Bare-Chested Politics in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia: The Dynamics of Local Elections in a 'Post'-Conflict Region

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Abstract

This paper examines how far the 2005 direct *Pilkada* (District Head Elections) in Poso, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia – where there has been widespread ethno-religious violence in the past – were indicative of a move towards a more 'positive' peace. Using a two-level conceptualisation of peace at the elite and the grassroots level, we examine various interventions during the election and voting patterns, to discern to what extent positive peace has been achieved. A positive peace is one which promotes a mutual vision for the future, civic identities, a bridging of ethno-religious identity cleavages, and endeavours to address some of the underlying problems of the conflict.

The results of the election indicate a strong negative peace. During the election, there were interventions in place and close monitoring of the implementation to ensure that the elections were peaceful. In some but not all quarters in Poso, the results of the *Pilkada* indicate there are small movements at the elite level to promote local civic identities and bridge ethno-religious cleavages. However, this did not translate into grassroots voting patterns in favour of slates which were representative of new local civic identities and a bridging of ethno-religious cleavages, which in turn could reduce the incentives to mobilise along ethno-religious lines. Instead, voting patterns indicate that people were reverting to religious affiliations when casting their vote in order to protect their interests. Since the elections, however, there is evidence to suggest that cross-group collective peace building processes are emerging from the grassroots through civil society activities. This has at the very least been evidenced by the restrained reaction of the populace in not engaging in riots or inter-group clashes at the time of the execution of three Christians charged with committing atrocities during the conflict and the sporadic bombings which occurred prior to and following the executions, the murder of three school girls, and other similar incidents which have taken place following the elections.

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1. Introduction

The 2005 *Pilkada* (*Pilihan Kepala Daerah*, or Local Head Election) for the positions of *Bupati* (District Head or Regent) and *Wakil Bupati* (Deputy District Head or Deputy Regent) in the troubled Indonesian district of Poso were of vital importance for the future stability of the region and the reconciliation processes underway there. Given the role of political electoral mobilisation as one of the features underpinning in the violence in the post-Suharto period, there were widespread fears that the elections could see a return to violence. From a social scientific perspective, the elections were also important as they provide us with a snapshot of the status and dynamics of the broad peace that has endured since 2001 despite many incidences of provocation.

The research is based on a survey of secondary sources and a series of interviews (more than 100) conducted in the region prior to the *Pilkada* and one year later following the installment of the new *Bupati*. The interviews were conducted with representatives from both sides of the conflict at both the grass roots and elite levels, victims and perpetrators of violence, local and provincial leaders, academics, the media, groups vulnerable to the conflict including women and youth, candidates across the slates in the election, their support teams and party representatives, and the elected *Bupati*.

Using a two-level conceptualisation of peace at the elite and the grassroots level, this paper examines how far the *Pilkada* was indicative of a move towards a more 'positive' peace at both levels. Examining various formal and informal interventions in the election campaign, we argue that at the elite level, there is a strong negative peace in which is likely to prevent a return to conflict, but which involves little positive engagement to address some of the underlying problems or construct a mutual vision for the future for all groups involved. At the grassroots level, we argue that voting patterns suggest there is a similar lack of positive peace at this level and an even weaker form of negative peace. It is important to note at the outset that this paper does not examine in great detail the impact of decentralisation and district splitting on the conflict dynamics in Poso, which definitely also have implications for the *Pilkada* and voting patterns in the region.[2] In short, the district splitting allowed for by the decentralisation laws enacted in 1999, has changed the demographic balance of the

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[2] See Diprose, Rachael (2007) Passing on the Challenges or Prescribing Better Management of Diversity: Decentralization, Power-Sharing, and Conflict Dynamics in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, CRISE Working Paper 38, presented at: Conference on Federalism, Decentralization and Conflict, 5-7 October 2006, University of Oxford, Oxford; Diprose, Rachael and Ukowa, Ukiwo (2007) The Complexities of Managing Ethno-religious Diversity: A Comparison of Decentralization and Conflict Dynamics in Indonesia and Nigeria, CRISE Working Paper, November 2007, University of Oxford, Oxford, (forthcoming in Special Issue of Ethnopolitics)

Christian and Muslim populations, and consequent lobbying for political power in the region, which in turn has led to some of the dynamics of the *Pilkada* discussed below.

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

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

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

In examining the elections within a post-conflict context, we propose a modified version of the 'positive peace-negative peace' framework developed by Johan Galtung (1969; 1975). Galtung observed a difference between the simple absence of 'personal' violence – which he termed 'negative peace' – and the absence of 'structural' violence – which he termed 'positive peace'. In the conflict resolution context, 'positive peace' has come to be understood as the existence of processes of engagement and reconciliation between contending parties, with the aim of eradicating underlying causes of conflict, or 'structural violence' (see Aklaev 1999 for an example of this framework applied to ethnic conflict resolution). In employing this distinction in our analysis of the *Pilkada* dynamics in Poso, we make two modifications to this framework. Firstly, we distinguish between elite level interactions and the 'grassroot' level, as depicted schematically in Table 1. Secondly, we distinguish between a 'strong' and a 'weak' form of negative peace. 'Strong' negative peace pertains to situations in which strong informal or formal institutions are in place to avoid a return to conflict, but which do not involve sufficient proactive engagement to lead to positive peace. 'Weak' negative peace refers to situations in which institutions are not in place, or only weakly so.

