or manage impunity.

### ***Mistargeting and revocation of impunity in Babelan, Bekasi (Case ##)***

As explained in detail in Chapter 2, the social legitimacy that is accorded to vigilantism is heavily influenced by commonly held notions about the identity and features of a 'wrong doer'.

With respect to moral offenses or ‘supernatural’ offenses (witchcraft), the profile of a believable suspect would be someone who is anti-social, does not conform to expected life-cycle milestones (is not married, does not have children etc) and does not exhibit outwardly signs of religiosity.

With regards to criminal offenses such as theft or kidnapping, a typical suspect would be a male from a very low-class background, a migrant from regions known for criminal rackets, previous history of trouble with the law, tattoos, piercings and no stable job. This commonly held idea of a ‘criminal figure’ can be gleaned from the way that crime stories are reported in the mass media, highlighting and reinforcing these characteristics.

Punishing offenders who fit this profile is typically safe for vigilantes and they are most likely to get away with violence because a) there is no public opinion backlash and b) the victims’ background is usually such that his family is unlikely to press for revenge. This is why vigilantes take time to investigate the identity of their victims before engaging in violence. From time-to-time however, communities can make mistakes in identifying offenders. These mistakes can generate a public backlash and led to revocation of impunity from the police.

This is what happened in the Bakti Muara village of Babelan, Bekasi District, where the residents lynched a man accused of theft on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017.<sup>196</sup> The victim, who was passing through the village had stopped by to pray at the local mosque. Residents had noted the presence of the stranger and discovered just after he left that the amplifier of the mosque was missing. They raised alarm and detained the man, who did have an amplifier on his motorbike. He explained that he was a repairman and that amplifier was from another mosque but got nervous

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<sup>196</sup> “Ini Kronologis Lengkap Seorang Pria di Bekasi Dibakar Massa Dituduh Mencuri Ampli Musala.” Tribunnews.com, August 7, 2017. <http://www.tribunnews.com/metropolitan/2017/08/07/ini-kronologis-lengkap-seorang-pria-di-bekasi-dibakar-massa-dituduh-mencuri-ampli-musala>.

when the crowd began to gather. As he tried to run away, he was apprehended by the residents, beaten and then burned alive on the main road.

The NVMS dataset records three previous incidents of vigilante violence in the same hamlet, including one fatal lynching of an alleged thief and one mob attack on a couple accused of adultery. There are no records of any charges filed against the perpetrators in these previous cases. In this particular case, however, the middle-class profile of the victim and the brutality of his killing led to a media frenzy. The young wife of the victim, heavily pregnant with their first child appeared on several TV interviews demanding justice for her husband's brutal murder. Under severe public pressure, the Bekasi police finally arrested residents involved in the lynching and charged them with the crime of participating in collective violence (Article 170(1) of the criminal code).<sup>197</sup>

*Wait-and-see approach preserves impunity in Cikupa, Tangerang (Case #13)*

Just a month after the fatal lynching in Babelan, a deadly incident of vigilantism took place in the Budimulya village, Cikupa, Tangerang.<sup>198</sup> Both Babelan and Cikupa are suburbs of Jakarta but located on opposite sides of the city. On August 30<sup>th</sup> 2017, a resident of Budimulya discovered two men, trying to steal his motorbike.<sup>199</sup> In an altercation between the resident and the alleged thieves, the former was stabbed several times but managed to raise alarm. Other residents gathered and chased the two suspects and caught one of them, who was beaten to death. The other suspect managed to escape. Previously, 30 incidents of violence, including 14 deadly

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<sup>197</sup> Six men charged with the crime were sentenced to 7-8 years in prison in May 2018. Media, Kompas Cyber. "Terdakwa Pengeroyokan dan Pembakaran Zoya Divonis 8 Tahun Penjara." *KOMPAS.com*, May 3, 2018. <https://megapolitan.kompas.com/read/2018/05/03/18152231/terdakwa-pengeroyokan-dan-pembakaran-zoya-divonis-8-tahun-penjara>.

<sup>198</sup> Budimulya, along with the rest of the Cikupa subdistrict is an urbanized area, but is administratively classified as a 'village' because it falls under the jurisdiction of a district instead of a city.

<sup>199</sup> Initially some newspapers mistakenly reported that the suspects were trying to steal a goat that was being kept for the Eid sacrifice.

lynchings have been recorded in Cikupa subdistrict between 2005 and 2014—making it one of the worst-affected areas by vigilantism.

I met with the acting head of the Budimulya village (VH) on September 3<sup>rd</sup>.<sup>200</sup> He acknowledged that the incident took place late at night between the 30<sup>th</sup> and the 31<sup>st</sup> of August. The victim of the theft and stabbing was the son of the RW chief. When he and his friends raised alarm, the residents managed to chase down and lynch one of the two suspects while the other one ran away. VH explained that because he lives on the other side of the highway that runs through the hamlet, he did not hear anything. He was only informed afterwards, when the suspect was already dead and the police arrived at the scene.

VH regretted that the people had felt the need to take the law into their own hands. He insisted that he does not endorse such acts but given the level of anxiety about crime among the residents, he could understand their frustration. He attributed the crime in the area to the influx of migrants, especially from South Sumatera, Lampung, Maluku and NTB provinces. “The native residents (*pribumi*) of Budimulya are very traditional and religious (*agamis*) but with the factories come the migrants and with the migrants comes the crime.”, he added. He was quick to point out that the lynched thief was also a migrant: “The police thinks he is from Ambon or Bima.” However, he quickly amended his comments by noting that he did not think all migrants are criminals, in fact most are just looking to make a living like everyone else. Only some people from the four provinces are known all around Tangerang as trouble makers. “I read in the paper that the same migrants also make trouble in Jakarta. Isn’t it so?”, he asked.

VH’s cautious approach in talking about the incident and his efforts to distance himself from the act stood in sharp contrast to the other village heads and neighborhood leaders from

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<sup>200</sup> Interview # 60, Male, hamlet chief (lurah), Budimulya, Cikupa, Tangerang District, September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2017.

Cikupa I had interviewed a few months earlier. For instance, the head of Dukuh village, located right next to Budimulya, had very strong views about the negative impact of migrants from Lampung and South Sumatera on crime in the area.<sup>201</sup> Given the bad reputation of these two ethnic groups in Tangerang and their connections with organized motorbike theft, his residents considered these identities a proxy for criminality. This meant that they watched out for people with Sumatran features passing through at night and searched them at the security posts. Residents also refused to rent a room or give a job to migrant workers, whose ID cards indicated that they were from one of these two areas.<sup>202</sup>

The neighborhood leaders in Dukuh village, also acknowledged feeling unsafe because of the influx of migrants, who come with ‘bad intentions’ (*niat yang tidak baik*). One RT described his anxiety in terms of the changes brought about by rapid industrialization.<sup>203</sup> “When I was a young man, it used to be the case that if someone passed through our neighborhood, he introduced himself and his business before moving on. Now, all kinds of people can just pass through here and we have no idea who they are and what they are after.” He acknowledged that his residents are suspicious of migrants from particular areas and several incidents of vigilantism had occurred in the village. While these actions may be viewed by some as anarchic, he was at a loss for coming up with an alternative: “Now I ask you, as an educated person, if we should not take the law into our hands, what should we do?” he asked rhetorically.

The head of Sukanegara village in Cikupa (KH), also located next to Budimulya, had been even more forthcoming in his approval of vigilante violence against criminal migrants.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Interview # 2, Male, hamlet head, Dukuh, Cikupa, Tangerang District, April 20, 2017.

<sup>202</sup> Indeed, newspaper reports of lynching from Tangerang frequently and clearly mention the victim’s place of origin as Lampung, Palembang, Bima or Ambon.

<sup>203</sup> Interview # 12, Male, RT chief, Dukuh, Cikupa, Tangerang District, April 30, 2017.

<sup>204</sup> Interview # 14, Male, hamlet head, Sukanegara, Cikupa, Tangerang District, April 30, 2017.

Hesitant to discuss any specific incidents, he nevertheless acknowledged that he had instructed the neighborhood leaders to ‘just finish off’ (*habisi saja*) suspicious looking intruders. Indeed, a Lampungese migrant was beaten to death by the residents of Cikupa in 2012 after being accused of theft. In 2016, another migrant from Lampung was lynched to death after a resident suspected him of stealing a cell-phone. None of these cases led to an investigation or an arrest of the perpetrators. When asked if he is worried about wrongly targeting an innocent person in the process, KH did not think it was likely: “Why would a decent person be roaming around at night in other people’s areas, not able to explain his business? Then if we know he is from there [Lampung or South Sumatera], that just confirms our suspicion.” When asked about the police’s reaction to incidents of vigilantism, he said he did not particularly care about their thoughts on the matter because they do not appear to be doing anything to solve the issue from their end. However, he acknowledged that at the very least (*paling tidak*) the police are understanding about this and do not bother the residents when they “take care of their own problems.”

Given the broad acknowledgement of vigilantism in Cikupa during previous months, the caution displayed by the Budimulya village head seemed odd. However, I soon discovered the reason for his anxiety when I met an officer from the Criminal Investigation unit at the Cikupa *Polsek* (IP), who was in charge of processing this most recent case of lynching.<sup>205</sup> He narrated the same basic details of the case and confirmed that the RW chief had gathered the residents to catch and punish the thieves after his son had been injured. He also confirmed that the dead suspect was indeed a migrant from Bima and the search for his accomplice was still underway.

IP reported being under pressure to arrest the residents of Budimulya involved in the lynching. He explained that his superior officers at the *Polres* were worried about the case

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<sup>205</sup> Interview # 61, Male, Criminal Investigation (Reskrim), Cikupa Polsek, Tangerang District, April 20, 2017.

because of the media outrage caused by the lynching in Babelan just a month earlier. They feared that an incident so soon after could lead to a public scandal and bad publicity for the Tangerang police. While he understood these concerns, he insisted that the two cases were not similar. First, he argued that the deceased suspect was indeed a thief and the residents had even provided the police with the proof. Reaching into one of the drawers next to his table, he produced several metal tools, which he claimed were found on the body of the deceased. He explained that one of the tools was a T-key, commonly used by motorbike thieves to break into the engine. Second, he explained that unlike the Babelan lynching, the dead victim in this case was not from around the area, but a migrant from Bima.

IP did not want to spoil his good relations with the community by disturbing them over this incident. “The superiors (*atasan*) sit comfortably at their office at the *Polres*, only venturing out a few times a week. We, at the *Polsek*, live in the middle of this [and] have to deal with the residents every day. Why would I irritate them for such a small matter?” Given these considerations of maintaining good relations with the local communities, IP managed to assuage his superiors’ fears and persuaded them to adopt a wait-and-see approach. “I told them that we have investigated the incident and we have a list of all the residents who were involved in the lynching. The report is here in my drawer and if there is any trouble at all, I can file it immediately.”

In the end, IP’s wait-and-see approach paid off for the vigilantes. He had correctly guessed that given the identity of the victim and the nature of the crime, there would be little public discussion of the incident and no likelihood of a revenge attack. In a couple of days, the story disappeared from the newspapers and no arrests were made in connection with the

lynching. 10 days later, however, the Cikupa police arrested and charged the accomplice of the lynching victim, who had fled the scene that day.

*Punishing the wrong offense and revocation of impunity in Cikupa, Tangerang (Case # 16)*

In contrast to the impunity afforded by the police to the residents of Budimulya, vigilantes in the neighboring hamlet of Sukamulya, Cikupa were not so lucky in the aftermath of an incident of vigilantism that took place just three months later. On November 11<sup>th</sup> 2017, the residents raided the boarding room of a female factory worker, while she was being visited by her boyfriend from another hamlet. The mob, led by the RT chief of the area, forced open the door of the boarding room and accused the young couple of fornication. Inside the room, they intimidated the two youngsters and forced them to admit to committing sexually indecent acts. When the pair refused, the RT chief ordered the mob to drag them out of the room and strip them of their clothes. The man and the woman were dragged naked to the house of the RW chief, who ordered them to be punished with a beating to make an example out of them. After being beaten ruthlessly, the two were told to go home.

The couple's ordeal and the RT/RW's role in the violence was recorded on a cellphone video by one member of the mob. No doubt driven by the expectation of impunity that is common for vigilantes in Cikupa, the perpetrators began sharing the video among each other before it leaked to a media outlet. Indeed, the data shows that vigilantism is nothing new for the residents of Sukamulya hamlet. In 2005, two deadly lynchings were recorded in the hamlet, one involving a suspected motorbike thief and another of a man accused of stealing a chicken. In 2014, the residents attacked a visitor, who had come to watch a music event with his friend, after accusing him of insulting the village.

The video, which shows the young couple being stripped even as they beg for mercy, dragged against their will and beaten brutally was finally posted on Youtube and triggered a public outrage. Human rights groups, women's rights organizations and lawyers' association demanded swift action against the perpetrators. While the young woman was an orphan with no family to support her, a fact that no doubt emboldened the RT/RW leaders, the man's family publicly and vociferously demanded justice. Initially the woman was kept in protective custody to protect her from intimidation and threats from the perpetrators' families. The couple was married off after a few days' time and the woman was able to move in with the groom's family, away from Sukamulya. Within three days of the incident, the police arrested 6 men involved in the violence, including the RT and the RW chiefs, who have been sentenced to 5 years in prison.<sup>206</sup>

*Harsh punishment and revocation of impunity in Jakarta (Case ##)*

Public opinion can also turn against vigilantes when the severity of the punishment is seen as disproportionate to the alleged offense or the motives behind violence are political. In 2017, a 15-year old boy was accused of positing derogatory remarks on social media about the leader of the Islamic Defenders' Front (*Front Pembela Islam--FPI*) that has a self-declared agenda of "promoting righteousness and stopping vice" (*amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*).<sup>207</sup> After leading a blasphemy charge against Jakarta's Christian governor that eventually led to his defeat in a re-election, FPI's leader fled the country to dodge pornography charges.

The organization issued a 'warrant' against individuals who dared to ridicule its leader's flight on social media. When the teenager's post was deemed offensive, FPI members tracked

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<sup>206</sup> "Ketua RT yang Persekusi Dua Sejoli di Tangerang Divonis 5 Tahun Bui." liputan6.com, April 12, 2018. <https://www.liputan6.com/news/read/3448754/ketua-rt-yang-persekusi-dua-sejoli-di-tangerang-divonis-5-tahun-bui>.

<sup>207</sup> For a more detailed study of the FPI, see (I. D. Wilson 2015; Mudhoffir 2017).

him down. According to a video of the incident, they forced him to read an apology while striking him repeatedly on the head. The political affiliation of the perpetrators, the brazen nature of the assault and the age of the victim led to a public outrage. The two men seen beating the teenager in the video were swiftly charged with the assault of a minor. No such action was taken in the many other ‘raids’ by the FPI and other militias to regulate religious offense that were conducted around the same time (Jaffrey and Mulyartono 2017).

### ***Risk of escalation and revocation of impunity***

Apart from public opinion backlash, the police’s main motivation for revoking impunity for vigilantes is the risk of violence escalation. In most cases, the police takes legal action against the vigilantes if the victims’ relatives can pose a credible threat of counter-attack. Given Indonesia’s history with deadly communal violence, especially during the democratic transition, preventing the eruption of communal riots is a top security priority for the police. Indeed, officers’ careers depend on their ability to prevent such incidents or in the event that they occur, minimizing the impact and enforcing a ceasefire between belligerents.

As the comparison of cases from multiple locations across Indonesia will show, the police’s decision to preserve, deny and revoke impunity is heavily guided by their anticipation of violence escalation. Cases where police officers miscalculated the risk of violence are also discussed along the consequences of such mistakes, in order to highlight the police’s emphasis on preventing them.

### ***High risk of escalation and impunity denied in Pujut, Central Lombok (Case #19)***

As described in the description of the Lajut case (#7) in the previous section, street-level interaction between local police and residential leaders has created a widespread expectation of impunity for vigilante violence, making vigilantism rife across Central Lombok district. The

limits of this impunity were tested in 2012, when rumors about the presence of a child-kidnapping ring on the Island of Lombok, led to the lynching of five innocent victims in a single day.<sup>208</sup>

In October 2012, false information was circulated through an SMS that claimed to be sent on behalf of the West Nusa Tenggara Provincial Police (*Polda* NTB). The message warned that the kidnapping ring was collecting children's organs for sale. It further specified the kidnapers' features and vehicle registration information in a way that suggested they had come from outside Lombok. On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 5 victims were lynched in 4 incidents across different locations in Lombok after being accused of being child kidnapers. Not surprisingly, 4 of the 5 victims were migrants from Bima and Bali. All of them were innocent. In fact, the police had no record of child kidnapping having occurred in Lombok during that time.

In the Kuta village of Pujut subdistrict of Central Lombok, two victims were lynched in a single incident. They were herbal medicine sellers, who lived in a nearby village but had been well known in Kuta for several years. On the morning of the incident, the two men wheeled their carts into the village as usual. As they walked past an elementary school, they were stopped and questioned by some resident youngsters who were standing guard in front of the gate. The two were taken to a nearby café (*warung*) for an interrogation. From their names, it was clear that one of the men was ethnic Sasak (ie a local from Lombok) and the other was a migrant from the island of Bima. After being accused of trying to kidnap children in the school, the youngsters began to attack the two men. However, another resident who had witnessed the aggressive questioning of the two men alerted the officers at the *Polsek*, which was situated a 5-minute drive away. Two police officers arrived at the scene and evacuated the victims to the *Polsek*.

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<sup>208</sup> Liputan6.com. "Korban Amuk Massa di Lombok Menjadi Lima Orang." liputan6.com, October 23, 2012. <https://www.liputan6.com/news/read/446608/korban-amuk-massa-di-lombok-menjadi-lima-orang>.

One of the officers (WR), the *Bhabin* in charge of Kuta along with two other villages, described his decision to bring the two victims to the *Polsek* as a mistake that he regrets to this day.<sup>209</sup> He recalled that only four officers were on duty (*piket*) that morning and he was about to go home after just having finished his night shift, when they got the news that two vendors were being beaten by a mob (*dimassa*). WR was sent to deal with the incident with another officer. “There were 10 or 20 youngsters at the scene. We came in quickly on two bikes, pulled the victims onto the back (*bonceng*) and got out as quickly as we could,” he recalled.

Back at the *Polsek*, the officers thought it would be better to hold the two evacuees until things calm down. Within 30 minutes, however, a crowd of over 300 people gathered at the *Polsek*, demanding that the two suspects be handed over. The police tried to negotiate with the crowd, offering to note the complaints and assuring them of a legal process, but the mob kept growing. WR and his colleagues called for back-up from the nearby stations, but before the troops could arrive, the same group of youngsters they had confronted that morning climbed over the walls into the detention area where the two men were being held. The officer who was guarding the cell (LT) recalled seeing a frenzied attack.<sup>210</sup> One of the two victims was hacked with a machete and died within minutes. LT was stabbed in the neck but managed to escape. Afterwards, the mob dragged out the other victim into the courtyard and took turns beating him while the rest of the crowd cheered on. In the end, someone doused the victim with petrol and set him on fire, while he was still alive. “In retrospect, we should have driven them straight to the *Polres*.”, WR noted, speculating that the *Brimob* unit stationed at the *Polres* may have been better equipped to deal with a crowd that size.

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<sup>209</sup> Interview # 98, Male, Bhabinkamtibmas, Polsek Pujut, Central Lombok, August 1, 2017.

<sup>210</sup> Interview # 109, Male, Bhabinkamtibmas, Polsek Pujut, Central Lombok, July 29, 2017.

The village head of Kuta (KD) regretted the incident but insisted that the fear of the kidnappers was real: “It wasn’t just our people who were affected (*termakan*) by the rumor, other villages in the area also made the same mistake.”<sup>211</sup> He also acknowledged that like many other residents of the village, he too was the victims’ client and frequently bought herbal medicine from them. Even at the time he did not believe the accusations against them but was afraid to intervene in front of a crowd that was blind to reason (*kehilangan akal*).

In contrast, the brother of the victim (BM) who was burned alive, did not believe that the incident was purely the result of a mistake.<sup>212</sup> He reported that the lead perpetrator of the lynching had borrowed money from his brother and his business associate and accused him of child kidnapping to avoid paying it back. “The residents investigated him [my brother], they calmly checked his medicines and his ID at the *warung*. They had a problem with him,” BM argued. During the funeral, he said that several residents from Kuta came to express their regrets that they could not help the pair even though they knew they were innocent.

Apart from the two victims in Kuta, 3 other victims were lynched by mobs in other locations. Another migrant from Bima was dragged out of the Polsek in Kediri, West Lombok and beaten to death. In East Lombok, yet another migrant from Bima was apprehended and lynched in Jerowaru, while he was on his way to work. A Balinese man was beaten to death in Narmada, West Lombok, even as a police officer tried to disperse the mob.

This string of incidents in a single day and the attacks on police station drew the attention of the provincial police headquarters, who took charge of arresting the perpetrators. A senior police officer who led the investigation recalled that he was under immense pressure to swiftly arrest and charge the perpetrators because they received news that people in Bima and Bali

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<sup>211</sup> Interview # 99, village head Kuta, Pijut, Central Lombok, August 1, 2017.

<sup>212</sup> Interview # 81, brother of lynching victim, Bima City, August 5, 2017.

islands were mobilizing for revenge attacks against Sasak migrants from Lombok.<sup>213</sup> “If we did not process the perpetrators quickly, this could easily have turned into ethnic war (*perang suku*).” The situation was also massively embarrassing for the NTB police because the SMS was sent under their name and 4 out of 5 victims were lynched in police stations or in front of hapless police officers. Within two weeks, the *Polda* had charged 15 individuals for the violence from 4 different villages, along with the journalist who had started the false SMS. All of the accused were tried in court sessions that were open to the public and received prison sentences for their role in the violence under Article 170 (1) of the Criminal Code.

*Increasing risk of escalation and revocation of impunity in Sukadiri, Tangerang (Case #20)*

While police’s post-hoc efforts to withhold legal prosecution allowed the vigilantes in Budimulya village, Cikupa to get away with taking the law in their own hands, similar efforts did not result in lasting impunity for residents of Kosambi village in Sukadiri. On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017, residents of Kosambi village, Sukadiri, Tangerang District accused a young man from the neighboring village of Tegal Kunir, Mauk subdistrict, of stealing a cellphone. The residents of Kosambi apprehended the suspect and beat him to death. Previously, 4 incidents of vigilantism have been recorded in Sukadiri between 2005 and 2014, including three deadly lynchings of suspected thieves and child kidnappers.

According to friends and relatives of the victim, the police initially managed to convince the victim’s family that their son was caught stealing the cellphone and as a result was lynched by angry residents of Kosambi.<sup>214</sup> The family decided not to contest these charges in order to

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<sup>213</sup> Interview # 103, Criminal Investigation (*Reskrim*) at the Provincial Police Headquarters, Mataram, Central Lombok, July 31, 2017.

<sup>214</sup> Interview # 1, Male, residents of Tegal Kunir, Sukadiri, Tangerang District, April 18, 2017.

avoid embarrassment. They agreed not to file any charges and refused an autopsy to prepare for a burial the next day.

The family changed its position when a video of the lynching surfaced a few days later, showing the mob repeatedly dragging the victim in and out of the water while beating him. “It was very brutal the way they beat him,” recalled one relative (JN) who saw the video, which was posted by the attackers on Youtube.<sup>215</sup> In the video, the perpetrators could be seen repeatedly mentioning the name of the victim’s village, Tegal Kunir, suggesting that they had taken the time to investigate his identity before killing him. JN explained that the victim was actually accused of stealing the cellphone from a girl, whom he knew through a social media platform. They insisted that the victim had gone to Kosambi to visit her, not to steal. However, he had gone with a friend, who managed to escape the lynching and may have been the thief.

The video of the lynching convinced the family that contrary to what they had been told by the police, the killing was not a spontaneous response to a crime committed by their son. The lead perpetrator could be seen egging the others on by saying “He is the one from Tegal Kunir! Kill him!”. Given that their village had a long history of rivalry with Kosambi, the victims’ family and fellow villagers concluded that he had been killed because of his affiliation with Tegal Kunir. The family, along with the village leaders from Tegal Kunir, went to the Sukadiri Polsek to file a complaint. According to JN, the police dragged their feet on registering the case. Then, they did not make any arrests, even though the video clearly showed the people who were involved in the violence. Instead, the police kept negotiating with the victim’s family and village leaders to find a way around the legal system.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> It was later taken down on police orders.

<sup>216</sup> Hatmoko, Widi. “Video ‘Jambret HP’ Beredar Di Youtube, Warga Dua Desa Nyaris Bentrok.” MerahPutih, March 11, 2017. <https://merahputih.com/post/read/video-jambret-hp-beredar-di-youtube-warga-dua-desa-nyaris-bentrok>.

Frustrated with police inaction, residents of Tegal Kunir finally organized themselves to avenge the murder by attacking Kosambi. On March 12, armed with sticks and sickles, thousands of residents from Tegal Kunir marched towards Kosambi. The attack was successfully thwarted as the Tangerang *Polres* deployed 490 personnel, including troops from the elite Mobile Brigade unit (*Brimob*) that is usually reserved for high threat situations. The heavy police presence was reinforced up with an additional 600 soldiers from the Tangerang District Military Command (*Kodim*).<sup>217</sup>

On the one hand, the deployment of a large number of security personnel served well to protect the residents of Kosambi from an imminent revenge attack. On the other hand, the large-scale mobilization by residents of Tegal Kunir put pressure on the local police to revoke impunity previously granted to the vigilantes and start legal proceedings. On March 15<sup>th</sup>, the police exhumed the victim's body for an autopsy to start the investigation. On March 17<sup>th</sup> the district government brokered a peace agreement between the two villages, declaring the end of hostilities.<sup>218</sup> By November, the police had tracked down, and charged 8 people in connection with the lynching.<sup>219</sup>

*Revenge thwarted, and impunity preserved in Pondok Aren, South Tangerang (Case #10)*

While the risk of an imminent revenge attack can usually prompt the police to take legal action against vigilantes, the police also routinely use their authority to thwart possible revenge attacks from the victims' side, in order to preserve impunity. This was done successfully by the police in Pondok Karya hamlet, Pondok Aren, South Tangerang suburb of Jakarta.

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<sup>217</sup> master. "Kodim 0506/Tgr Lakuan Apel Gabungan Unras -." Accessed May 23, 2019. <https://korem052wk-tniad.mil.id/kodim0506/2017/03/12/kodim-0506tgr-lakuan-apel-gabungan-unras/>.

<sup>218</sup> Redaksi. "Warga Tegal Kunir Lor Dan Kosambi Deklarasi Damai | Tangerang Online." Accessed May 23, 2019. <https://tangerangonline.id/2017/03/17/warga-tegal-kunir-lor-dan-kosambi-deklarasi-damai/>.

<sup>219</sup> Relatives of the victim confirmed that the perpetrators from Kosambi were tried and sentenced to prison time in court. However, I could not find any media or court records of a trial or a court sentence.

On February 24<sup>th</sup> 2015, four men were apprehended by the residents of Pondok Karya, allegedly during the commission of motorbike theft. Three of the suspects managed to escape but one was chased down by the residents and burned alive on the main road. Vigilantism is quite common in Pondok Karya. The NVMS dataset shows that between 2005 and 2014, at least 21 incidents of violence have taken place in the area, including 4 deadly lynchings. There are no reports of charges filed against vigilantes in any of these cases.

The person (KM) who is generally acknowledged by the residents and leaders of Pondok Karya as ‘the one in charge of security’ is the son of the RT chief in the neighborhood where the lynching took place.<sup>220</sup> In his mid-30s, he had effectively taken over the tasks of the RT from his ailing father and appeared to maintain frequent communication with police officials.<sup>221</sup> KM was eager to explain that improving the security of the neighborhood was his top priority.<sup>222</sup> As such, he had formed a residential security task force by seeking volunteers from the neighborhood youth group (*Karang Taruna*). He claimed that his security program was so popular with the residents that they were happy to contribute monthly fees to fund incidental expenses of the volunteers. KM also explained in detail how he had set up security posts that allowed him to monitor the entry and exit of all visitors and catch intruders.

KM acknowledged that the 2015 lynching had taken place in the area but seemed hesitant to share any details, perhaps due to the publicity generated by the Babelan lynching just two months prior to the interview. Even so, he explained that the victim, whom he called the ‘thief’ (*begal*) was a hardened criminal and part of a violent gang. Even though his body had been

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<sup>220</sup> As reported in Interview# 68, hamlet head Pondok Karya, Pondok Aren, Tangerang, September 14, 2017 and Interview# 70, RW chief Pondok Karya, Pondok Aren, Tangerang, September 15, 2017

<sup>221</sup> On the phone. He apologized for having to take several calls during our conversation because they were from the ‘aparat’. He also seemed to know that I would be visiting him after he was told to expect a researcher by the police officer I had interviewed earlier at the *Polsek*.

<sup>222</sup> Interview # 71, Acting RT chief and head of hamlet security, Pondok Karya, Pondok Aren, Tangerang, September 17, 2017

burned badly during the lynching, he recalled that a tattoo on his arm had the name of an ethnic mass organization that is infamous for extortion. As final proof of the victim's guilt, KM explained that even after the incident, the residents had received mysterious letters from his criminal associates and relatives, threatening revenge attacks.

While all vigilantes insist on the 'criminal' background of their victims, I discovered that the victim of this particular case did really match the prevalent stereotype of a criminal figure, *begal*, when I went to visit his mother (KS). KS lives in a rented room with her two remaining sons, in Tangerang City.<sup>223</sup> After a divorce, she had raised her children as a single mother. KS acknowledged that her son was troubled and often hung out with rough boys. "He stopped living with us some time ago, so I can't say that I knew everything he was up to." Even so, she disputed the allegation that her son had been stealing that night. According to KS, her son was visiting an ex-girlfriend in Pondok Arya, when he got into a fight with her current boyfriend, who called his friends from the neighborhood and accused him of theft.

KS recalled that she had heard about the incident on the news but only found out it was her son after a few days when a relative called to say that he had seen a photo of the tattoo in the news. When she went to the *Polsek*, the officers told her that because her son was found stealing a bike and punished by the residents, it would be best if she accepted the situation (*ikhlas*). She identified the body at the police hospital but did not have the \$100 to pay for its release. It took her another day to collect donations from the neighbors and get the body released for a burial.

A week after the burial, KS was surprised by a visit from two officers of the Pondok Aren Polsek, who have no jurisdiction in Tangerang City, where she lives. They demanded to see her youngest son. He was not at home so, they interrogated her oldest son about his whereabouts in

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<sup>223</sup> Interview #74, Female, mother of a lynching victim, Larangan Utara, Tangerang City, September 25, 2017.

the past few days, where he worked and if he knows some of his deceased brothers' friends. KS claimed that the officers showed them Facebook messages that her youngest son had posted on his account, blaming the residents of Pondok Karya for his brother's death and warning them of imminent revenge. One of the officers told her that this was a criminal offense and her son could be arrested for threatening people in this way. He said that the residents had also been receiving threatening letters from her deceased son's friends, two of whom have already been arrested. KS quoted the officer saying that "Tell your son to behave himself. He is the brother of a thief (*begal*) and will soon end up like his brother if he doesn't stop this." When her son came back that evening, she made him delete his account and promise never to go to that area.

Even so, KS admitted that a few months after the incident, she went to Pondok Karya by herself. "I just wanted to see the place where he died," she explained. She had seen a video of the lynching and made several trips around the hamlet to try to identify the road but was unable to do so. She was afraid to ask around, so she kept taking different minivans (*angkot*) routes. Finally, the driver noticed that she seemed lost and asked her if she was looking for a specific place. She told him that her son was the *begal* who was burned alive. "He took pity on me and drove me to that spot, so I could pray for a few minutes," KS recalled. A few months later, two more victims were lynched in front of the Pondok Karya hamlet head's office, just a few meters away from where her son had been killed.<sup>224</sup>

*Miscalculating the risk of escalation leads to deadly consequences in Lampung (Cases #6 &17)*

Attempts to preserve impunity for vigilantes by dissuading the victims' from seeking legal reprisals can go wrong when the police miscalculate their ability to launch a revenge attack.

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<sup>224</sup> "Begal Motor Tewas Dikeroyok Warga di Pondok Aren," January 29, 2016. <https://mediaindonesia.com/read/detail/26536-begal-motor-tewas-dikeroyok-warga-di-pondok-aren>.

These mistakes can quickly result in spirals of ethnic violence as can be seen in the 2015 double-lynching incident in East Lampung.

On July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, two alleged motorbike thieves were lynched by the residents of Malangsari village, Tanjungsari subdistrict in South Lampung.<sup>225</sup> The victims were ethnic Lampungese residents of the nearby Batubadak village in Margasekampung subdistrict, East Lampung, while the majority of Malangsari residents are Javanese transmigrants. According to the investigative reports presented in court, a motorbike theft had been committed in Malangsari village a day prior to the incident. The culprit was never caught but the victim of the theft said that he had seen the two Lampungese men around the village that day. The next day when the two suspected men were passing through the village, they were suspected of being the thieves and mobbed. One of the victims died on the spot and the other was taken to the hospital by the police in critical condition.

While lynching is rife across Lampung, acts of vigilantism against members of a rival ethnic group carry the risk of rapid escalation into communal clashes.<sup>226</sup> Usually, the ethnic Lampungese, who tend to be economically marginalized, are accused of criminal activity and lynched by Balinese and Javanese transmigrant villages. However, the fear of violent reprisals from the Lampungese usually prevents vigilantism in villages such as Malangsari that are situated in close proximity to Lampungese villages and are vulnerable to counterattacks. This explains why, despite being located in the South Lampung district that exhibits the highest rate of lynching in the province, Malangsari has not experienced an act of vigilantism since 2005.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Haryanto, Andri. "Ricuh Di Lampung Timur, Petugas Desa Tewas Dianiaya Dan Mobil Polisi Dibakar." Detiknews, July 30, 2015. <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-2978884/ricuh-di-lampung-timur-petugas-desa-tewas-dianiaya-dan-mobil-polisi-dibakar>.

<sup>226</sup> For more on the history of ethnic conflict in Lampung see (Tajima 2014a; Cote 2014)

<sup>227</sup> A total of 139 vigilantism incidents, including 29 deadly lynchings have been recorded in South Lampung between 2005 and 2014.