Table 1: Negative and positive peace at two levels

		ELITE LEVEL	
		Negative Peace	**Positive Peace**
GRASSROOTS LEVEL	**Negative Peace**	Neither elites nor grassroots engaged in positive peace-building; ethno-religious cleavages maintained and promoted; risk of return to conflict high, particularly in case of provocation	Elites engaged in positive peace-building and promoting civic identities at the local level which bridge ethno-religious cleavages; grassroots remain ostracised from each other. Likelihood of return to violence low to medium, depending on elites' ability to respond to provocation to prevent escalation
	Positive Peace	'Organic' reconciliation at the grassroots level and the desire to bridge cleavages in the community not matched by elite integration; likelihood of return to mass inter-group violence low, even in the event of provocation. If there is sustained provocation, however, this could undermine grassroots efforts	Both elites and grassroots engaged in positive peace-building, bridging religious groupings and promoting civic rather than separate ethno-religious regional identities; decreased incentives for us-them discourse, competition between groups, and mobilisation along religious lines; likelihood of return to violence negligible

2. Background to the *Pilkada:* Conflict in Central Sulawesi

After the fall of Soeharto and his authoritarian New Order regime, violent conflict became more widespread in Indonesia. In the literature on Indonesia, it is now commonplace to link the outbreak of violent conflicts that occurred across the archipelago to the transition of 1998 to , although in many cases violent conflict had already broken out in these regions (Bertrand 2004; Tadjoeddin 2002; Varshney, et al. 2004). However, for more than 30 years, potential inter-group tensions were systematically controlled in Indonesia via the security forces, government hegemony over the media[3], the implementation of legislation regulating and controlling ethnic, religious, race and inter-group relations *(Suku, Agama, Ras, Antar-Golongan - SARA)*, and sometimes the use of force. Furthermore, legislation on Village Governance (Law No. 5, 1979) homogenised village administrative structures, split the local power bases, forced these new units to compete for scarce development resources, and eroded the 'traditional' or informal forms of governance which had been one of the problem solving mechanisms in communities in the past (Guinness 1994). Communal disputes were not regulated through a robust legal justice system where conflicts could be systematically adjudicated by impartial third parties, perpetrators duly punished, or civil liberties maintained.

The post-1998 processes of democratisation saw grievances surface and the effects of a weak conflict resolution system culminate in communal tensions without adequate mediation and intervention mechanisms available to help reduce the violent impacts of conflict. It left different groups with a number of grievances, particularly in relation to differential access to the state (Bertrand 2004). Between 1999 and 2004, reaching a peak in 2000-2002, large-scale communal violence ensued in Central and West Kalimantan, Ambon and North

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[3] Sen and Hill (2000: 12) demonstrate that under the New Order, any text that might inflame SARA tensions was banned, limiting the news reporting of ethno-religious tensions and controlling the public interpretation of all socio-political conflicts, as well as to exclude and restrict languages used in the media in various ways.

Maluku, and Central Sulawesi amongst others. Varshney et al (2004) estimated the death toll from collective violence at over 10,700 between 1990 and 2003 with the bulk occurring in the later part of the period.

While Indonesia is approximately 85% Muslim and 10% Christian, traversing some 300 larger ethnic groups, in many (but not all) of the conflict areas - which are usually limited to particular districts - the size of the ethno-religious groups is relatively balanced. That is, ethno-religious group polarisation is regionally concentrated. Such are the demographics in Poso, Central Sulawesi where wide-spread communal violence has taken place. Many of these conflicts involve competing claims of indigeneity and grievances over political, economic and social marginalisation of one or the other group involved. The conflicts in such areas have not been completely removed from national politics and national elite interests, but at the same time have not been purely instrumentalised by those who can profit from conflict, with the long-standing grievances pervading poverty-stricken communities surfacing during the conflicts.

The implementation of decentralisation and regional autonomy in 2001 allowed diversity in the regions to flourish. Regional autonomy devolved significant powers and responsibilities to district and municipal (*kabupaten/kota*) governments, *not* the provincial governments (previously an extension of the central government in the regions), which has also changed the nature of local politics. Prior to and during this transition, minority ethnic groups have increasingly asserted their interests and also separate identities, which they claim to be of parallel importance to their national identity as Indonesians. This intensified when district splitting further concentrated the demographic representation of particular groups in a region, especially where there was a history of competition for power among groups and/or where one of the groups was perceived to have been marginalised from local politics over time. There is no better example for examining these dynamics than during the *Pilkada* in Indonesia, when local interests, power struggles, competition for resource control, and grievances come to the fore.

The local population of Poso is ethnically heterogeneous, with migrants from all over Sulawesi (mainly Muslim) and other islands, as well as the local Pamona people of which the majority profess the Christian faith. The ethnic Pekurehua, Bada and Besoa, who respectively inhabit the regions of North Lore, Central Lore and South Lore, give their own colour to the diversity of Poso, with ancestral and traditional *adat* (local custom and tradition) values still existing in many villages in these areas. The Lore and Pamona regions have also become a destination for many internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the conflict which has taken place in the district.   In the legislative branch of government, the 25-member district legislature (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah* – DPRD) is dominated by Partai Damai Sejahtera (The Prosperity for Peace Party - PDS), Golkar (Partai Golongan Karya - The Functional Groups Party), Partai Patriot (the Patriot Party), and Partai Bintang Reformasi (The Reform Star Party - PBR). [4]

In the post-Soharto period, much of the communal violence in Central Sulawesi was concentrated in the Poso district, where the aggregate Muslim and Christian groupings were almost equal in size prior to the outbreak of communal conflict in 1997, although more recent figures, following the splitting off of the Morowali and Tojo Una-Una districts show a population of 30% Muslim and 65% Christian in 2004 (BPS 1998; BPS 2005). The triggers for some of the major incidents of violence between 2000 and 2002 which resulted in the

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[4] Interview with chairman of DPRD commission D, 11 March 2005.

loss of some 2000 lives and widespread property destruction were youth clashes and seemingly small incidents between individuals.[5] However, local grievances and competition for political power form the backdrop to the clashes between local groups organised around their Muslim and Christian identities, both claiming some form of indigeneity or settlement rights in the region. Thus, the tensions leading to the communal clashes of 1998-2006, with groups mobilising around religious identity, were underpinned by socio-economic and political grievances rather than simply being a clash of religious ideology itself (e.g. Aragon 2000; Aragon 2001; Brown, et al. 2005; Cote 2005).

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

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

A brief overview of the chronology of the 1998-2006 conflict in Poso is important for understanding how social relations and trust broke down in the region, as well as local institutions (and national institutions represented at the local level) including those which facilitate and provide justice and conflict resolution services. The impact of the conflict in the Poso Pesisir sub-district is just one example of how devastating the conflict was for the citizens of the region. Poso Pesisir suffered the worst of the damage from the conflict, with over 6000 buildings destroyed, including 58 places of worship.[6] Many people were killed and injured and some 10,000 people were displaced. A number of issues served to fuel the conflict further: the poor resolution of some incidents in the conflict; the fact that few perpetrators of the violence were arrested; and, there were outside interests in sustaining the violence.   The interviews conducted for this research, on the potential for conflict in the *Pilkada*, indicated frustration with unresolved incidents pertaining to the conflict continues to dominate public discourse and increase the potential for conflict.

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[5] Interviews with Muslim and Christian leaders in Poso, May 2005
[6] Dampak Konflik Horizontal di Kabupaten Poso, BPS

It is evident from the chronology in the table below and the discussion above why, during the interviews conducted on the *Pilkada* dynamics, many expressed fears that communal conflict would result from the elections. Below we identify six inter-linked phases in the recent conflict history of Poso following the end of the New Order. These phases are characterised by trigger incidents between youths, mass mobilisation and violence around religious identity in Poso, claims to indigeneity and resources in the region, district politics, shifting allegiances, a breakdown in informal power-sharing agreements between Muslim and Christian leaders, local and supra-local elite interests and the prevailing national climate, as well as local and supra-local intervention mechanisms. The information in this table is taken from a variety of sources which are highlighted in the text. Where there is no specific reference provided, the information is based on triangulation of information from the fieldwork interviews.
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Table 2: Chronology of communal conflict and violence in Poso since 1998

Phase 1: December 1998 – Outbreak of Violence	
December 24, 1998, during Christmas Eve and Ramadan	A brawl between a Protestant and Muslim youth broke out in Poso. The incident quickly took on religious overtones; religious leaders from both groups joined to ban alcohol during Ramadan. Some Muslims began their own vigilante seizures, leading to clashes between Protestant youths defending shops selling alcohol (HRW 2002: 14).
December 27, 1998	On a wave of rumours of church burnings, the conflict escalated. On December 27, Christian district assembly member Herman Parimo from Tentena trucked in his militia, the Central Sulawesi Youth Movement (GPST), armed with machetes – although this is contested as some argue the group was entering Poso for post-Christmas celebrations. Hundreds of Muslims from other parts of Central Sulawesi arrived by truck, clashing with Christians in Poso near the police barracks. After a week, the violence subsided, leaving 200 people (mostly Protestants) injured, approximately 400 Protestant homes burned and scores of Protestant stores destroyed. Parimo was rumoured by Muslim accounts to be dissatisfied that Protestant politician Patiro was not nominated for the position of *Bupati (*District Head). Instead the incumbent Muslim was nominated for a third period, representing a breakdown in the informal power-sharing arrangement between Christians and Muslims. Parimo was later imprisoned along with seven other Protestants, while no Muslims were prosecuted. This seemingly one-sided application of the law fueled anger among Protestants. Some also see this as a period when tensions over corruption of KUT (Farmers Credit Union Funds) were beginning to appear. Interviews with both Christians and Muslims see this phase as being contained however, and not developing into full Muslim-Christian warfare.[7]
Phase 2: April 16-May 3, 2000 – Second Outbreak of Violence	
April 16, 2000	In response to the knifing of a Muslim youth, a mob of Muslims searched for the Protestant youth deemed responsible and began to destroy Protestant and Chinese homes, causing many to flee to the hills. *Brimob*, the riot control police unit (mobile brigade), was summoned by the Poso police to stop the burning of Protestant homes and churches. In the process of temporarily halting the burnings, *Brimob* shot and killed three Muslims, further incensing Muslims and leading to the recall of *Brimob* to Palu, the provincial capital.
End April-early May	After the Brimob left Poso, house burnings resumed and the violence escalated further. Ultimately, the violence was stopped by the mobilisation of 600 soldiers sent from Makassar. The second phase of conflict left at least seven killed, 38 injured, roughly 700 Protestant and Catholic homes destroyed and four churches burned. No one was prosecuted during the violence in Phase 2.
Phase 3: May 23, 2000-July 2000 – Christian Retaliation	
Beginning May 2000	Two successive phases of Muslim-dominated violence, amid a lack of even-handed and effective justice were followed shortly after by a third phase in which many more Muslims were killed by Christians to avenge previous bouts of violence. In this phase roughly a dozen Christian 'ninjas' attacked Muslims in a targeted raid against those to whom they attributed responsibility for much of the previous violence. Three Muslims were killed by the group and the church to which the group fled was burned down. Various episodes of violence broke out between Christians and Muslims, including an incident at a transmigration village near Kilo Sembilan (which was a site of migrant Muslim vs. indigenous Christian tensions from transmigration). In this incident, many Muslim men from the village were killed (even after surrendering) and there are reported incidences of women being subjected to