This can be compared to the Mulyosari and Purorejo villages in the Pasir Sakti subdistrict of East Lampung that are surrounded by co-ethnic ‘buffers’ and routinely engage in vigilantism.<sup>228</sup>

Given the province’s history, the police was aware of the risk of escalation from the very beginning. The *Kapolres* of South Lampung along with the *Kapolsek* of Tanjungsari both attended the funeral of the deceased victim in Batubadak village and urged the community to remain calm during the investigation. On July 27<sup>th</sup>, a delegation of Lampungese leaders and village heads, including the village head of Batubadak visited the *Kapolsek* of Tanjungsari and inquired about the status of the investigation, which they were told was still ongoing. They informed the *Kapolsek* that a negative sentiment had been developing in their community, who were demanding revenge for the two victims. They also asked the *Kapolsek* to urge the leaders of Malangsari village to demonstrate their remorse at the violence and apologize to the victims’ families.

The next day, on July 28<sup>th</sup>, the *Kapolsek* of Tanjungsari invited a delegation of Javanese village heads in the area, including the village secretary (*sekdes*) of Malangsari, who was also the acting village head. The *Kapolsek* communicated the threat of revenge from the Lampungese delegation and suggested that leaders from Malangsari visit the victims’ home, offer their regrets and deliver compensation (*santunan*). He offered to lead the delegation himself and the Malangsari officials agreed to visit Batubadak that evening. When the *Kapolsek* of Margasekampung was informed of this plan, he advised against the visit as the situation in the village was still tensed. The Batubadak village head also requested that the visit be delayed because the situation was not conducive and he was not the area to receive the delegation.

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<sup>228</sup> Proximity to Lampungese villages as a consideration for vigilantism was explained by the officials of Mulyosari village (Interview # 126, Mulyosari, Pasirsakti, East Lampung, August 19, 2017) as well as the Bhabinkamtibmas (Interview # 127, Purworejo, Mulyosari, Pasirsakti, East Lampung, August 19, 2017)

Eager to resolve the matter with compensation to prevent legal action against Malangsari residents and prevent revenge attacks, The Tanjungsari *Kapolsek* pressed on with the visit, leading the Malangsari delegation, escorted by officers from the Tanjungsari Polsek. They were received calmly by the family of the deceased victim. After a prayer session, the *Kapolsek* was making a speech when a crowd gathered around the house. Moments later, the lights were turned off and the crowd began throwing glass and stones at the delegation. The group sought refuge inside the house and called for help but the crowd kept growing outside, demanding that the leaders from Malangsari be handed over as “the loss of a life must be paid with another life.”<sup>229</sup>

After being holed up for hours, as the group tried to escape and meet with the police patrol that had arrived to evacuate them, the crowd attacked and caught Malangsari’s *sekdes*. According to eyewitness testimonies presented in court, a small group of people chased the *sekdes* and began beating him with sticks and machetes. One of the perpetrators instructed the others: “make sure he isn’t police.” Another perpetrator examined his face and confirmed that it was the *sekdes*, not the police. The victim was beaten to death with a stone. The *Kapolsek*, his officers and other members of the delegation were also injured in the attack but managed to escape.

Officers involved in managing the aftermath of the case acknowledged that the Tanjungsari *Kapolsek* had made a series of grave errors.<sup>230</sup> Not only did he fail to take swift action against perpetrators in the first incident, he foolishly led the Javanese leaders into the Lampungese village for reconciliation, where the second incident took place. One investigating officer explained that prior to the delegation’s visit, someone from Malangsari had sent a video

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<sup>229</sup> “nyawa dibayar nyawa”

<sup>230</sup> Interview #130, Community Guidance Unit, Polsek Margasekampung, East Lampung. August 30, 2017.

of the lynching to the victim's family.<sup>231</sup> It showed that the *skedes* led the lynching of the two Lampungese men. The *Kapolsek* was later demoted and transferred to a desk job at the national headquarters (*Mabes*).

The incident not only caused massive embarrassment for the police, it also presented the risk of further escalation. The investigation officer explained that after the secretary's killing, Javanese villages in the area were rallying for a revenge attack while the Lampungese were mobilizing in anticipation. 500 combined military and police troops were deployed in the area in anticipation of more violence.<sup>232</sup> Moreover, because the slain *sekdes*' son served in the police's *Brimob* unit, his fellow officers were also threatening to "clear [sikat] the Lampungese village". "We were under tremendous pressure to find the killers [of the secretary]. Everyone feared a repeat of Bali Nuraga", he recalled, referring to the ethnic riots that took place in South Lampung in 2012 between the Lampungese and Balinese transmigrants. Triggered by a similar incident of vigilantism, these riots led to at least 12 deaths and major destruction.<sup>233</sup> This assessment was noted in the police's confidential memo (*Informasi Khusus*) that was circulated at the time. It predicted imminent attacks on Lampungese villages in the area by transmigrant villages and emphasized the need for swift arrest of perpetrators in Batubadak.

The investigating officer explained that eventually everyone held back because the provincial police chief (*Kapolda*) took charge and offered a personal guarantee that every killer will be brought to justice. Indeed, a national manhunt was launched to arrest the secretary's

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<sup>231</sup> Interview #130, Intelligence Unit (Kanit Intel), Polsek Margasekampung, East Lampung. August 30, 2017.

<sup>232</sup> Admin. "Begal Dibunuh, Sekdes Tewas Dimassa, 500 TNI-Polri Lampung Siaga." LAMPUNGONLINE.CO.ID (blog), July 29, 2015. <https://www.lampungonline.co.id/2015/07/begal-dibunuh-sekdes-tewas-dimassa-500.html>.

<sup>233</sup> Muliarta. "Ormas Bali Lakukan Aksi Menyusul Bentrokan Warga di Lampung." VOA Indonesia, October 31, 2012. <https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/ormas-bali-lakukan-aksi-menyusul-bentrokan-warga-di-lampung/1536448.html>.

killers, some of whom had fled the province. Finally, nine people were arrested, charged and received maximum sentences under Article 170(1) of the Criminal Code. In contrast, the lynching of the two Lampungese men was never investigated.

### **6.3 How does the expectation of impunity encourage vigilantism?**

Case studies presented in the previous sections show the pathways for obtaining impunity that are available to vigilantes in Indonesia. The analysis shows that state agents may signal impunity from legal prosecution prior to an act of violence or decide to withhold legal action against vigilantes after an incident has already taken place. State agents also play a critical role in protecting vigilantes from revenge attacks from their victims' families, effectively making it 'safer' for them to engage in violence. However, the impunity for extra-legal violence offered by state agents is selective as it is based on considerations of public opinion backlash as well as the risk of violence escalation.

These conclusions, based on qualitative case studies suggest that while vigilantes do not need a *guarantee* of impunity to engage in violence, there does need to be an *expectation* of impunity for the systematic use of extra-legal violence to punish perceived offenses. In this section, I test the generalizability of these conclusions, derived from a small set of cases, on large-N data from hamlets and neighborhoods in Indonesia's capital city, Jakarta.

#### **6.3.1 Signaling and proximity of street-level police**

The claim that vigilantes act based on an expectation of impunity implies the presence of a signaling mechanism through which communities can judge the likelihood of getting away with extra-legal violence. It is not possible for vigilantes to seek ex-ante indication of impunity directly from a state-agent before engaging in every single act of violence. The case studies show that in a majority of cases, vigilantes rely on their ability to get post-hoc impunity from state

agents, who can withhold legal prosecution against them and protect them from revenge attacks. Moreover, given that impunity can be revoked in individual incidents, communities' expectation of impunity would be based not solely on the verbal promises of state-agents but on their track record. In other words, my theory implies that *vigilantes' expectation of impunity in the future should be based on the state-agents' history of providing impunity to others around them*. This claim can be disaggregated into two sets of testable hypotheses.

First, we can test the possibility that the expectation of vigilantism is simply a function of the vigilantes' own past behavior or the behavior of other vigilantes around them:

**H1:** A community is more likely to engage in vigilante violence if it has engaged in vigilantism in the past.

**H2:** A community is more likely to engage in vigilante violence if other communities in the area are engaging in vigilantism.

Second, in line with my theory that makes impunity for extralegal violence contingent on state presence, we can test the possibility that expectation of impunity derives from past behavior in the presence of street-level police:

**H3:** A community is more likely to engage in vigilante violence if it has engaged in vigilantism in the past and has street-level police presence.

**H4:** A community is more likely to engage in vigilante violence if other communities in the area are engaging in vigilantism despite the presence of street-level police.

I test these claims by analyzing a hamlet-level panel dataset on vigilante violence from the Greater Jakarta Area between 2005 and 2014.<sup>234</sup> The NVMS dataset records the location of incidents of violence only up to the subdistrict level. In order to obtain a higher level of granularity, I worked with a team of coders to code the GIS location of the 4,730 incidents of

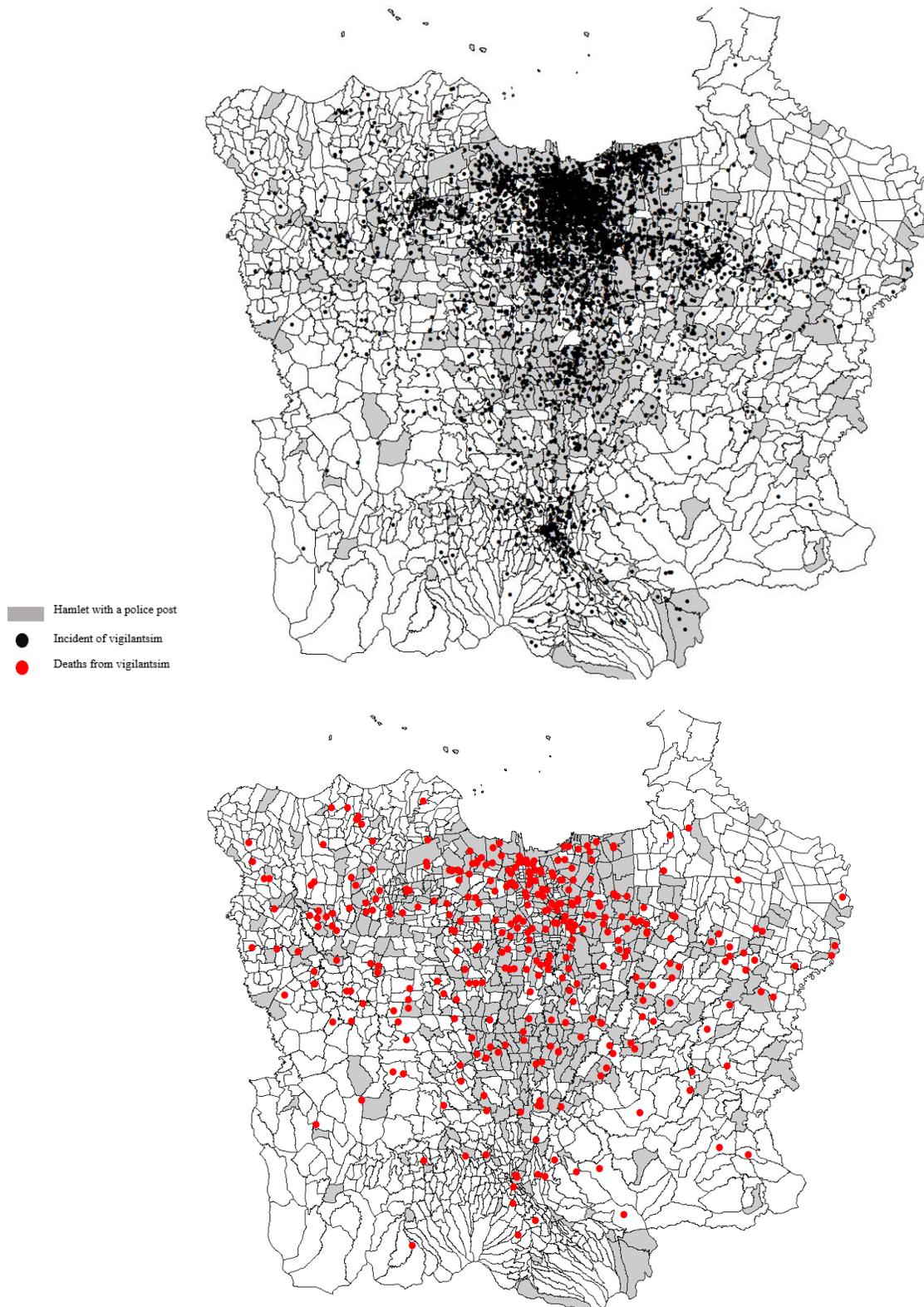
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<sup>234</sup> This refers to the Jabodetabek area, which includes the Capital Region of Jakarta (DKI), Tangerang District, Tangerang City, South Tangerang City, Depok, Bekasi District, Bekasi City, Bogor District and Bogor City.

vigilantism in the Greater Jakarta Area that occurred between 2004 and 2014. I superimposed the administrative map of the area over these incidents to be able to calculate the number of incidents that took place in each of the 1,499 hamlets over the ten-year period. I further disaggregated this data into a panel that records changing levels of vigilantism across hamlets, every 2-years between 2005-2014. This yields a total of 7,485 hamlet-biennial observations. I identified the hamlets in the panel data that had an active police post in 2011 based on the PODES data (described in Chapter 5).

Figure 5.1 presents the time-invariant hamlet-level map of the Greater Jakarta area with the distribution of police posts and vigilante violence. On both of the maps, the grey shaded hamlets are those with an active police post. On the top map, black dots represent the incidents of vigilantism that took place in the area between 2005 and 2014, while the red dots on the bottom map represent deaths from vigilantism during the same period. The hamlet-level distribution of vigilantism displayed on these maps shows violence is concentrated in hamlets with a police-post, supporting the findings from district-level analysis presented in Chapter 5.

**Figure 6.1: Vigilantism and police presence across Greater Jakarta (2005-2014)**



Because my theory calls for testing the effect of past and surrounding vigilantism on the likelihood that a community will engage in vigilante violence, I transformed the panel of hamlet-year observations into a binary variable “Incidence of Vigilantism” such that the value of ‘0’ indicates that communities in a hamlet did not engage in vigilante violence in a given time-period, while the value of ‘1’ denotes that the communities in the hamlet did engage in vigilante violence at least once in that time-period. The variable “Police Post” takes the value 1 if the hamlet has a police post and “0” if it does not.

In order to test whether the likelihood of vigilante violence in a given hamlet is influenced by vigilantism in its surrounding areas, I constructed the variable “Vigilante Neighbor”. For each of the 7,485 hamlet-year observations in the panel, this variable takes a value of ‘1’ if any of the adjacent hamlets experienced at least one incident of vigilantism in that time period; and takes the value ‘0’ if none of the adjacent hamlets experienced an incident of vigilantism in the same period. Finally, I construct a count variable “Neighboring Police Presence”. For each of the 7,485 hamlet-year observations, this variable counts the number of adjacent hamlets with a police post. Summary statistics for this panel are presented in Table 5.1.

**Table 6.1: Summary statistics**

	# Observations	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Frequency
<b>Dependent variable</b>						
Incidence of Vigilantism	7,482	0.2615611	0.4395142	0	1	Biennial
<b>Explanatory variables</b>						
Incidence of Vigilantism (Lagged)	7,484	0.2616248	0.4395487	0	1	Biennial
Vigilante Neighbor	7,482	0.5932906	0.4912526	0	1	Biennial
Police Presence Index	7,485	0.650869	0.6616035	0	2	2011

I use a simple logit model to estimate the effect of past and surrounding vigilantism on the likelihood of vigilantism in a hamlet. The dependent variable in this estimation is the binary variable “Incidence of Vigilantism”. The results are presented in Table 5.2. The analysis does not provide support for H1 and H3 as it shows that in a given hamlet, the incidence of vigilantism in the past, has no statistically significant effect on the likelihood of vigilantism in the future. Even when the model is estimated separately in hamlets that have a police post and those that do not, past experience of vigilantism does not seem to affect future likelihood of violence.

The results do, however, provide support for H2 and H4. First, the analysis shows that having a vigilante neighbor increases the likelihood that a community will engage in vigilante violence. Specifically, the odds ratio of experiencing an incident of vigilantism is 8.86 times higher in a hamlet that is adjacent to another hamlet that has experienced at least one incident of vigilantism. Moreover, the estimates show that the magnitude of the contagion effect of a vigilante neighbor is conditional on the presence of a police post in the adjacent district. When neighboring hamlet engages in vigilantism in the absence of a police post, the odds ratio of vigilantism in the adjacent hamlet is 1.98 times higher compared to a hamlet that does not have a vigilante neighbor. However, the odds ratio of vigilantism in a given hamlet are 4.16 times higher if the neighboring hamlet experience vigilantism in the presence of the police post.

**Table 6.2 Results of the main estimation**

	H1	H3		H2	H4	
DV: Incidence of Vigilantism (0,1)	Odds ratio in all hamlets	Odds ratio in hamlets with no police posts	Odds ratio in hamlets with a police post	Odds ratio in all hamlets	Odds ratio in hamlets with no neighboring police posts	Odds ratio in hamlets with at least one neighboring police post
Units: Hamlet-Year						
Incidence of Vigilantism (0,1) with a 2-year lag	0.916 (-0.0554)	0.927 (-0.0816)	0.94 (-0.0882)			
Vigilante Neighbor (0,1)				8.867*** -0.693	1.978*** -0.363	4.163*** -0.674
chi2	2.122	0.741	0.431	1130.1	13.39	87.06
N	7484	5059	2425	7485	2080	1770

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

These results support my claim that increased police presence in Indonesia generates impunity for vigilantism. They show that the expectation of impunity and thus the likelihood of violence is higher in a hamlet when surrounding communities engage in violence, despite police presence, not in its absence.