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[7] Series of 100 interviews in 2006.

	sexual violence. Various other attacks on Muslims occurred throughout this period, ultimately leading to the deaths of between 300 and 800 people, mostly Muslims. The fighting was brought under control after the military sent 1,500 additional soldiers, ten tanks and a combat unit to the area in addition to *Brimob* forces from Java. Soldiers secured hotspots, built barracks for IDPs and confiscated weapons.
August 2000	In August 2000, after the violence had subsided, top-down attempts at reconciliation were imposed through an agreement by the governors of Central, South and North Sulawesi to return IDPs safely with government aid. With President Wahid's participation, a peace ceremony was performed to reconcile both sides. However, these efforts did not emerge from the initiatives of the key local communities and their leaders, undermining the robustness of the peace efforts.
Phase 4: July 2001-December 2001	
July 2001	Low levels of violence continued, until members of the militant Muslim group, Laskar Jihad, arrived from outside the region. Fighting became increasingly well organised with more potent weapons involved, reportedly including automatic weapons. The entrance of Laskar Jihad led to more Christian deaths and many IDPs. In the beginning, the government did nothing to prevent Laskar Jihad from becoming involved in the violence, with Laskar Jihad even meeting with provincial and district officials after arriving. Laskar Jihad coordinated with local Muslims to burn Christian villages to the ground one at a time. The violence was ended by a new infusion of police and military troops. This phase saw increased violence that pitted the police and military against Laskar Jihad and Muslim fighters. Two incidents in Mapane and Toyado occurred in which the security forces were accused of retaliatory human rights violations, rather than upholding the rule of law. During this phase, at least 141 were left dead, 90 injured and over 2,400 houses razed.
Phase 5: The Malino Declaration, December 2001 – end 2004	
December 2001	In December 2001, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, then-Coordinating Minister for Politics and Security initiated a joint military-police Security Restoration Operation (Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan), which had three aims: 1) ending the violence; 2) expelling outsiders, confiscating weapons, carrying out legal actions; and 3) rehabilitating damaged infrastructure and reconciling communities.[8] At the same time, the National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) together with top security and cabinet officials initiated the Malino peace process on December 19-20, 2001. Representatives of both religious communities were chosen by each side, reflecting the geographic, ethnic, professional and thematic complexity of the conflict. The agreement that emerged from the process consisted of ten key points which were intended to address mostly the proximate causes of the violence by resorting to legal procedures, recognising pre-conflict rights and ownership, returning IDPs and rehabilitating infrastructure.
	Following the declaration, a period of weapons confiscation and security deployments, in addition to the overall weariness with the violence, helped to maintain basic security. To follow-up the Pokja Malino was created, working groups that would monitor and help implement various aspects of the Malino Declaration. Working groups were created at the provincial, district and sub-district levels on peace and reconciliation, economic rehabilitation, education and spiritual welfare.
	Following the declaration and the greater presence of security forces the nature of violence changed, forcing it underground. Instead of pitched battles among communities, violence tactics shifted to targeted terror. Many outsiders have left (following the dissolution of Laskar Jihad). However, mysterious bombings and shootings have continued. In October 2003, 13 people were killed in Poso and Morowali by masked gunmen and in March 2004 an attack on a church left a reverend dead (ICG 2005; Jakarta Post, 31 March 2004). The October attacks were quickly followed by the arrest of 18 local men with ties to the regional Southeast Asia terror group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) through a local militia called Mujahidin KOMPAK.
Phase 6: 2005 – 2006 – elections, on going tensions and relocation of IDPs	
	Throughout 2005, efforts were made to rebuild some of the burnt down areas; evidence of this can be seen at the famous *kilo sembilan* (9 kilometre) site where many were massacred during the conflict. There have been significant meetings between Christian and Muslim leaders, particularly prior to the District Head elections in June 2005. These meetings took place at the community level, rather than as a part of an elite peace accord. Bombs and other attacks continued sporadically in Poso throughout 2006, but this was increasingly related not to communal tensions but to corruption in the funds for IDPs. For instance, the beheading of the village chief of Pinedapa in October 2004 has been argued to be related to his refusal to sign for IDP funds that his village had not received. Similarly, the bombs outside two major NGOs in Poso in April 2005 occurred after the NGOs' attempts to

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[8] HRW 2002, 28-9

organise a public accusation of civil servants and legislators involved in corruption. Whilst these attacks did not provoke further group-based retaliatory violence or displacement – an indication of increasing confidence in the peace-building process – substantial disquiet remained in the district, not least over the frequent failure to bring those responsible for such attacks to justice.[9] Of greatest concern however in 2005 was the large bomb in May which went off in the Christian market of Tentena, in Pamona Utara area far from where previous incidents of violence had taken place . However, local leaders were able to calm fears and contain reprisals and vengeance seeking.