In order to further explore how variation in the level of police presence conditions the ‘signal’ of impunity from vigilante neighbors, I created a composite measure “Police Presence Index.” For each hamlet, this simple index measures whether or not a hamlet itself has a police post and the fraction of adjacent hamlets that have a police post to provide a continuous measure of police presence (Equation 1). As indicated in Figure 5.2, the minimum value of the index is ‘0’ indicating that the hamlet itself does not have a police post and none of its adjacent neighbors have one either. The maximum value is ‘2’, which is assigned when a hamlet has a police post and each of its adjacent hamlets also has a police post.

**Equation 1 Estimation of Police Presence Index (PPI)**

$$PPI = (\text{Police Post in Hamlet } (0,1)) + \left( \frac{\text{Total number of adjacent hamlets with a police post}}{\text{Total number of adjacent hamlets}} \right)$$

**Figure 6.2: Estimation of Police Presence Index**



I re-estimate the effect of past experience with vigilantism and vigilante neighbors on the likelihood that a community will engage in vigilante violence by including the Police Presence Index as a dependent variable. The results are presented in Table 5.3. First, the analysis shows that past experience with vigilantism does not affect the future likelihood of vigilantism in a hamlet, even when controlling for varying level of police presence. Consistent with the results of district-level analysis presented in Chapter 5, however, increasing level of local police presence in and around a hamlet is associated with a higher likelihood that communities in that hamlet will engage in vigilantism.

Why is past experience with vigilantism not a significant predictor of vigilantism in the future? Several substantive and empirical issues could be generating this finding. It is possible that the past does affect the future likelihood of violence but not on a year-year basis but in a cumulative sense. It could also be that the effect of past vigilantism and the expectation of impunity is short-lived but the panel being analyzed in this estimation is biennial. The possibility of short-term expectation of impunity can be explored further by creating a panel with shorter time periods.

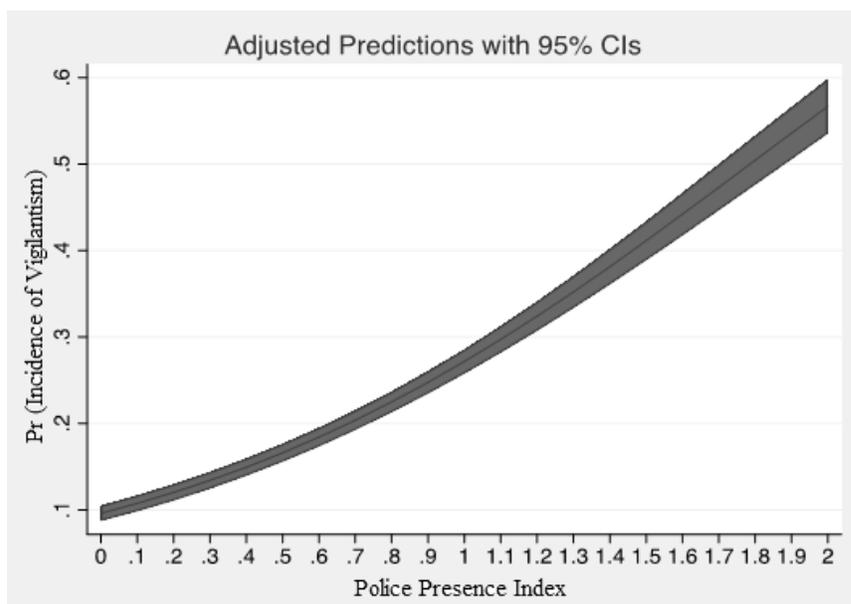
Second, the results in Table 5.3 provide further support to the claim that the signal of impunity, based on a neighboring hamlet’s engagement in vigilantism is conditional on local police presence. Controlling for varying levels of police presence in and around a hamlet, the results show that the presence of a vigilante neighbor increases the odds ratio of vigilantism in an adjacent hamlet by 4.6 times. Furthermore, Figure 5.3 shows that the marginal effect of a vigilante neighbor on the likelihood of vigilantism increases with the increasing police presence.

**Table 6.3 Re-estimation of main results with Police Presence Index**

<b>DV: Incidence of Vigilantism</b>	<b>Odds ratio in all hamlets</b>	<b>Odds ratio in all hamlets</b>
Units: Hamlet-Year		
Incidence of Vigilantism (0,1) with a 2-year lag	0.944 -0.0657	
Police presence index	4.877*** -0.216	3.507*** -0.166
Vigilante Neighbor (0,1)		4.607*** -0.383
chi2	1502.9	1904.1
N	7484	7485

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

**Figure 6.3 Conditional effect of a vigilante neighbor on the likelihood of vigilantism**



### 6.3.2 Expectation of impunity linked to residential structures

Apart from claiming that impunity for vigilantism in Indonesia is conditional on the presence of street-level police, my theory also posits that impunity for vigilantism is generated through the interaction between police and neighborhood leaders. Existing explanations of vigilantism emphasize anonymity in a crowd as a factor that makes people feel safe while taking the law into their own hands. In contrast, my theory implies that because vigilantes fear legal reprisals and revenge attacks, they are more likely to engage in violence in a setting where they are known and their leaders have the necessary familiarity with street-level police to be able to protect them. As such, in Indonesia the expectation of impunity and thus the likelihood of vigilantism should not be randomly distributed but linked to the residential structures.

I explore this claim by examining the distribution of vigilantism in Jakarta across different types of land-use zones. Every few years Jakarta's planning commission issues a map of the city, divided into plots (*kavling*) that are classified by their usage status. These classifications differentiate between residential areas, commercial spaces, industrial zones, public

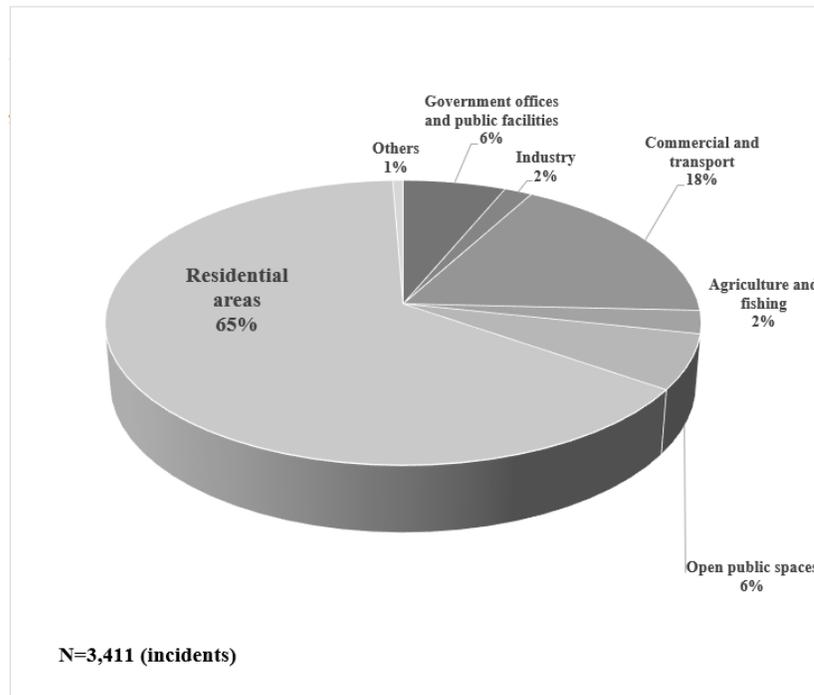
facilities, government offices and transport hubs. I superimposed Jakarta's 2013 zoning map on the 3,441 GIS coded incidents of vigilantism in Jakarta City that took place between 2005 and 2014.<sup>235</sup> By combining the two layers of data, I was able to determine the zone in which each incident took place.

The distribution of vigilantism across zone classification is shown in Figure 5.4. The breakdown shows that nearly two-thirds of all incidents of vigilantism in Jakarta have taken place in residential areas, where perpetrators are known not only to each other, but also to the neighborhood leaders who can protect them from the consequences of engaging in violence. In contrast, less than one fifth of the incidents took place in busy commercial and transport hubs that experience high levels of opportunistic crime. Unlike residential areas, these spaces are full of passerbys. Clients, passengers and vendors etc are usually in transit and do not know each other well. As such, they provide anonymity to those who come across a suspected thief or a heckler and want to punish him with violence. On the other hand, commercial and transport hubs also do not have the RT/RW system that is critical for protecting vigilantes from the consequences of engaging in violence. This diminishes the expectation of impunity and reduces the likelihood of vigilantism outside of residential areas.

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<sup>235</sup> This analysis could only be performed on the Jakarta City, not the Greater Jakarta Area, as the zoning maps for surrounding areas did not have the same level of granularity as the map issued by the Jakarta government.

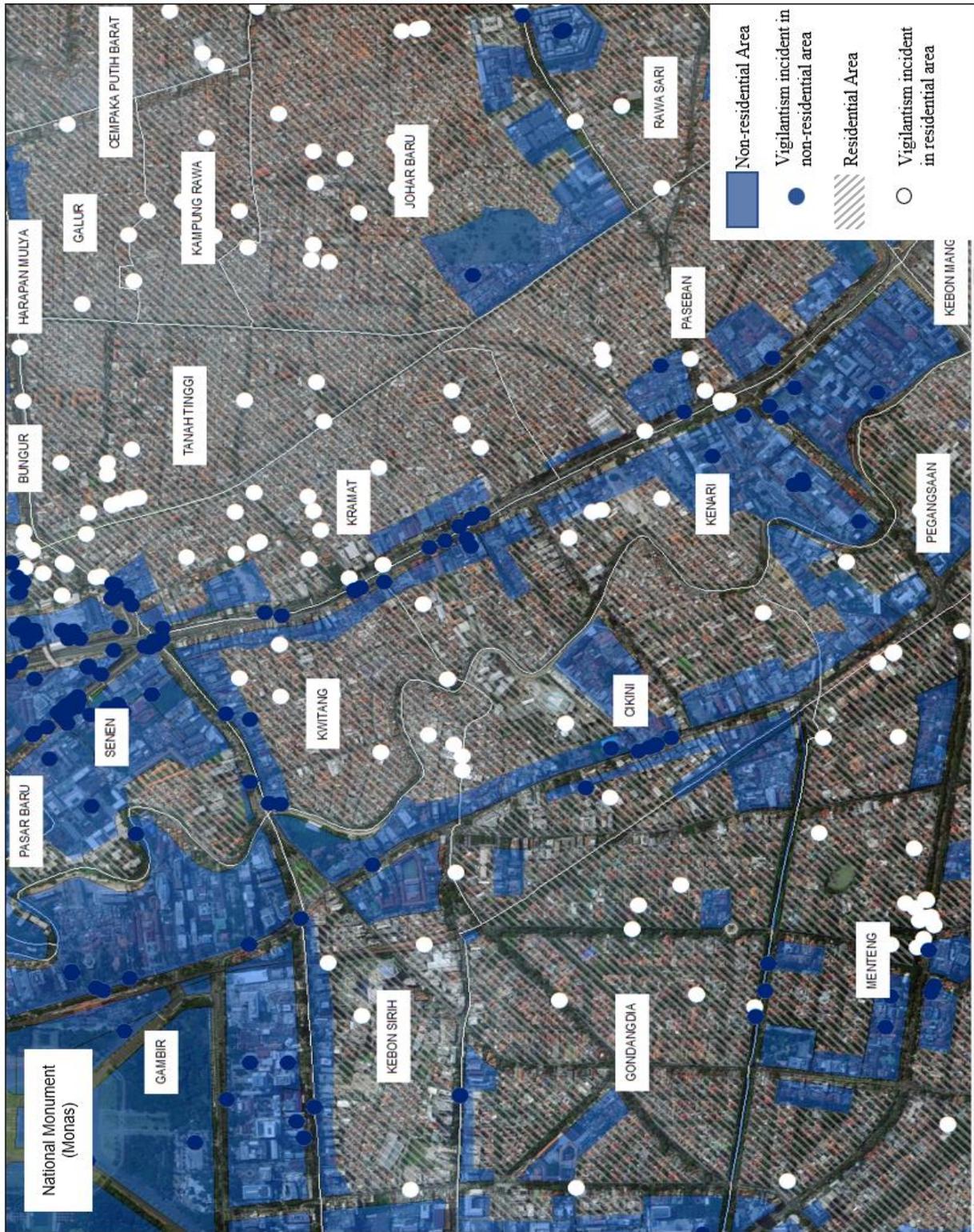
**Figure 6.4: Sites of vigilantism in Jakarta by land-use classification (2004-2013)**



Source: NVMS Dataset and the 2013 DKI Jakarta Zoning Map

Figure 5.5 shows the distribution of vigilantism in a section of Central Jakarta District based on land-use classification. It shows that incidents are mostly concentrated within residential areas. Even when incidents of vigilantism do not take place within a residential area, they are always close to it, on main roads or the commercial strips that buffer residential areas from main roads. In order to check this proximity, I estimated the average distance of an incident of vigilantism in non-residential zones to the nearest residential zone. Out of a sample of 3,441 incidents, 2,228 incidents took place within residential areas, while 1,213 incidents took place in non-residential areas. For each incident that took place in a non-residential area, I calculated its distance from the nearest residential zone. I found that on average, these incidents were located less than 186 meters from a residential zone. This proximity makes sense when we consider that most incidents of vigilantism involve a chase during which victims try to escape the area by running or driving towards a public road, where they are often caught and beaten.

Figure 6.5: Distribution of vigilantism in Central Jakarta (2005-2014)



## **6.4 Calibration of order through street-level interactions**

This chapter shows that impunity is the mechanism that links the increasing presence of local police in Indonesia with high levels of vigilantism. The incentives for this impunity and its limits derive from street-level interaction between local police and residential leaders. The police are under pressure to earn the goodwill of the communities but not able to do so through improvements in public service delivery. As such, they provide impunity for vigilantism as a form of private service to citizens, in order to keep their cooperation for combating high priority security threats. Evidence from case-studies of vigilantism collected during 14 months of fieldwork is presented to show how considerations of public backlash and the risk of violence escalation shape the police's decision to deny, preserve or revoke impunity for vigilantism. These quotidian decisions, based on street-level interactions, determine the acceptable boundaries of violence and calibrate the level of disorder in society.

Finally, the quantitative analysis presented in this chapter provides support for two of my claims about the nature of impunity. First, it shows that expectation of impunity is contingent on police presence. In other words, the presence of local police can make the vigilantes feel safe. The analysis of 7,485 hamlet-year observations shows that the likelihood of vigilantism in a given hamlet is determined by signals of impunity, generated by vigilantism in nearby areas amid high police presence. Second, the analysis also shows that this expectation of impunity is produced as the result of interaction between police and neighborhood leaders and does not travel well to commercial or other public spaces. Neighborhood-level data presented in this chapter supports this proposed link and shows that vigilantism is mostly concentrated in residential areas, where vigilantes are known to each other and to the leaders, who can protect them.

### **Part 3: Conclusion**

## **7. Conclusion**

### **7.1 Weapons of the weak or a strategy for dominance?**

This dissertation describes vigilantism as a template for coercion and identifies the institutional infrastructure that is necessary for its rapid replication to punish an expanding range of criminal, social, moral and religious offenses. In doing so, my research highlights new dimensions of vigilantism that can help us understand why, across the developing world, vigilantism has evolved from society's way of occasionally bypassing the state into a popular coercive force that seeks to alter it.

First, I challenge the popular depiction of vigilantism as the spontaneous response of disgruntled citizens, who have no other recourse. While vigilantes are generally frustrated with inadequate provision of order by the state, they are also deeply afraid of legal prosecution and revenge attacks from their victims. The fear of consequences makes them cautious about when, where, what, whom and how much to punish. This is why non-violent alternatives to vigilantism, such as arbitration and social sanctions, are far more widely practiced forms of informal justice by citizens who seek to avoid the formal law-enforcement system. As such, my research shows that the use of collective violence in response to a transgression is neither requisite nor is it spontaneous.

When vigilante violence is used by communities, it is preceded by a deliberative process, in which community leaders play an important role in assessing the risks attached with lynching a particular victim for a specific transgression. The purpose of this process is to reduce the uncertainty about the possible future consequences of their actions: Will punishing this particular offense draw scrutiny from a higher authority? Does the identity of the victim suggest that his family may be

influential enough to file legal charges? Can his co-ethnics launch a counter-attack? Can someone offer protection if they do?

Existing scholarship and recent commentary on vigilantism have largely ignored this quality about vigilantes, depicting them in one of two ways. One set of observers describe vigilantes as indignant citizens, who find safety in numbers and their moral claims about asserting popular sovereignty shield them from any social or legal backlash. A second set of observers portray them as agents of powerful political organizations, who have already achieved dominance such that they do not fear consequences while executing orders from above.

I contend that neither of these accounts accurately capture the uncertainty and risk that vigilantes must navigate. Unlike inter-personal violence that is committed in private, vigilantism is essentially a public act of violence that has many witnesses. It is also a highly contentious act that breeds disagreements and conflict both within and among communities. In median capacity states with functioning legal systems, this contention can result in legal action against vigilantes. At the very least, it can trigger violent counter-attacks against vigilantes from those who disagree with their actions or have been wronged by them.

The widespread practice of vigilantism in a community against an expanding set of targets indicates that vigilantes have found someone to underwrite the risk of engaging in violence. Thus, instead of denying vigilantes' need for protection or assuming that they already have it, this research has sought to explain the factors that make it possible for communities to punish perceived transgressions by reducing the uncertainty about the consequences of violence and act with a reasonable expectation of impunity.