Since that time, three Christian school girls have been murdered, and in 2006 there were a series of bombs have been detonated in predominantly Christian areas, and three Christians on death row including the infamous Tibo were executed, increasing Muslim-Christian tensions as public rallies of Muslims called for the execution, while Christians called for a stay in the execution. In addition, dissatisfaction with security forces performance led to some low-level violence and property destruction directed against the state. While many of these events definitely undermined the peace process, they did not eventuate in grassroots inter-group warfare.

Public discourse in 2006 was concerned with granting amnesty to the perpetrators of violence during the conflict period (with the conflict period being contested, as well as whether such amnesty should extend to representatives of the state); the potential formation of an independent fact finding team (with the endorsement of the President) to investigate and expose what really went on during the conflict; the Tibo execution mentioned above and post-mortem evidence that the three prisoners had been tortured prior to execution; the extent of the involvement of state agencies and representatives in the conflict; whether or not the elected District Head falsified his education certificates for his candidacy during the 2005 elections; more exposure of corruption of IDP funds; and the impacts of one of the largest hydro-electricity projects in the country being built in Pamona Utara by a company owned by a part of the extended family of the Vice President.[10]

The conflict dynamics explored in the previous section suggest a 'strong' negative peace, in which certain conflict-avoidance institutions were in place, but there was little proactive engagement in search of a positive peace. On the one hand, conflict did not return to the region despite regular, often gruesome, provocations. On the other hand, tensions continue to simmer and the fragile peace was repeatedly threatened in 2005-6. The greatest opportunity for a positive peace to emerge – the Malino accords and, particularly, the subsequent formation of the 'Pokja Malino' working groups – were almost universally viewed as a disappointing failure by all sides in the conflict.[11]

3. The 2005 *Pilkada* in Poso
In examining the *Pilkada* in this context, we look first at the campaign period, identifying particularly different formal and informal 'interventions' from the elite level to ensure a peaceful campaign. We interpret this as evidence of the type of peace existent at the elite level. We then turn to the voting patterns themselves, taking these as evidence of the type of peace prevalent at the grassroots level. Before discussing the campaign, however, we briefly introduce the candidates, slates and parties contesting the election.

Altogether, five slates of candidates stood for the *Bupati*/Deputy *Bupati* elections in Poso, as detailed in Table 3 – the numberings given are the official ballot paper numbers, which were assigned randomly by the Election Commission (KPU, *Komisi Pemilihan Umum*). As we shall explore further below, each pairing comprised a Muslim and a Christian; in three out of the five pairings, the Christian candidate was for the *Bupati* with a Muslim as his deputy; and vice versa in the other two. Given the recent shift in population demographics following the district splitting and conflict dynamics, this represents both a logical power-sharing strategy

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[9] Interviews with community leaders, Poso, May 2005.
[10] Series of 100 interviews in 2006
[11] Interviews with community leaders, May 2005. See also Brown et al (2005).

to accommodate each side and a proportional weighting of lead candidates by population in the pairings.

Table 3: Candidates for the election

	Bupati Candidate	Background	Deputy *Bupati* Candidate	Background	Nominating Parties
1	Dede K Atmawijaya	Army officer, Muslim, Sundanese	Lis Sigilipu	Reverend, Christian, Pamona	Koalisi Poso Bersatu: PDIP; Partai Democrat; Pelopor
2	Piet Ingkiriwang	Retired police officer, Christian, Pamona	Muthalib Rimi	Businessman, Muslim, Bugis	Partai Damai Sejahtera
3	Muin Pusadan	Former *Bupati*, Muslim, Bungku	Osbert Walenta	Retired civil servant, Christian, Pamona	Koalisi Sintuwu Maroso: Partai Keadilan dan Persatuan Indonesia; Partai Amanat Nasional; Partai Bintang Reformasi
4	Frans Sowolino	Civil Servant, Christian, Pamona	Kahar Latjare	Politician, Muslim, Bugis	Partai Patriot Pancasila
5	Edy Bungkundapu	Bureaucrat, Christian, Pamona	Awad Alamri	Bureaucrat, Muslim, Arab	Partai Golkar

Source: *Seputar Rakyat*, 5:2; interviews with community leaders, Poso, May 2005

Broadly speaking, the candidate slates can be broken down into three groups within the framework elaborated above. Firstly, there were two slates with strong religious links, Nos. 2 and 3. Although these pairing had a Muslim and a Christian candidate, they were nominated by parties with very strong religious affiliations, and in each case the candidate for the *Bupati* position was from the religious community of the nominating party or coalition, indicating that the election was hedged on people voting for the lead candidate rather than the cross-religious group pairing. Ingkiriwang/Rimi were nominated by the *Partai Damai Sejahtera* (PDS, Prosperous Peace Party), which is a Christian party, while Pusadan/Walenta were nominated by a coalition of Islamic parties. Muin Pusadan had been the (appointed) Bupati when the conflict originally broke out, and many reports implicate him in the religious mobilisation that led to the violence (e.g. Human Rights Watch 2002). Widespread support for these two slates would suggest that at the grassroots level, a weak negative peace continued to prevail, with voters still relying on their 'own' parties and religious affiliations to protect their interests.