Second, I show that vigilantes draw on the state's strength to protect them from the consequences of lynching. A long-standing view in the study of vigilantism is that vigilantes substitute for a weak state. This is also a commonly held belief in policy circles and among

citizens, who bemoan the state's absence to explain why people take the law into their own hands. To some extent, this is true. Dissatisfaction with law-enforcement does provide strong motivation for vigilantes. This can be due to inadequate resources available to the state, lack of cohesive institutions or even discriminatory policies that leave certain areas or populations without access to formal justice. Ironically, however, in order to *act* on these motivations in a systematic and routine fashion, vigilantes need the state to be strong enough and accessible enough to protect them from legal and social reprisals. Specifically, I show that the presence of local police is necessary for credibly withholding legal prosecution and thwarting revenge attacks against vigilantes by persuading, intimidating or physically blocking their victims.

My theory implies that for vigilantism to become rife, state has to be weak enough to breed dissatisfaction among citizens but strong enough to be able to mitigate the consequences that vigilantes fear most. This dual effect of state capacity may be the reason why vigilantism has become an increasingly prominent feature of political life in median income countries that exhibit this combination of weakness and strength. This is especially true of developing countries that start off with weak law-enforcement systems that come to be widely distrusted. However, with economic progress and political development, the state expands its reach into society and builds its capacity. Under certain institutional settings, described in terms of state's dependence on civil society's coercive functions, citizens may be able to leverage the state's improved strength to protect them from the consequences of engaging in vigilante violence.

Finally, while most studies of vigilantism see it as a reactive phenomenon, this study has sought to emphasize its transformative properties. In both scholarly and popular discourses about vigilantism, popular justice is seen as the citizens' reaction to an existing set of conditions. For example, lynching of criminals is often described as the public's reaction to the inadequacies of

law or its enforcement amid rising levels of crime. Alternatively, we often hear vigilantism against ethnic minorities described as public's reaction to a false rumor in the context of rising intolerance. While it is true that individual acts of vigilantism are committed in reaction to these kinds of stimuli, cumulatively vigilantism produces a transformative effect on both the law and society.

Unlike rioters and gangsters who seek to displace or eliminate their rivals, vigilantism works by punishing individual infractions of order and cowing others into submission. This makes vigilantism a far more efficient strategy for establishing social dominance. It is not the vigilantes' goal to eliminate members of another group. Instead, by setting boundaries of acceptable behavior and demonstrating the high costs of crossing them, vigilantes can get their rivals to self-regulate their behavior and submit to a dominant social order.

The social legitimacy attached to vigilantism and claims of exercising popular sovereignty also make it an effective form of violent lobbying. This can have a transformative effect on the state in two ways. One, by threatening to take violent action against certain kinds of offenders, vigilantes can provoke state agents to undertake harsher enforcement of existing laws. This phenomenon is most visible in the recent enforcement of previously dormant blasphemy laws in countries like Bangladesh and Indonesia, where vigilantes have systematically targeted atheist and minority religious groups to seek stricter regulation of religious offense by the state. Another set of changes vigilantism can bring about is the expansion of the state's purview into previously ungoverned domains. Vigilante action or the anticipation of vigilante violence has been the driving force behind the recent spate of efforts to criminalize sexual 'deviance' across developing countries that have historically been tolerant of alternative sexualities and preferences.

## **7.2 Institutional infrastructure that generates vigilantism**

The rise and entrenchment of vigilante violence in political life has emerged as a global phenomenon over the past two decades. While it was not uncommon to read about a lynching in the remote village once in a while, increasingly frequent reports of lynching and mob violence are now coming from major urban centers across countries that have very different social, political and institutional features. Moreover, the kinds of offenses that are being punished by vigilantes vary widely both within and across these countries.

On the one hand we have post authoritarian regimes where vigilantism has become rife. The trends and patterns of vigilantism in Indonesia have been discussed at length in this dissertation, most notably the increase in both frequency of vigilantism as well as the expansion of the scope of offenses that it seeks to punish. Similar trends have been observed in other new democracies: Pakistan and Bangladesh for religious offense; Philippines, Brazil, Mexico, and South Africa against criminals and criminal organizations; and violence against LGBT in Ghana and Kenya. On the other hand, vigilantism is also being used to dominate religious minorities and marginalized castes in a long-standing democracy like India.

This disturbing rise of vigilantism has generated much concern among academics and policy-makers alike. Indeed, attempts to manage this particular form of collective violence are met with a unique set of challenges.

First, vigilantes' claims about exercising popular sovereignty generate a level of social legitimacy for their acts. This is especially the case in democratic settings, where claims about citizens' demands from and rights on the state find much more resonance with the general public. Thus, when a 'majority of citizens' claim to 'exercise their right' to refuse the presence of an

offensive group (e.g heretic sect or LGBT) in ‘their area’, it is often portrayed as a democratic demand, achieved through direct popular action.

Second, the popular portrayal of vigilantism as acts of blind rage seriously impedes efforts to devise effective preventative policies. Other forms of collective violence such as riots, electoral clashes and insurgent violence have clearly identifiable goals. However, vigilantism is usually portrayed as an act of cruelty or collective frustration. This problem is most visible in the discussion of lynchings that result from the spread of misinformation on social media. Following a string of “Whatsapp lynchings” in India and much earlier in Indonesia, almost all policy discussions revolved around finding mechanisms for curbing the virality of misinformation. There is no doubt that these measures are needed during emergency response. However, only focusing on the online information flow ignores the off-line processes that generate collective violence.

Scholars and commentators tend to explain this recent, global rise of vigilantism by focusing on factors that stoke fear among citizens, prompting them to react with violence. Chief among them is the rise of populist politicians, who often gain support by defining a public “enemy” that poses an imminent threat to the nation. By defining a common enemy and constantly stressing the need to eliminate it, populist leaders can prompt their supporters to engage in vigilantism by identifying such enemies among them and punishing them with violence. This can be seen in the Philippines, where Duterte’s rise to power is linked to his extraordinary ability to fan public fears about the threat from narcotic gangs. In India, the string of cow vigilantism incidents is also linked to the rise of Modi’s Hindu nationalist Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) that has openly campaigned on the threat from ‘Muslim invaders’. In Indonesia, the campaign to defeat Jakarta’s Christian Chinese Governor after accusing him of blasphemy,

stoked fears about the diminishing influence of the country's Muslim majority and the takeover of its politics and resources by 'Chinese foreigners' (*aseng*). This contentious campaign that openly advocated for the need to put Indonesia's religious and ethnic minorities in their place and literally called itself the "Action to Defend Islam," led to a spate of incidents in which vigilantes hunted down and punished supporters of the Governor after accusing them of causing religious offense.

This dissertation does not dispute the importance of political factors in motivating vigilantes and orienting them around the fear of a single enemy. It simply identifies the institutional infrastructure that enables vigilantes to *act* on these fears. As explained in the previous section, vigilantes fear the risk of social and legal reprisals. While a populist leader can call on citizens to use such violence against an enemy, he cannot guarantee their ability to get away with it. In order to seek impunity for their actions, they require the support of a local state agent, whom they know, trust and preferably one who has protected them from the consequences of extra-legal violence in the past.

This kind of infrastructure, described in this dissertation as the result of state's dependence on the coercive functions of civil society, cannot be built in a day. Thus, populist leaders can reorient the focus of vigilantes towards a particular enemy only if this infrastructure already exists and is widely used by citizens to punish a host of other, less obviously political offenses. This is why, in order to understand and overcome communal or politically motivated forms of vigilantism, we need to understand the underlying institutional settings that are producing vigilantism on an everyday basis.

### 7.3 Implications for state-building and public service delivery

My research has three implications for understanding the relationship between state building processes and collective violence. First, it indicates the need to look beyond the ‘level’ of state capacity as a predictor of violence and think about how different ‘configurations’ of state capacity can result in particular types of violence. I have argued that vigilantism becomes widespread when the state is weak enough to cause citizen dissatisfaction with formal law-enforcement and strong-enough to be able to protect vigilantes from the consequences of their actions. However, this median level of capacity alone cannot explain why vigilantes are able to draw on the state’s strength to mitigate their risks. Afterall, why would a street-level cop, who can barely enforce the law, be bothered to help vigilantes break it?

My theory posits that vigilantes are able to leverage the state’s strength for their protection in countries where the configuration of the state is such that it needs civil society’s cooperation to combat large security threats. At a micro-level, this means that the street-level cop has to provide impunity for vigilantism as a way to secure community cooperation for higher priority tasks. Cumulatively, at the macro-level, this translates into a security trade-off for the state: it needs to allow latitude for one form of violence in order to contain another.

This dissertation has maintained a focus on examining the effects of Indonesia’s dependence on neighborhood associations, for combating terrorism and communal conflict. However, similar incentives for vigilantism can be expected in countries that have a dependence on other forms of civil society structures for fighting different types of threats. In Pakistan, for instance, the state’s enduring dependence on the *jirga* system to fight Taliban insurgents in the north has empowered these bodies to perpetrate honor killings with impunity and maintain a chokehold on communities that they ‘govern’. In India, traditional *khap panchayats* and tribal

councils may help the state reach into otherwise inaccessible communities but the same bodies are responsible for enforcing an oppressive caste system by violently punishing even minor infractions.

Second, this study emphasizes the *selective* nature of impunity for extra-legal violence as its provision depends on the broader considerations of order, linked to public opinion backlash as well as the risk of escalation into communal or political violence. As such, I have shown the presence of a threshold of violence, beyond which, vigilantism becomes unlikely. I explain this threshold by noting that state agents have mixed incentives for providing impunity to vigilantes. On the one hand, allowing some latitude for the use of extra-legal violence to manage local disturbances can help the police generate community goodwill. On the other hand, an unequivocal endorsement of vigilantism by the state, especially in a high conflict setting, can result in widespread disorder. These competing considerations of the state distinguish vigilantism from those forms of collective violence that are a consequence of state apathy as well as those that result from direct state sanction.

Third, I argue for the need to reexamine the impact of community-based policing initiatives in post-conflict and/or post authoritarian contexts. International donors have long advocated programs that bring street-level police in close contact with citizens, as a way to increase responsiveness and accountability of security agencies, and ultimately improve their public service delivery. However, the Indonesian case shows that improving responsiveness and accountability of the local police in the context of limited structural reform can produce perverse incentives for private, extra-legal favors by the police, instead of improved public service delivery.

Despite the significant growth of Indonesia's policing capacity over the past decade, the legacy of dependence on civil society for security management has remained largely intact. There is continual reluctance to engage in deep institutional reform that can address corruption in the force, phase out off-budget financing and reduce reliance on civil society structures. As a result, a street-level cop remains heavily dependent on the goodwill of the community he serves, even to perform basic tasks. By himself, a low-ranking policeman cannot generate community goodwill by improving the public provision of security. He can, however, provide selective impunity for extra-legal violence as a private service. While provision of impunity can improve the police's ability to detect and address national-level threats such as terrorism and communal conflict, it comes at the cost of encouraging vigilante violence, often against the most vulnerable sections of society.

#### **7.4 Breaking the cycle**

Indonesia's experience shows that legacy of institutional dependence on coercive functions of civic structures can survive different phases of a country's political development and can be used to combat new, emerging security threats. Given the effect of this dependence on enabling vigilantism, what can be done to overcome it? In Indonesia, dismantling the RT/RW system has proven to be impossible because of the host of essential, non-coercive functions they perform to facilitate grassroots administration by state bodies. As such, efforts to diminish their role in security functions should focus on two fronts.

The most important change that is needed to break the link between police presence and provision of impunity by street-level cops is the improvement of basic policing functions at the lowest-level precincts, the *Polsek*. My theory shows that street-level policemen in Indonesia provide impunity as a private service to win communities' goodwill as it is not possible to

demonstrate their responsiveness by improving public service delivery. Fixing the system to improve the police's performance is first and foremost contingent on eliminating widespread corruption. Apart from this, two institutional changes can help. First, there needs to be a stricter regulation of informal mediation and out of system arbitration by police officials. While these measures may be necessary to manage case-load and prison space with limited resources, farming this function out to street-level cops and neighborhood level leaders with little regulation only empowers these two actors to demand and supply impunity for extra-legal violence.

Second, allocation of the police's budget needs to be revised in a way that empowers the *Polsek* to effectively perform basic policing functions such as complaints management, criminal investigation and intelligence gathering. Low-paid *Bhabin* cannot substitute for the kinds of police activities that require resources, skill and time. The presence of a street-level officer within a community can only be useful if there is an institutional uptake and processing of the complaints and problems he detects. If the police continue to circumvent the need for deeper reform to empower the official functions of a *Polsek*, by flooding communities with *Bhabin*, vigilantism will continue to rise.

Another approach to reducing the state's dependence on civil society's coercive functions is investment in alternative technologies of surveillance. Gathering fine grained information on potential terrorist is a serious concern of the Indonesian government and rightly so. The current system that is heavily dependent on the cooperation of neighborhood leaders does help it achieve this goal, but it also makes Indonesia vulnerable to endemic mob violence. Furthermore, this technology of surveillance lacks transparency and institutional oversight.

Breaking the cycle of dependence can be done by investing in modern technologies for information gathering and data collection on potential suspects that are subject to review and

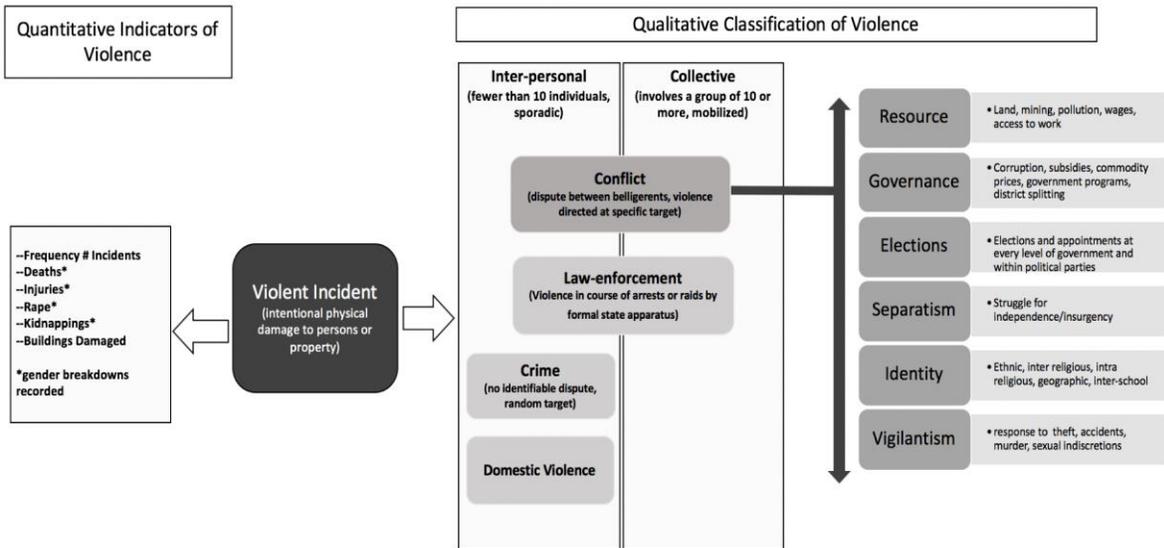
oversight by democratically elected representatives. In some ways, Indonesian government is aware of the pitfalls of its dependence on neighborhood associations. As such, it has started the process of shifting to other modes of information gathering. For example, the switch from paper-based to electronic national ID cards in the past few years has significantly reduced the need for neighborhood leaders' cooperation in tracking movements of high-risk groups. Similarly, the move to register cellphones and limit the number of sim cards is another effort to streamline information that can be gathered about a suspect's contacts when needed. As more of these efforts are made in the future, they need to be accompanied by sufficient data privacy provisions and safeguards.

## Appendices

**Appendix 1: Spatial and temporal coverage of the NVMS Dataset**

Province	Population (million)	Number of local newspapers used	Period of Data Available	Total Incidents Recorded	Total Deaths Recorded	Recent history of large-scale violence
<b>Aceh</b>	4.5	8	1998-2014	18,214	11,335	Active civil war between GAM and GoI until 2005
<b>Maluku</b>	1.5	7	1998-2014	5,627	3,434	Christian-Muslim communal violence 1999-Feb 2002
<b>North Maluku</b>	1	5	1998-2014	2,409	3,441	Christian-Muslim communal violence 1999-2000
<b>Central Kalimantan</b>	2.2	8	1998-2014	6,813	1,922	Ethnic violence between Dayak and Madura communities in 2001
<b>West Kalimantan</b>	4.4	5	1998-2014	16,599	2,233	Ethnic violence between Dayak and Madura communities in 1997 and then again in 1999
<b>Central Sulawesi</b>	2.6	11	1998-2014	6,749	1,391	Christian-Muslim communal violence 1999-2001
<b>Papua</b>	2.7	14	1998-2014	15,169	1,791	Persistent low-level insurgency since 1963
<b>West Papua</b>	0.7		1998-2014	3,924	353	Persistent low-level insurgency since 1963
<b>East Nusa Tenggara</b>	4.8	11	1998-2014	12,055	1,690	---
<b>Lampung</b>	7.6	6	2005-2014	10,616	1,333	---
<b>Greater Jakarta</b>	28	5	2005-2014	23,862	3,827	May 1998
<b>West Nusa Tenggara</b>	4.5	6	2005-2014	7,293	687	---
<b>North Sulawesi</b>	2.2	6	2005-2014	16,097	966	---
<b>South Sulawesi</b>	8	6	2005-2014	10,422	1,372	---
<b>North Sumatera</b>	13	10	2005-2014	28,499	2,809	---
<b>East Java</b>	37.5	15	2005-2014	41,617	3,746	---
<b>All other provinces</b>	139	51	2014	13,621	1,478	
<b>Total</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>239,586</b>	<b>43,808</b>	<b>---</b>

## Appendix 2: NVMS Dataset Coding Scheme



## Appendix 3: Summary of NVMS Dataset

	Incidents	% Incidents	Total Deaths	Female Deaths	Injured	Kidnapping	Rape	Buildings Destroyed
Crime	119,713	62%	12,202	2,836	71,862	1,492	23,917	9,455
Domestic Violence	18,364	9%	3,055	1,499	11,577	13	3,635	210
Law-enforcement	10,246	5%	1,251	8	11,850	8	5	103
Collective Violence	45,135	23%	3,804	157	55,259	211	17	24,673
Other	2,989	7%	211	3	3,212	4	0	425
Resource	5,897	13%	814	61	6,716	63	3	11,660
Governance	3,136	7%	68	5	3,332	22	4	1,676
Electoral	2,774	6%	95	4	2,193	26	0	1,824
Identity	3,781	8%	589	38	6,861	21	1	5,635
Separatism	470	1%	392	4	484	57	0	281
Vigilantism	26,088	58%	1,635	42	32,461	18	9	3,172

### Appendix 4: List of qualitative case-studies

Case #	Village/Hamlet	Sub-district	District	Province	Date	Victim	Alleged Offense	Setting	Response from victim's side	Consequences for perpetrators?	Summary
1	Pondok Aren	Pondok Aren	South Tangerang	Banten	1/29/2016	Outsider	Theft	Urban	None	None	Residents of Pondok Aren apprehended and lynched two unidentified men accused of motorbike theft. One of the victims died and the other was taken to the hospital by the police in critical condition. The lynching took place in front of the hamlet head's office. No formal complaint was filed and no arrests were made in connection to the lynching.
2	Jugalajaya	Jasinga	Kab. Bogor	West Java	12/25/2015	Insider	Religious offense	Rural	Parents demanded compensation	None	Residents of Jugalajaya village lynched a man after accusing him of desecrating religious paraphernalia in a Mosque. The victim had migrated from a neighboring village to live with his wife's family who were residents of Jugalajaya. He was long known to have suffered from mental illness and died from his injuries. The victim's parents demanded monetary compensation from Jugalajaya village but did not file an official complaint. No one was arrested in connection with the lynching.
3	Bantar Kuning	Cariu	Kab. Bogor	West Java	12/13/2010	Insider	Sorcery	Rural	None	None	Residents of Bantar Kuning village apprehended and lynched an elderly man after accusing him of using sorcery to kill another resident's daughter. He died after being buried alive overnight in a dry well. The police initially took some suspects into custody but they were released as no charges were filed.
4	Mulyosari	Pasir Sakti	Lampung Timur	Lampung	6/27/2017	Outsider	Theft	Rural	None	None	Residents of Mulyosari village apprehended and lynched two men accused of motorbike theft. Majority of village residents are ethnic Javanese and both victims were of Lampungese ethnicity. Both victims died as a result of their injuries. No suspects were arrested in connection with the lynching.
5	Purorejo	Pasir Sakti	Lampung Timur	Lampung	13/10/2014	Outsider	Theft	Rural	None	None	Residents of Purorejo village apprehended and attached two men accused of snatching a motorbike from a young girl. One of the victims died from the beating and the other escaped. Majority of Purorejo residents are ethnic Javanese and both of the alleged thieves were Lampungese. No one was arrested in connection with the lynching.
6	Malangsari	Tanjung Sari	Lampung Selatan	Lampung	7/22/2015	Outsider	Theft	Rural	Residents of victim's village lynched Malangsari's village secretary.	None	Residents of Malangsari village apprehended and lynched two men after accusing them of stealing a motorbike. One of the victims died and the other was taken to the hospital by the police in critical condition. The residents of Malangsari are predominantly ethnic-Javanese. Both victims were Lampungese ethnic from a neighboring village of Batubadak. Representatives from the victims' village repeatedly asked the police to investigate the killings. No one was arrested but the police offered to facilitate compensation for the victims' families to be paid by residents of Malangsari residents.
7	Lajut	Praya Tengah	Lombok Tengah	NTB	6/1/2017	Outsider	Theft	Rural	None	None	An unidentified man was lynched by the residents of Lajut village after being accused of stealing a goat. The police came to collect his body. Before he died from the beating he mentioned the name of an accomplice in the village. No police complaint was filed and no suspects were arrested.
8	Prabu	Pujut	Lombok Tengah	NTB	2/20/2009	Insider	Adultery	Sub-Urban	None	None	Residents of Prabu village lynched a man accused of committing adultery with the wife of another resident. The victim died of multiple stab wounds. One of the attackers, the accused woman's husband, is the relative of a well-connected politician. No formal complaint was filed and no suspects were arrested.
9	Dadibou	Woha	Bima Kab	NTB	2/10/2012	Insider	Sorcery	Sub-Urban	Victim's village organized a revenge attack.	None	Residents of Dadibou village lynched a man after accusing him of sorcery. The victim had migrated to Dadibou from the neighboring village of Samile to live with his wife's family. He died from the injuries. The victim's village attacked Dadibou for retribution and burned down an entire neighborhood. Large police and military battalions had to be deployed to stop the violence from spreading. A peace agreement with compensation was brokered by the district head and the police/military chiefs. No arrests were made.
10	Pondok Karya	Pondok Aren	South Tangerang	Banten	2/24/2015	Outsider	Theft	Urban	Victim's associates threatened revenge	None	Residents of Pondok Aren lynched and burned alive a young man accused of stealing a motorbike. Three people were apprehended by the residents but two escaped. One tried to escape and hide in a shop but was discovered by the residents and beaten before being burned alive on the main road. A few days after the attack, there were rumors of a counter attack by the victims' friends and family. The police visited the family and threatened them with consequences if they sought revenge. The two alleged accomplices of the victim were arrested by the police. No one was arrested in connection to the lynching.

Case #	Village/Hamlet	Sub-district	District	Province	Date	Victim	Alleged Offense	Setting	Response from victim's side	Consequences for perpetrators?	Summary
11	Sukanegara	Cikupa	Tangerang	Banten	1/11/2016	Outsider	Theft	Urban	None	None	Residents of Sukanegara apprehended and lynched a man accused of stealing a motorbike. The victim was taken to the hospital by the police but he died from his injuries. No formal complaint was filed and no suspects were arrested in connection with the lynching. Residents of Cikupa recalled the victim's ethnicity as Lampungese.
12	Sukanegara	Cikupa	Tangerang	Banten	5/7/2012	Outsider	Theft	Urban	None	None	Residents of Sukanegara apprehended and lynched a man accused of stealing a cellphone. The victim's ID revealed that he was from South Lampung. He died as a result of the beating. No formal complaint was filed and no arrests were made in connection with the lynching.
13	Budimulya	Cikupa	Tangerang	Banten	8/30/2017	Outsider	Theft	Urban	None	None	Residents of Budimulya apprehended and lynched a man accused of stealing a motorbike. Two residents allegedly discovered the theft and had an altercation during which they received stab wounds. They raised alarm to gather other residents who beat the victim to death. No complaint was filed and no arrests were made in connection with the lynching.
14	Wonosari	Gunungsugih	Lampung Tengah	Lampung	7/29/2015	Outsider	Theft	Rural	Victim's village threatened attack on Wonosari but stopped by the police.	Arrested. No record of a charges or sentencing	Residents of Wonosari village lynched two men from Komeringagung village after accusing them of motorbike theft. The attack occurred when a visitor was allegedly stopped by the two victims at a checkpoint and asked to handover his bike and belongings. When he screamed for help residents of Wonosari gathered and beat the two men. One escaped but the other was killed. Majority of Wonosari residents are ethnic Javanese while the victims were Lampungese. The victims' village mobilized for a counter attack, which was stopped by the police. Peace was brokered by the district head and the police. Four suspects involved in the lynching were arrested. The other victim, a suspected thief was also arrested.
15	Jatiwaringin	Pondok Gede	Bekasi	West Java	5/20/2017	Outsider	Gangsterism	Urban	Police from neighboring district filed legal charges	Arrested, charged but not sentenced	Residents of Jatiwaringin lynched and killed one alleged member of a motorbike gang. Faced with frequent violent incursions from gangs, the residents had been asked by local leaders and police authorities to participate in efforts to defend the hamlet. Armed with sticks, they fought off the gang but one alleged member died in the process. The victims' family filed a complaint. Suspects were arrested and charged but were set free due to insufficient evidence.
16	Sukamulya	Cikupa	Tangerang	Banten	11/11/2017	Outsider	Fornication	Urban	Victim's family demanded legal action.	Arrested, charged and sentenced	Residents of Sukamulya raided the private room rented by a young migrant woman while her boyfriend was visiting her from another area. The couple were accused of fornication. They were dragged out, stripped naked and beaten while being paraded. A video of the incident caused a public outcry. The girl was an orphan but the boy's parents' filed a report with the police. All suspects were arrested and charged.
17	Batubadak	Margasekampun g	Lampung Timur	Lampung	7/28/2015	Outsider	Murder	Rural	Victim's family threatened attack but did not mobilize.	Arrested, charged and sentenced.	Residents of Batubadak village lynched the village secretary of Malangsari village as revenge for the lynching of their residents a few days earlier. The secretary along with other village officials arrived in Batubadak to pay compensation for the earlier lynching. He was accompanied by the sub-district police chief and his men. The visitors were held hostage. The village secretary was killed but others were rescued by additional police. After threats from the victims' families for a counter attack the suspects of this lynching were hunted down by the police, charged and sentenced.
18	Wadukopa	Soromandi	Bima Kab	NTB	2/8/2013	Insider	Sorcery	Rural	None	Arrested, charged and sentenced.	A husband-wife pair were accused of sorcery by residents of Wadukopa village. Anticipating the attack, the wife ran away to seek protection at the local police station, but her husband stayed behind with their children. Residents lynched the husband by burning him alive in the school yard. The children were saved from the attack by the village head. Formal complaint was filed and suspects were arrested, charged and sentenced.
19	Kuta	Pujut	Lombok Tengah	NTB	10/22/2012	Outsider	Kidnapping	Sub-Urban	Threat of Island-wide ethnic reprisals	Arrested, charged and sentenced.	Residents of Kuta village lynched two men accused of being child kidnappers. A rumor had spread warning residents of child kidnappers on the island. These two victims were herbal oil salesmen who were well known in Kuta. The police rescued them from the mob but a large group attacked the police station and burned them alive. Three other victims were lynched on the same day and all were ethnic migrants. Police feared ethnic reprisals. Suspects were arrested and sentenced.
20	Kosambi	Sukadiri	Tangerang	Banten	3/10/2017	Outsider	Theft	Sub-urban	Victim's village mobilized counter-attack but prevented by police	Arrested and tried in court but no record of sentencing	Residents of Kosambi apprehended a young man accused of stealing a cell-phone and lynched him. The victim was from the neighboring village of Tegal Kunir Lor in Mauk sub-district and died from his injuries. The victim's village mobilized a counter attack against Kosambi but were stopped by the police. Suspects involved in the fatal lynching were arrested by the police and tried in court.

**Appendix 5: Examples of informal adjudication of local offenses**

Kami yang bertanda tangan di bawah ini

Nama : [redacted]  
 Umur : 54 th.  
 Agama : Islam  
 Alamat : [redacted]

Selain itu juga di sebut pihak Pertama, dan

Nama : [redacted]  
 Umur : 52 th  
 Agama : Islam  
 Alamat : [redacted]  
 kec. G4. Putri Bogor

Selain itu juga di sebut pihak ke 2

Pada hari ini Selasa 15 Maret 2016, kami kedua belah pihak sepakat untuk mengadakan musyawarah untuk menyelesaikan permasalahan kedua belah pihak sbb:

1. Pihak Pertama bersedia menanggung biaya pengobatan atas [redacted] atau sebesar Rp 18.000.000, (Delapan belas juta rupiah) dan saya berjanji untuk tidak menyanggu/berhubbungan di kemudian hari.
2. Biaya pengobatan tersebut sebesar Rp. 5.000.000 (lima juta rupiah) akan di berikan pada hari Rabu 16 Maret 2016 dan sisanya akan di berikan paling lambat tanggal 21 Maret 2016.

Informal agreement signed by RT/RW chiefs, concerning adultery (possibly rape). The accused man agrees to pay the husband of the woman IDR 18 million for her medical treatment and promises not to disturb them again. The husband promises not to file charges.

3. Adapun kronologi kejadian singkat yaitu pihak Pertama telah benar dan mengakui Perbuatan Zina dengan Istri pihak ke 2 yang bernama [redacted]

4. Apabila di kemudian hari antara kedua belah pihak menjangkari surat pernyataan bersama ini siap dan bersedia di Tutut Secara hukum yang berlaku

5. Permasalahan ini telah di selesaikan secara musyawarah tanpa ada paksaan dari pihak manapun dan pihak kedua tidak akan melakukan Pamuntutan ke pihak kepolisian/darurat dan di selesaikan oleh pihak kepolisian, ketua Lingkungan dan tokoh Masyarakat

diadakan 16 Maret 2016 -  
 yang menyatakan

pihak kedua

[redacted]

Saksi-saksi

1. Joyani Larin
2. Ahmad Nawin
3. Ebi elong
4. H. Sarwani

RT - RW . 09  
 DESA / KECAMATAN : GUNUNG PUTRI  
 KABUPATEN BOGOR

RW . 05  
 DESA / KECAMATAN : GUNUNG PUTRI  
 KABUPATEN BOGOR

pada hari ini Senin 21 Maret 2016 Jam 16:15 Saya bertanda tangan di bawah ini pihak pertama

1. [Redacted] (orang tua) dari [Redacted]

- Nama : [Redacted]  
 TTL : BEKASI 10 [Redacted] 1967  
 Alamat : [Redacted] RT 02/11 Bojong Kalur  
 Agama : Islam

pihak ke dua (2)

2. - Nama [Redacted] / orang tua dari [Redacted]  
 TTL : [Redacted] 1978  
 Alamat : [Redacted] RT 02/11 Bojong Kalur  
 Agama : Islam

3. - Nama : [Redacted] / orang tua dari [Redacted]  
 Kami ke Alamat : [Redacted] RT 02/11 Bojong Kalur  
 TTL : [Redacted] 1972  
 Agama : Islam

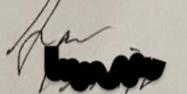
Informal agreement signed by RT/RW chiefs, concerning an assault. The assailant agrees to pay the victim IDR 1million for medical treatment and promises not to repeat the offense. The victim agrees to resolve the issue informally and not file any formal complaint with the police.

Kami kedua belah pihak telah Sepatut musyawarah/secara ke keluargaan untuk tidak saling menuntut /mengancam pada kejadian penganiayaan terhadap [Redacted] pada hari Minggu malam Senin 20 maret 2016 Jam 23:55 yang beralamat di Kediaman [Redacted] yang ber alamat di [Redacted] Bojong Kalur Cn putri Bogor.

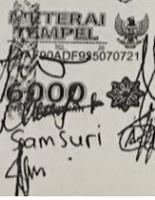
pihak kedua Bersedia mengganti Biata perobatan dari pada pihak pertama Sebesar 1 juta Rupiah, Apabila terjadi di kemudian hari perbuatan yg serupa dan Melanggar hukum Siap di proses secara jalur hukum.

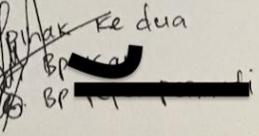
Demikian Surat pernyataan ini Saya buat dalam keadaan sehat jasmani dan Rohani dan tidak ada Menintropensi dari Pihak manapun.

Gunung putri 21 maret 2016

Pihak pertama  


- Saksi
1. BP RT mein
  2. BP RW ACEN
  3. BP satgas pa Samsuri
  4. BP AS Bi



Pihak ke dua  


# SURAT PERNYATAAN PERDAMAIAN

Saya yang bertanda tangan dibawah ini :

1. Nama : [Redacted] (4 Tahun)  
Umur : 14 Tahun  
Agama : Kristen / Katholik  
Pekerjaan : Masih ikut orang tua  
Alamat : Dusun Peranginain, Desa Sarintou  
Selanjutnya disebut Pihak I (Pertama)
2. Nama : [Redacted]  
Umur : 39 Tahun  
Agama : Katholik  
Pekerjaan : Petani  
Alamat : [Redacted]  
Selanjutnya disebut Pihak II (Kedua)

Informal agreement signed by village head, concerning petty theft by a minor. The accused and the victim agree to resolve the matter informally and not hold any grudge against each other. The accused agrees to repair the damage caused during the commission of the theft.

Sehubungan dengan permasalahan yang terjadi di Dusun pertumbungan [Redacted] Juni 2017.