The second group of slates, Nos. 4 and 5, were much more secular, with no strong religious institutional links either on the part of the individuals themselves or the parties backing them. These two slates – Sowolino/Latjare and Bungkundapu /Alamri – were respectively nominated by Partai Patriot Pancasila and Golkar. Given that Partai Patriot Pancasila was itself formed as an off-shoot of the Golkar youth organisation, these two slates were very much representative of the old 'New Order' politics, particularly the Bungkundapu/Alamri pairing, where both contenders were from the bureaucracy, Bungkundapu being the secretary of the DPRD.[12] This is important because in other regions affected by conflict, such as North Maluku, former New Order elites did very well in the *Pilkada* (Smith, 2006). Voter support for these candidates would be indicate of a stronger, but still negative, grassroots peace; none of these parties or candidates were overtly religiously-biased, but their New Order linkages would suggest that support was based on some nostalgia for the kind of coercive negative peace that prevailed under Suharto, as epitomised by the SARA regulations.

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[12] Interview, *Pilkada* candidate, May 2005.

Support for the remaining slate – No.1, Atmawijaya/Sigilipu – could be taken as stronger evidence of the emergence of a more positive peace at the grassroots level. For example, it would indicate that there was a true and voluntary grassroots movement towards civic identities formation and ethno-religious identity bridging at the local level, which would decrease the incentives for competition and mobilisation along ethno-religious lines. This slate appears to have been based more on the individual, cross-religious appeal of both candidates rather than on any strong political or party affiliation. The candidate for *Bupati*, Dede Atmawijaya, was a high-ranking police officer in Poso who was widely credited with having protected Muslims from Christian attacks during the violence, but was also seen by both sides as fair and neutral. A Sundanese Muslim without strong religious convictions, he is known locally for his shirtless karaoke carousing and his active involvement in youth forums and other reconciliation activities. His running partner, Lis Sigilipu, is a senior member of the Central Sulawesi Church synod, and was a delegate at the original Malino discussions and claimed wide respect among Muslims. Although Sigilipu herself was a long-time Golkar activist, the parties backing this slate – Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's Partai Democrat, Megawati Sukarnoputri's PDIP and the smaller Partai Pelopor – were broadly linked to the post-New Order elite at the national level.

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

However, the KPU was active at every stage of the process and conscious of the need to respond quickly to complaints, as well as to engage with candidates and coordinate with security forces and local leaders to ameliorate potential triggers that could undermine the election process. When interviewed shortly before the official campaign period began, the chairman of the Poso KPU was clearly of the view that the most important task facing the organisation was not just to implement a fair election, but to be widely *seen* as doing so: 'The excesses of the KPU were very worrying before, especially the central [i.e. national-level] KPU'.[13] The KPU thus undertook a number of programmes to ensure that such activities as the verification of candidate nominations were conducted with full transparency: 'At every level of the process, we disseminate to the press, changes at any level: from the beginning, result and the end will all be distributed to the media'.[14] Political observers confirmed that the KPU was broadly effective in reaching the grassroots and conducting an open and fair election.[15] Furthermore, when considering the peaceful implementation of the elections, several different candidates, from the losing candidates on both the Christian and

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[13] '*Kemudian ekses KPU memang sangat menggangu kemarin, ekses KPU Pusat*', interview Yasin Mangun, Palu, 19 May 2005.
[14] '*Setiap tahapan, setiap proses, kita lansir [diangkat di media] terus, setiap perubahan tahapan: memulai, hasil, dan akhir semua dilansir media*', interview, Yasin.
[15] Interview, Poso-based journalist, 17 May 2006.

Muslim sides to the *Bupati,* were happy with the measures the KPU took to ensure violence did not break out.[16]

As already mentioned, one of the most important interventions in ensuring a peaceful election was the pairing of Muslim and Christian candidates on each slate. Our informants differ on how this came about. One of the candidates whom we interviewed asserted that it had been in response to grassroots demands, but the KPU chairman claimed the proposal for such pairings had come from the KPU itself, although acknowledging that 'all of society wanted such combinations'.[17] Other informants suggested that motivation for such pairing came from basic political considerations by the political parties and the recognition that even a Christian candidate would find it hard to win in the predominantly Christian areas without any Muslim backing, and vice versa, which can partly be explained by the conflict dynamics, and partly by the changing nature of local politics triggered by the demographic change bought about by the district splitting. Whatever its origins, the cross-religious pairing was widely interpreted as a necessary, although not necessarily sufficient, condition for ensuring that religious mobilisation did not emerge during the campaign period.

Another important characteristic of the candidates themselves was the strong political and personal links between the many candidates of different slates, although not as strong as was observed in other areas of Indonesia such as Bandar Lampung.[18] The Golkar candidate for *Bupati*, Edy Bungkundapu, for instance, was related to the husband of Lis Sigilipu; Sigilipu herself was the cousin of Piet Ingkiriwang. Although perhaps representing a degree of 'elite capture' of local politics (cf. Hadiz 2003), all with their own big business backings originating from within and outside the region, as well as party backing this personal interlinking of candidates was also presented as an important factor in keeping the campaign and election peaceful – as one candidate told us, 'we let society understand that we are related, so there aren't quarrels'.[19] Even the head of the local Election Commission had strong political links; his father and sister were both Golkar members of, respectively, the DPR-GR (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat – Gotong Royong, People's Representative Council – Mutual Self-Help) and DPRD (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah, Regional Representative Council).[20] Each of the candidates attempted to present themselves in the best possible light in terms of their past performance in both the conflict and local politics.

One respondent contended that the leader of the winning slate, Inkiriwang, who had only engaged in local politics in the six months preceding the elections, was able to win the election due to his 'newness', his seemingly 'clean slate' in terms of corruption, claims to indigeneity, and lack of previous political involvement,[21] it is important to note that in contrast to many of the other District Head elections in the country, party backing mattered in the Poso *Pilkada*.[22] Given the Christian majority in the district, the popularity of PDS and its ties to the Christian church, and the grass-roots concern for peace and security, it is not surprising that the local boy, Christian ex-Police Chief, Inkiriwang, who ran on the PDS slate came out in front of other *putra daerah* (local sons), despite his recent split from the party

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[16] Interviews with candidates between July-September, 2006
[17] 'Semua ke masyarakat yang ingin kombinasi', interview, Yasin.
[18] Interviews with community leaders, Bandar Lampung, May 2005. In Bandar Lampung, where there was also five slates, virtually all the candidates had a close familial relationship with the notable exception of the PKS slate.
[19] *'Kita beri pemahaman kepada masyarakat bahwa kita bersaudara, jangan berkelahi'*; interview with candidate, May 2005.
[20] Interview, KPU representative, May 2005.
[21] Interview, Poso activist, May 2006
[22] Thanks to Benny Subianto for this point.

and loyalties to the President's Partai Democrat. His competitors had less money, a civil service background and less popular party backing such as Frans Sowolino. Sowolino was popular and respected by both Christians and Muslims but spent a meagre Rp280Billion (at the lower end of the outlays by the slates).[23]

Beyond the election machinery and the candidates themselves, civil society and community leaders also developed interventions to ensure the peaceful conduct of the elections, and to at least publicly support the implementation of violence-free elections. Most important here was probably the series of meetings and forums set up by Ustaz Adnan Arsal, an influential Islamic cleric, and Rinaldy Damanik, a Christian pastor who had been imprisoned after a dubious trial in 2003 for possession of weapons, but later released after a campaign led by a number of Islamic clerics. Highly influential within their own communities – Damanik has since been elected president of the Central Sulawesi synod – the Adnan-Daminik meetings were intended to set up a cross-religious forum to discuss issues of concern to both communities and to develop an agenda for the future of Poso.[24] This was also backed by a public embrace by the two leaders, who had previously embarked on somewhat frosty relations.

The forum established by the leaders never came to fruitiojn, which would have been, arguably, the strongest evidence of an emerging 'positive' peace in Poso. There are varied reasons why the alliance broke down in 2006, in particular the two leaders felt that the alliance was becoming politicised which had the potential to undermine its very achievements by taking it out of the politically neutral peace-building zone in which it began. However, two points are worth noting here. Firstly, the date on which the public announcement of the forum was meant to be held coincided with the Tentena bomb. Secondly, there may have been irresolvable disagreement on the core issue of the status of Kota Poso, the main city in Poso district. Despite the Christian majority in Poso district, Kota Poso is mainly Muslim and Adnan was a strong advocate of its separation as a district in its own right; given its position as the main economic hub of Poso district, however, the Christian community was strongly opposed to this proposal.[25]

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

To evaluate the grassroots perspective, we turn to the election results themselves. The elections were won convincingly by the pairing of Piet Ingkiriwang and Muthalib Rimi on the PDS-nominated slate. Although they did not win an absolute majority of the vote, their share of the vote – 42.6% – was 20 points higher than the second-placed candidates and they came first in every sub-district except Poso Kota and Poso Pesisir, where they came third, two areas where there is a higher concentration of Muslim residents.

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[23] Interviews with candidates, September 2006
[24] Interview, Adnan Arsal, Poso, May 2005.
[25] The issue of a separate district of Kota Poso is also connected with the ongoing political maneuverings associated with the formation of a new province of East Sulawesi (*Sulawesi Timur*), but space does not permit a discussion of this.

Table 4: Poso election results by sub-district

	1.Dede/Lies		2.Piet/Thalib		3.Muin/Osbet		4.Frans/Kahar		5.Edy/Awad	
	Vote %	Rank	Vote %	Rank	Vote %	Rank	Vote %	Rank	Vote %	Rank
Lage	9.6	4	47.3	1	9.6	3	25.4	2	8.2	5
Poso Kota	14.6	4	18.9	3	31.2	1	11.2	5	24.1	2
Poso Pesisir	10.9	5	22.9	3	25.9	1	16.0	4	24.3	2
Poso Pesisir Selatan	7.0	4	66.0	1	4.6	5	8.2	3	14.3	2
Poso Pesisir Utara	16.5	4	26.8	1	19.7	3	21.8	2	15.2	5
Pamona Utara	6.9	4	56.1	1	2.8	5	22.9	2	11.3	3
Pamona Selatan	10.6	3	38.2	1	9.7	4	35.3	2	6.2	5
Pamona Timur	1.7	5	60.8	1	4.6	4	24.5	2	8.4	3
Pamona Barat	3.7	4	61.8	1	2.6	5	22.5	2	9.4	3
Lore Utara	18.9	3	40.5	1	12.3	4	21.0	2	7.3	5
Lore Selatan	4.8	4	65.3	1	2.4	5	16.0	2	11.%	3
Lore Tengah	5.9	5	63.8	1	7.2	4	12.8	2	10.3	3
POSO	**10.3%**	**5**	**42.6**	**1**	**12.9%**	**4**	**20.8%**	**2**	**13.3**	**3**
Christian-maj. kec.	*9.4%*	*4*	*49.8%*	*1*	*7.6%*	*5*	*23.4%*	*2*	*9.8%*	*3*
Muslim-maj. kec.	*13.4%*	*4*	*20.2%*	*3*	*29.4%*	*1*	*12.8%*	*5*	*24.2%*	*2*