Sekira pukul 11:50 wib yaitu tentang membuat pencurian perasaan tidak senang maka kami Kedua belah pihak tersebut diatas sepakat membuat surat pernyataan perdamaian ini

Adapun isi dari surat pernyataan perdamaian kami adalah sebagai berikut:

1. Kami kedua belah pihak telah sepakat membuat surat perdamaian ini tanpa ada unsur paksaan Dari pihak mana pun dan kami melakukan perdamaian dengan hati tulus dan ikhlas.
2. Kami kedua belah pihak membuat perdamaian ini dimana antara kami masih ada hubungan keluarga yang sangat erat.
3. Kami kedua belah pihak berjanji tidak akan mengulangi perbuatan kami kembali , baik antara kami kedua belah pihak maupun terhadap masyarakat lainnya.
4. Kami kedua belah pihak merasa bersalah atas tindakan yang kami perbuat karna tindakan kami tidak benar dihadapan masyarakat .
5. Setelah adanya surat perdamaian ini maka kami kedua belah pihak berjanji tidak akan saling mendendam .
6. apa bila kami kedua belah pihak melanggar salah satu point diatas maka kami bersedia di hukum dengan hukum yang berlaku di Negara RI.
7. Yang rusak diperbaiki oleh pihak I (pertama)

Demikian lah surat perdamaian ini diperbuat dengan sebenarnya dengan akal pikiran yang sehat tanpa ada unsure paksaan dari pihak mana pun . Kemudian di tutup dan ditanda tangani oleh yang bersangkutan serta saksi - saksi .

[Redacted] 01 JULI 2017



- Saksi - Saksi
1. Lannes Siburian
  2. Mantun Sinaga

1. Pebri Tarigan
2. Wati Tarigan

PIHAK . II



Saya yang bertanda tangan dibawah ini :

Nama : [redacted]  
Temp / tgl. lahir : Bogor, [redacted] 1960  
Jenis kelamin : Laki - laki  
Alamat : [redacted]  
Agama : Islam  
Pekerjaan : Buah harian lepas  
NIK : [redacted]

Selaku ADIK ke 3 dari :

Nama : [redacted]  
Temp / tgl. lahir : Bogor, [redacted] 1950  
Pekerjaan : swasta  
Alamat : [redacted]  
Kec. Gunung Putri Kab. Bogor.

----- Bahwa sehubungan telah meninggal Sdr. [redacted] yang terjadi pada hari Kamis, tanggal 3 Februari 2016 jam. 13.00 WIB pada saat sedang bongkar muat bahan bangunan di jalan Kp. Bojary Kulur [redacted] Kecamatan Gunung Putri Kab. Bogor, saya mewakili pihak keluarga [redacted] tidak akan menuntut secara hukum kepada pihak manapun, tidak bersedia untuk dilakukan otopsi dan sudah menerima sebagai musibah. -----

----- Demikian surat pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sebenarnya tanpa ada paksaan dan tekanan dari pihak manapun. -----

Bojary Kulur, 3-02-2016  
yang menyatakan

Saksi :  
1. [redacted]  
IL (ANAK 1)

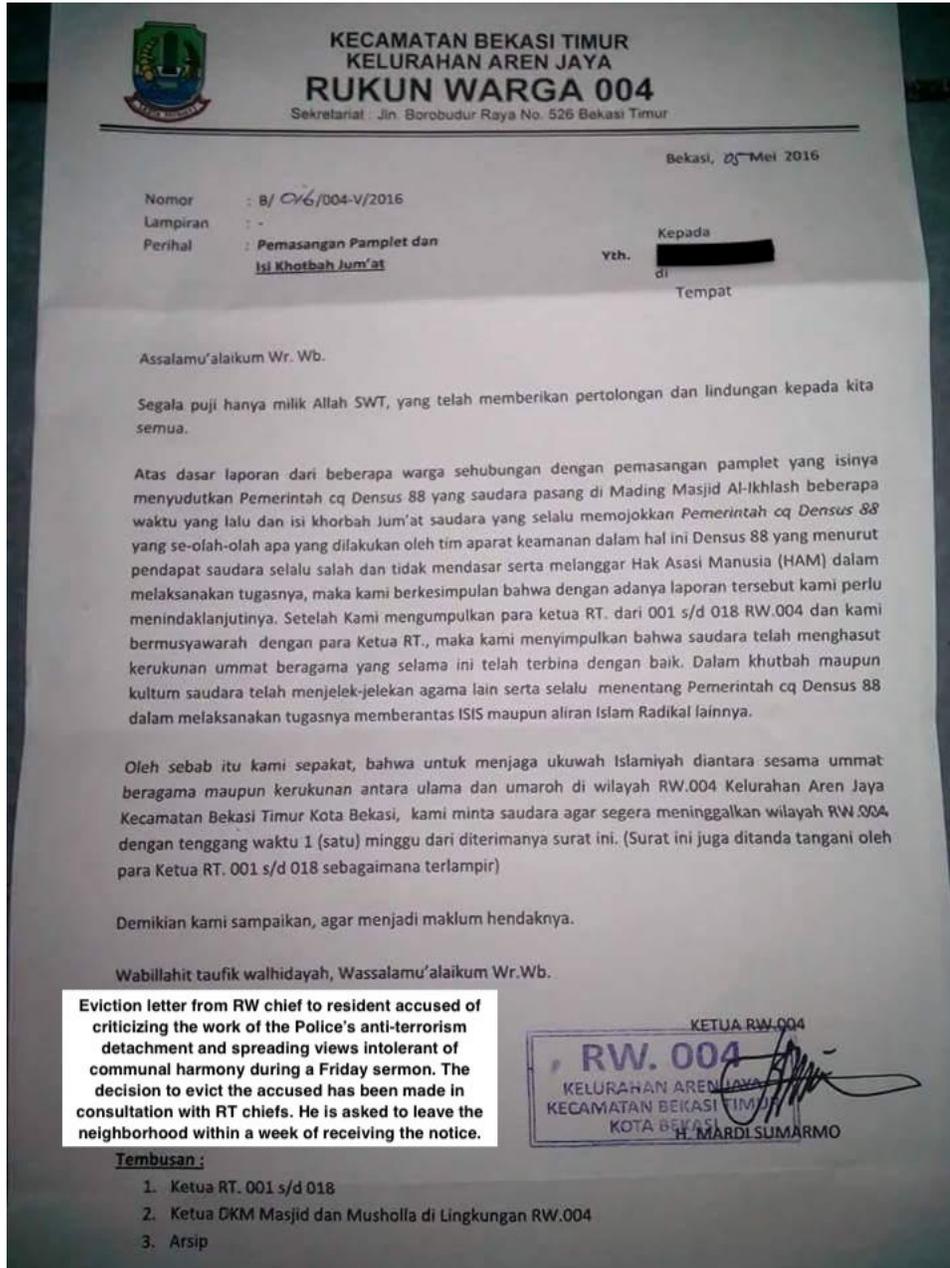
[Signature]  
RT 03/02  
DESA BOJONGKULUR  
KEC. GUNUNG PUTRI - KAB. BOGOR

[Stamp]  
KETERANGAN  
KUMPEL  
707689ADF440415451  
6000  
KABUPATEN

2. [Signature]  
NUR (ANAK 2)

Informal agreement signed by RT chief, concerning a fatal road accident. Family of the victim promises not to conduct an autopsy or file a formal complaint to the police. States that the statement has been made without any pressure or intimidation.

**Appendix 6: Examples of disciplinary orders by neighborhood leaders**





## RUKUN WARGA 06

### Perumahan Bumi Anugerah Sejahtera Desa Rajeg, Kec. Rajeg - Kab. Tangerang Berita Acara

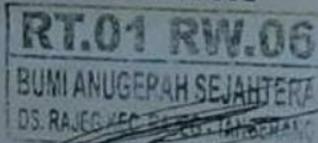
Peraturan dan Ketentuan kegiatan Non Muslim sbb :

- 1 Tidak mengalihfungsikan rumah menjadi tempat ibadah  
diperbolehkan melaksanakan kegiatan dengan ketentuan sbb :
    - a) tidak mengundang tamu dari luar perumahan
    - b) tidak menggunakan pengeras suara
    - c) tidak membawa pemuka agama
  - 3 dalam hal duka : " di himbau 1 x 24 jam jenazah harap segera di kebumikan"
  - 4 Melaporkan kegiatan kepada pengurus Rt/Rw minimal 3 hari sebelum acara
- Poin 4 : \* berlaku untuk seluruh warga \*

Notice from the RW chief about regulations and restrictions for non-Muslim residents informing them that they are not allowed to use their homes as a house of worship, not allowed to invite guests from outside the neighborhood, use loud speakers or invite a priest.

#### Menyetujui,

Ketua Rt.001



Rakmat

Ketua Rt.002



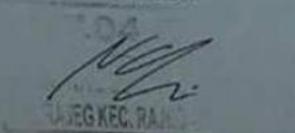
Slamet Purnomo

Ketua Rt. 003



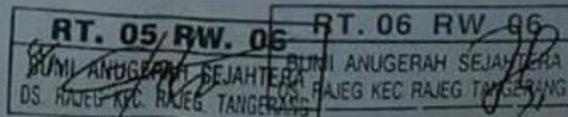
Nurwahid M. A

Ketua Rt. 004



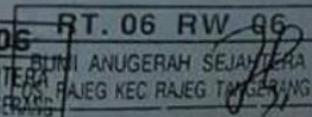
Yuki Nasuki

Ketua Rt. 005



Erwin Rahadi

Ketua Rt. 006



Habibullah

Kepala Desa Rajeg



#### Mengetahui,

Ketua Rw.06



PEMERNTAH KOTA SEMARANG  
KECAMATAN GAJAH MUNGKUR  
KELURAHAN BENDANNGISOR  
RT.03 / RW. IV

Nomor: 17/03-IV/V/2014  
Perihal: **PEMBERITAHUAN**

Kepada Yth.  
Komunitas Hysteria / Gerobak Art  
Di Semarang.

Dengan hormat,

Bersama ini kami segenap Pengurus RT.03 RW.IV Kelurahan Bendan Ngisor Kecamatan Gajahmungkur Semarang merujuk pada informasi-informasi yang muncul pada media massa online tentang Rencana Kegiatan Bedah Buku berjudul "*Tan Malaka, Gerakan Kiri dan Revolusi Indonesia*" yang ditulis oleh peneliti sejarah Belanda bernama Harry A. Poeze yang akan diadakan di lingkungan wilayah RT.03 RW.IV oleh komunitas Hysteria / Gerobak Art di Jl. Stonen No. 29 Semarang, maka kami mewakili seluruh warga RT.03 RW.IV Kelurahan Bendanngisor Kecamatan Gajahmungkur dengan tegas menolak untuk diadakan kegiatan tersebut di wilayah kami.

Demikian pemberitahuan ini disampaikan agar dapat menjadikan perhatian bagi pihak-pihak-pihak yang berencana mengadakan kegiatan terssebut.

Atas perhatian dan kerjasama baiknya kami ucapkan terimakasih .

Semarang, 14 Februari 2014

Ketua RT.03 RW.IV Bendanngisor

Notice from the RT chief refusing a planned discussion of a history book about revolutionary-era communist leader Tan Malaka.



ENDAH SOELISTIO, S.Pd.

Appendix 7: Examples of posters with threats of vigilante violence

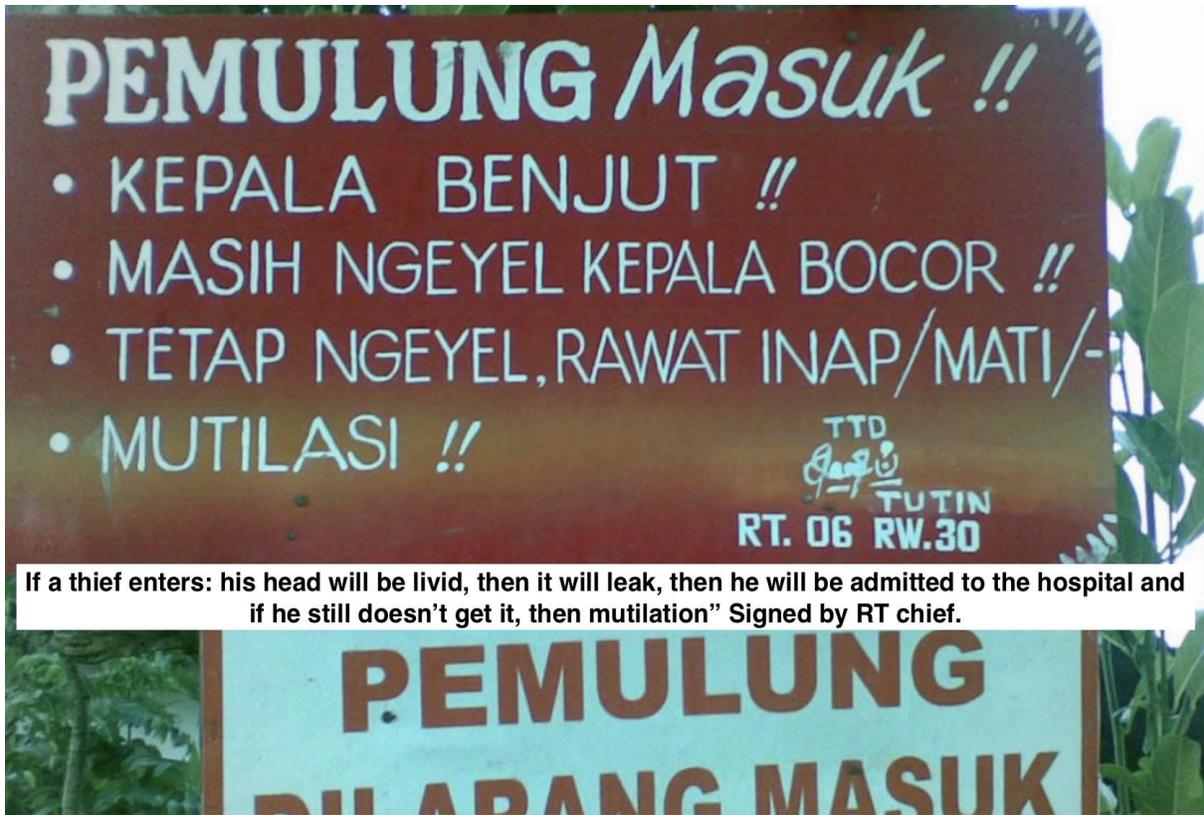


**“ Careful! Thieves are increasingly bold. Take a close look, verify it is a thief, scream, arrest, burn!” Signed by RT chief**