Source: *Seputar Rakyat*, 5:2

Despite the various interventions to prevent or reduce ethnic and religious tensions during the election, candidates nominated by religiously-based parties – support for whom we took to be representative of a 'weak' negative peace as voters reverted to their religious affiliations as a means of protecting group interests – garnered more than half the votes cast. Indeed, in *every* sub-district, such candidates came first. The PDS-backed Ingkiriwang-Rimi slate won in all the Christian majority sub-districts; the Pusadan-Walenta slate backed by the coalition of Islamic parties won in the two Muslim majority sub-districts of Poso Kota and Poso Pesisir. There was, however, a noticeable difference in the margin of victory. In many of the Christian areas, Ingkiriwang won an absolute majority of the votes, taking almost exactly half the votes overall. By contrast, Pusadan-Walenta won both the Muslim-majority sub-districts, but only as the largest minority, with less than 30% per cent overall in the two sub-districts. In addition, Ingkiriwang-Rimi did much better in the Muslim areas than Pusadan-Walenta did in the Christian areas.

The bloc of former New Order parties and their nominees – slate Nos. 4 and 5 – support for whom we took to be representative of a stronger but still negative grassroots peace as this promotes old, more coercive civic nationalism – won just over a third of the vote in combination. Surprisingly, however, each of the slates' share of the vote differed markedly in the Muslim and Christian areas – the Partai Patriot-backed Sowolino/Latjare slate performed much better in the Christian-majority sub-district, coming in second to the Ingkirinwang slate in all but one; in contrast, the Golkar-backed Bungkundapu/Alamri performed much better in the Muslim sub-districts, coming second to the Islamic coalition in both. This religious bias in the votes for both of these slates suggests that our original assumptions about the secular nature of these slates may have been unfounded, but these slates were clearly less overtly religious. Indeed, it is worth noting that the Golkar slate which came second in the Muslim areas was led by a Christian nominee for *Bupati*, who out-performed the alternative Muslim candidate, Dede Atmawijaya.

Finally, the Atmawijaya/Sigilipu pairing – support for whom we took to be most representative of an agenda for positive peace as they are representative of new civic

regional identities which have the potential to build cross-religious group ties at the local level – came in fifth overall, garnering barely a 10th of the vote. In one sub-district – Pamona Timur – they won less than 2% of the vote, the lowest of any of the candidates in any of the sub-districts. In contrast to all the other slates, however, there was considerably less variation in their votes between Christian and Muslim areas, suggesting indeed that they were broadly perceived as non-biased by both sides.

Despite several tense moments during the elections, with protests staged at the KPU office and threats of mass mobilisation, civil society did not engage in collective violence during the election period. The results of the election, however, suggest that the peace was overwhelmingly negative at the grassroots level, with more than half the population voting for religious party-backed slates representative of a 'weak' negative peace and protecting own religious group interests, and another third voting for the 'strong' negative candidates from the old New Order elites, again with some apparent religious bias and loyalty to the more coercive nationalism practices of the past. Only around one in 10 voters opted for the slate most associated with a positive peace agenda at the elite level, that could build civic rather than ethno-religious ties and decrease incentives to mobilise based on ethno-religious cleavages. The results of the vote in Poso, however, did not, at least at the time of the election, convey mass voluntary support for breaking down religious barriers and bridging ethno-religious cleavages.

4. Conclusions

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

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

This narrative undoubtedly carries more than an element of truth, but the analysis of the Poso *Pilkada* in this paper, a critical moment when a return to violence was widely feared, suggests some important nuances. Put simply, it is by no means clear that 'the people' are

the single primary agents preventing a return to violence in the district. While it is clear that the failure of the justice system to pursue an even-handed and thorough approach to conflict-resolution continues to cause tension, responses to incidents of provocation and the development of institutions of mediation have largely been a product of local elite-based interaction, rather than 'grassroots' initiatives. Rather than giving a strong political mandate to elites engaged in on-going peace-building activities, voting patterns instead suggest a continuing 'bunker mentality' in which religious parties are seen as the best option for the protection of group interests.

In some but not all quarters in Poso, the results of the *Pilkada* indicate there are movements at the elite level to promote local civic identities and bridge ethno-religious cleavages. However, at the time of the election in 2005, the populace was mainly voting in favour of slates with strong religious group backing as a means of protecting their interests. Since this time however, there is evidence to suggest that cross-group collective peace-building processes are emerging from the grassroots through civil society activities. This has, at the very least, been evidenced by the restrained reaction of the populace by not engaging in riots or inter-group clashes at more recent but pivotal points in the conflict history of the region: at the time of the execution of three Christians charged with committing atrocities during the conflict; during the sporadic bombings that occurred prior to and after these executions; the murder of three school girls; and other similar incidents which have taken place following the elections.

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