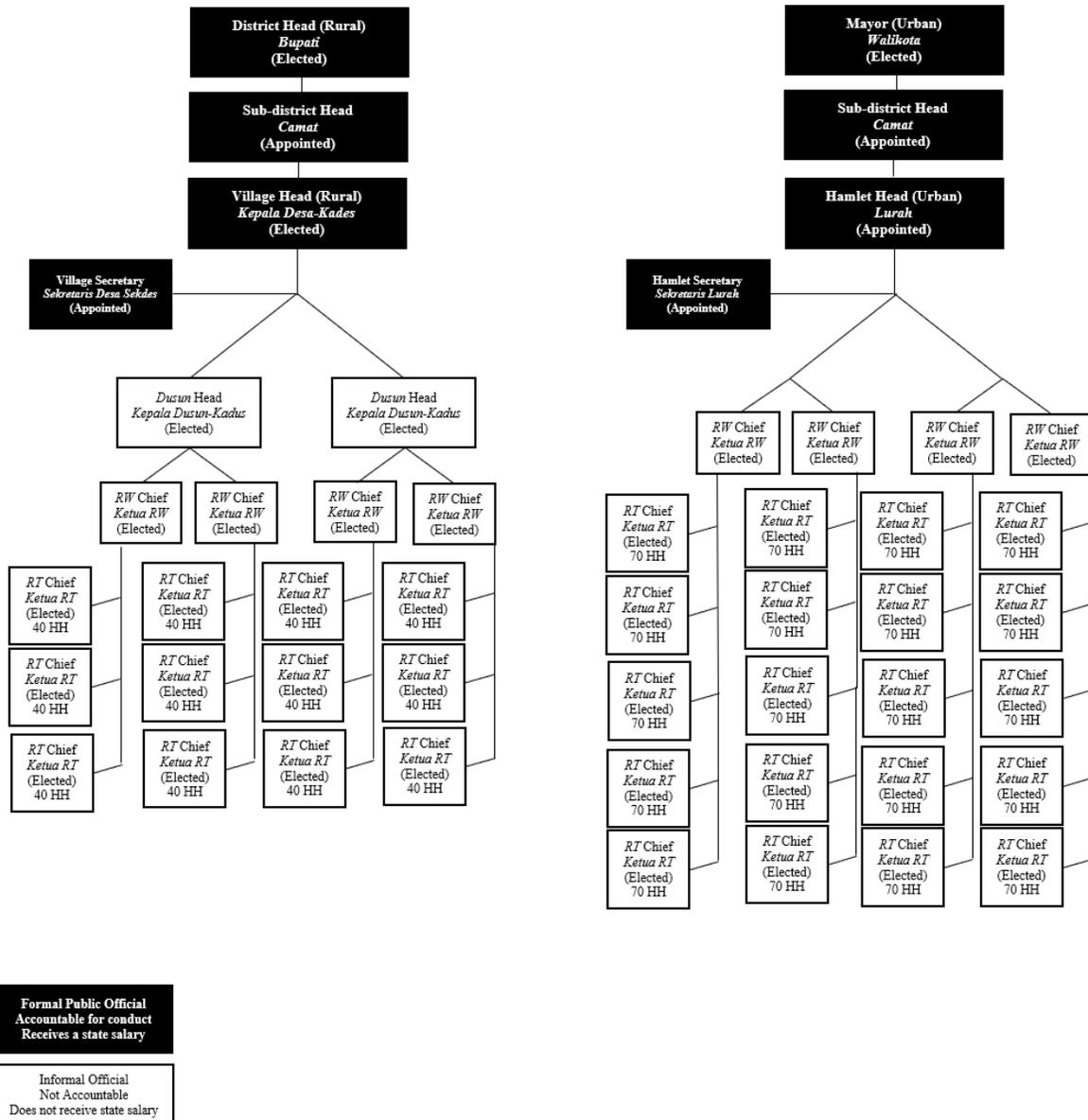


**Those found dating will be pelleted. Those who are not deterred will be beaten black and blue.” Signed by residents**

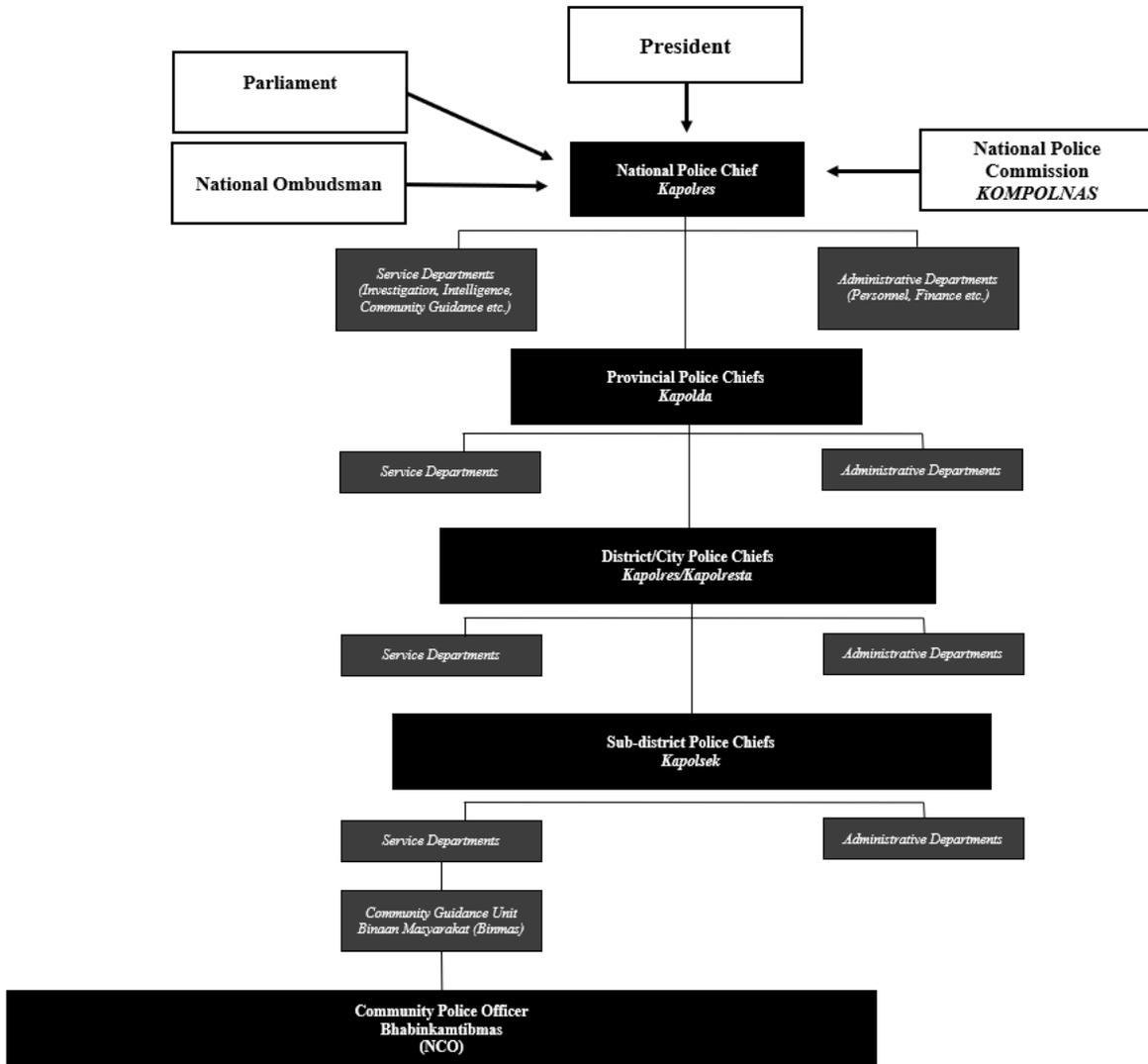




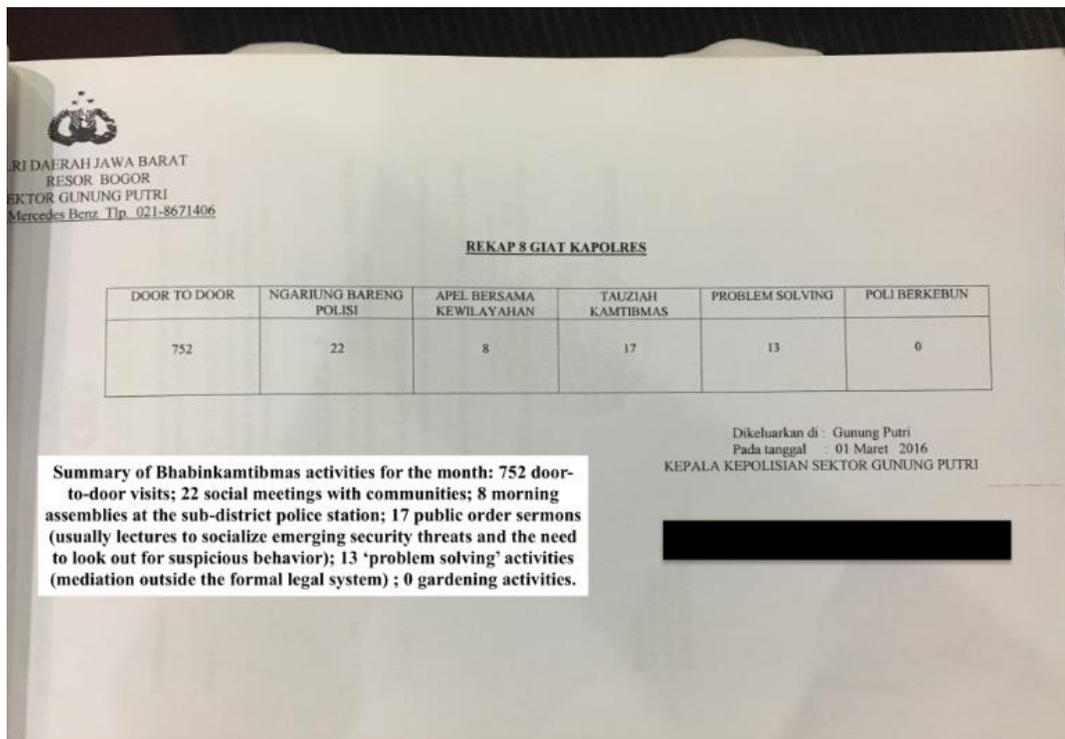
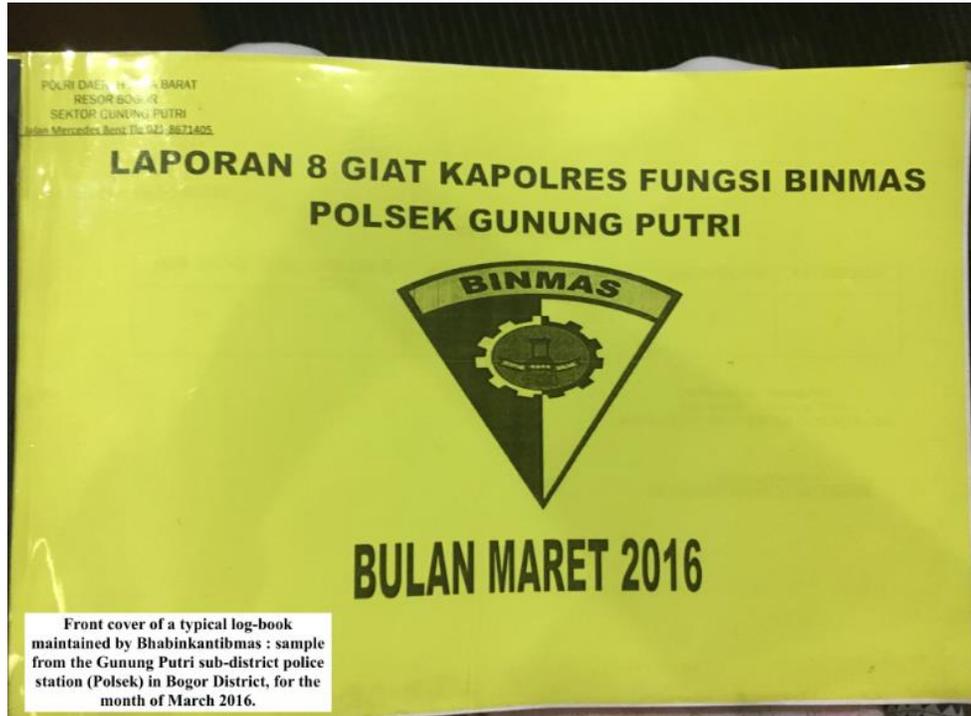
## Appendix 8: Neighborhood Association Structure in Indonesia (Generalized)



**Appendix 9: Territorial structure of Indonesian National Police (Simplified)**



**Appendix 10: Sample of problem-solving log-books maintained by street-level police**



POLRI DAERAH JAWA BARAT  
RESOR BOGOR  
SEKTOR GUNUNG PUTRI

LAPORAN PROBLEM SOLVING POLSEK GUNUNG PUTRI

NO	HARI/TGL/ JAM	PIHAK YANG BERMASALAH	PERMASALAHAN	LOKASI	POLRI YANG HADIR	HASIL YG DICAPAI	KET
1.	RABU 26 MART 2016 21.00 WIB	Pemuda Rt 01/01 dengan [REDACTED]	PENGHINAAN / PENCEMARAN NAMA BAIK	Kp. cicadas rrt 02/01	[REDACTED]	MUSYAWARAH KEKELUARGAAN DAN MEMBUAT PERNYATAAN	

Gunung Putri, 26 Maret 2016  
KEPALA KEPOLISIAN SEKTOR GUNUNG PUTRI

Example of problem solving: related to a libel  
dispute between residents, resolved through  
'family consultation and mutual agreement'.

POLRI DAERAH JAWA BARAT  
RESOR BOGOR  
SEKTOR GUNUNG PUTRI

LAPORAN PROBLEM SOLVING POLSEK GUNUNG PUTRI

NO	HARI/TGL/ JAM	PIHAK YANG BERMASALAH	PERMASALAHAN	LOKASI	POLRI YANG HADIR	HASIL YG DICAPAI	KET
1.	RABU 16 MART 2016 14.00 WIB	[REDACTED]	PERZINAHAN PIHAK KE I TERHADAP ISTRI PIHAK KE II	AULA DESA CICADAS	[REDACTED]	MUSYAWARAH KEKELUARGAAN DAN MEMBUAT PERNYATAAN	

Gunung Putri, 16 Maret 2016  
KEPALA KEPOLISIAN SEKTOR GUNUNG PUTRI

Example of problem solving: related to a dispute  
between a husband and his wife who is refusing  
permission for a second marriage, resolved through  
'family consultation and mutual agreement'.

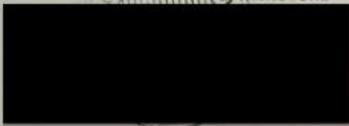
POLRI DAERAH JAWA BARAT  
RESOR BOGOR  
SEKTOR GUNUNG PUTRI

LAPORAN PROBLEM SOLVING POLSEK GUNUNG PUTRI

NO	HARI/TGL/ JAM	PIHAK YANG BERMASALAH	PERMASALAHAN	LOKASI	POLRI YANG HADIR	HASIL YG DICAPAI	KET
1.	RABU 09 MART 2016 13.00 WIB	DENGAN WARGA RT 04/13	PENGLOLAAN SAMPAH	KP CICADAS RT 004/013 DESA CICADAS		MUSYAWARAH KEKELUARGAAN DAN MEMBUAT PERNYATAAN MENGHENTIKAN KEGIATAN PENGLOLAAN SAMPAH KARENA TEMPAT SUDAH TIDAK MEMUNGKINKAN	

Gunung Putri, 09 Maret 2016  
KEPALA KEPOLISIAN SEKTOR GUNUNG PUTRI

**Example of problem solving: related to a dispute between residents about a garbage sorting business in the area, resolved through 'family consultation and mutual agreement' to terminate the business.**



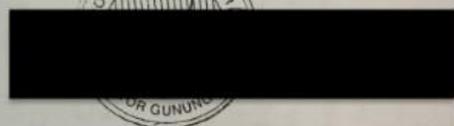
POLRI DAERAH JAWA BARAT  
RESOR BOGOR  
SEKTOR GUNUNG PUTRI

LAPORAN PROBLEM SOLVING POLSEK GUNUNG PUTRI

NO	HARI/TGL/ JAM	PIHAK YANG BERMASALAH	PERMASALAHAN	LOKASI	POLRI YANG HADIR	HASIL YG DICAPAI	KET
1.	RABU 19 MART 2016 13.00 WIB	DENGAN BPK	KECELAKAAN TUNGGAL BPK MASRUKI MENBRAK PAGAR RUMAH BPK UJANG	KP SENTUL RT 01/09 DESA CIKEAS UDIK		MUSYAWARAH KEKELUARGAAN DAN MEMBUAT PERNYATAAN	

Gunung Putri, 19 Maret 2016  
KEPALA KEPOLISIAN SEKTOR GUNUNG PUTRI

**Example of problem solving: related to an accident in which a resident ran his motorbike into another resident's fence, resolved through 'family consultation and mutual agreement'.**



POLRI DAERAH JAWA BARAT  
RESOR BOGOR  
SEKTOR GUNUNG PUTRI

LAPORAN PROBLEM SOLVING POLSEK GUNUNG PUTRI

NO	HARI/TGL/ JAM	PIHAK YANG BERMASALAH	PERMASALAHAN	LOKASI	POLRI YANG HADIR	HASIL YG DICAPAI	KET
1.	SELASA 25 MART 2016 21.00 WIB	OPERATOR PROYEK PT [REDACTED]	PENCURIAN	MAKO POLSEK GN.PUTRI	[REDACTED]	MUSYAWARAH KEKELUARGAAN DAN MEMBUAT PERNYATAAN	

Example of problem solving: alleged theft at a local business by one of its employees, resolved through 'family consultation and mutual agreement'.

Gunung Putri, 25 Maret 2016  
KEPALA KEPOLISIAN SEKTOR GUNUNG PUTRI



## Appendix 11: Glossary

<i>ABRI</i>	<i>(Angkatan Bersenjata Indonesia)</i> New Order term for Indonesian security forces
<i>Babinsa</i>	Non-commissioned officer of the Indonesian Military, posted at the village or hamlet level
<i>begal</i>	refers to a professional (motorbike) thief
<i>Bhabinkamtibmas</i>	<i>(Bhabin)</i> Non-commissioned officer of the Indonesian Police, posted at the village or hamlet level
<i>Binmas</i>	The Community Guidance Unit of the Indonesian Police
<i>Brimob</i>	Mobile Brigade of the Indonesian Police, deployed for high-risk operations, including riot control
<i>Bupati</i>	District head (directly elected)
<i>camat</i>	Subdistrict head (appointed by district head)
<i>Densus 88</i>	The anti-terrorism detachment of the Indonesian Police
<i>dusun</i>	the third smallest administrative unit in residential areas (in rural villages)
<i>gali</i>	refers to a criminal
<i>gotong royong</i>	mutual aid and cooperation in a community
<i>Kapolda</i>	Head of a provincial police headquarter
<i>Kapolres</i>	Head of a district-level police station
<i>Kapolri</i>	Head of the Indonesian National Police
<i>Kapolsek</i>	Head of a subdistrict-level police precinct
<i>kepala desa</i>	village head ( <i>kades</i> )
<i>Ketua RT</i>	Neighborhood chief
<i>Ketua RW</i>	Ward chief
<i>kiyai</i>	religious leader
<i>Kodam</i>	Regional command of the Indonesian Military
<i>Kodim</i>	District-level command of the Indonesian Military
<i>Koramil</i>	Subdistrict-level command of the Indonesian Military
<i>lurah</i>	urban hamlet head
<i>Mabes Polri</i>	National Headquarters of the Indonesian National Police
Muhammadiyah	Indonesia's second largest Muslim mass organization
NU	<i>(Nahdlatul Ulama)</i> Indonesia's largest Muslim mass organization
<i>ormas</i>	mass organization

<i>Pancasila</i>	Indonesia's official state ideology
<i>preman</i>	refers to a gangster
<i>Polda</i>	Provincial police headquarter
<i>Polres</i>	District-level police station
<i>Polri</i>	Indonesian National Police
<i>Polsek</i>	Subdistrict-level police precinct
RT	( <i>rukun tetangga</i> ) refers to a neighborhood, the smallest administrative unit in residential areas
RW	( <i>rukun warga</i> ) refers to a ward, the second smallest administrative unit in residential areas
<i>Siskamling</i>	( <i>Sistem Keamanan Lingkungan</i> ) Program for mobilizing neighborhoods for security operations
TNI	( <i>Tentara Nasional Indonesia</i> ) Indonesian Military
<i>tokoh agama</i>	religious leader
<i>tokoh masyarakat</i>	community leader
<i>tokoh pemuda</i>	youth leader
<i>Walikota</i>	mayor of a city (directly elected)

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