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Criminality and the political economy of security in Lombok

Over the past years, Lombok's primary instruments for re-defining community can be found in its anti-criminal militias. Starting in 1998, *pamswakarsa* or local security groups absorbed roughly 25% of Lombok's adult men for the sole purpose of hunting down the island's thieves. Led by the island's most powerful noble houses and Muslim clerics, *pamswakarsa* waged war against long-standing criminal networks. As these groups grew in force, regional and national actors attempted to recruit militia leaders and their masses to support their political or economic agenda. By early 2000, *pamswakarsa* leaders could claim as many as 400,000 trained members and many more voters to support the political causes of their choosing. By 2003, there were already reports of district head candidates recruiting both organized thief-networks and anti-crime militias to demonstrate side-by-side in support of the same candidate's election. In order to understand how, why and under what conditions such contradictory events have come to pass, we need to understand what happened when Suharto's control over criminality and security was subverted by an economic crisis. How could criminality assume such an important position in defining power and authority in Lombok?

Lombok had always been famous for its long-standing and traditional thief networks. These networks grew more powerful during the economic crisis when remittances sent from Sasak labourers were suddenly worth several times their previous value. Lombok's thieves preyed upon families with remittance-bought commodities creating a crime wave of unprecedented intensity. While traditionally thieves only held stolen goods and returned them to their owners upon receipt of a *tebusan* or ransom payment, the anti-crime militias formed by Lombok's Islamic clerics or Tuan Guru did not attend to the ransom of stolen goods. Instead, cleric backed militias shifted their moral attention away from the traditional return of the stolen article to focus instead the arrest and execution of the unrepentant thief.

Lombok's anti-crime militias have helped to at once redefine political participation for Sasaks and have contributed to the emergence of more broadly

Map 11. Lombok

defined community-level vigilantism. In order to comprehend how these emergent groups were able to grow so quickly we must focus at once on the events of the past five years in Lombok as well as the long-standing cultural and political tensions between rival religious groups, ambitious nobles and the political designs of the regimes that ruled over them. Within these shifting frames of national politics and intra-Lombok competition, various new and old forms of cultural legitimacy have coalesced to redefine self-presentation through theft and vigilantism in post-Suharto Lombok.

Criminality in a colonial framework

Lombok lies east of Bali and is home to 2.4 million inhabitants. Ethnic Sasak Muslims make up 92% of the population with minorities of some 60,000 Balinese Hindus and 20,000 Sasak Buddhists, mostly in North Lombok. Historically, western Lombok developed closer ties with Bali while eastern Lombok was economically and ideologically (through Islamic affinities) linked to Buginese Muslim kingdoms in Sulawesi to the north and Sumbawa to the east. Since the mid-eighteenth century, two East Balinese royal houses ruled over Lombok until Islamic brotherhoods based in East Lombok revolted against the Balinese colonizers in 1891. Although the Balinese subdued the rebellion, the Muslim brotherhoods asked the Dutch to assist them in their rebellion. After defeating the Balinese in 1894 the Dutch took over control of Lombok, but continuous revolts against the Dutch tax laws plagued colonial administrators until the Japanese invaded Indonesia in 1942.

The Dutch introduced forms of indirect rule that discriminated against Muslim commoners and exalted golden age nobles over counter-colonial leaders. As a result, colonial authorities imprisoned Muslim teachers and disbanded their followings while they rehabilitated Sasak nobility to the position of sub-altern district heads. As district heads and colonial bureaucrats, Sasak nobles re-calibrated their daughters' bride-prices (*aji krama*) according to their contrived claims to golden age descent. Meanwhile, the children of famous Muslim clerics were denied access to colonial schools or patronage.

The Dutch support of golden age legitimacy facilitated the administration of colonial taxation through Sasak nobles but, in so empowering the past against the present, also contributed to the messianic nature of peasant rebellions waged against Sasak nobles. In contrast to the Islamist rebellions against Balinese rule, the messianic revolts of the early twentieth century laid claim to the same golden kingdom of Selaparang that colonial forces used to legitimize the sub-altern nobles of their bureaucracy. Ironically, the Dutch colonial forces were later forced to issue a decree outlawing the use of golden age themes to counter Dutch rule over the island.

Whereas Islamic leaders were penalized and monitored under the Dutch, during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia (1942-1945) Japanese authorities made use of Lombok's Islamic leadership to train Islamic guerrilla units throughout the country to fight the allied forces. Many of Lombok's future political and religious leaders underwent this training. Arab-Indonesian intellectual, Saleh Sungkar was one such figure. Head of Lombok's most important Muslim organization, the Persatuan Ummat Islam Lombok (PUIL, Lombok Association for Muslims), during the Japanese occupation, he became an important reformer.¹ He turned the local branch of Indonesia's largest Islamic party, Masyumi, which he chaired, into an organization that welcomed commoners and nobles alike. After years of political favouritism under the Dutch, Sasak nobles worried that Sungkar's reform would threaten their privileged position. Because of Sungkar's populist policies, many of Lombok's nobles (*mamiek*) left Masyumi to join the Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI, Indonesian Nationalist Party), where they enjoyed close ties to the military and wealthy Balinese aristocrats.²

Saleh Sungkar represented Masyumi in Lombok's district parliament when he was mysteriously murdered in 1952. At the time, he was head of Lombok's district parliament. After his death, several fellow reformers joined Lombok's branch of the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI, the Indonesian Communist Party). Muhammed Ba'asyir, a leading Arab member of the Masyumi party under Sungkar, became Lombok's most outspoken advocate of the communist party.³ Counter to conventional stereotypes that the PKI was atheistic, modernist Islamic leaders in Lombok joined the PKI as a counter-gesture to Sasak nobles who opposed Masyumi's plans to reform the rice distribution on the island. In November 1965, Lombok's Muslim youth groups, backed by the military, started to kill at least 11,000 Sasak 'communists' for their involvement in land reform and social welfare programs conducted by the PKI in the 1960s.

¹ *Satu abad kota Selong* 1998. Lombok's most important religious leaders also founded important *pesantren* during this period. Lombok's largest is Nahdlatul Wathan in Pancor, Selong East Lombok. Others are Nurul Yakin in Praya founded by Tuan Guru Makmun in 1931, Darul Qur'an in Bengkel founded in 1940 by Tuan Guru Haji Hambali, and Assyidiyah in Gunung Sari founded by TGH Jafar.

² For a more comparative view of post-colonial elites in Lombok and Kalimantan see Magenda 1991.

³ Muhammed Ba'asyir was upset about the political assassination of Saleh Sungkar, who was head of the local parliament for Masyumi at the time. In protest of Sungkar's death Baisir left Masyumi and formed the PKI (Sairul S. Lubis 1962).

The New Order

When the killings were over, Suharto's political vehicle, Golkar, worked hard to co-opt Lombok's clerics and community leaders. Historically, they had strong alliances to the large Muslim political parties, Nahdlatul Ulama and Masyumi. But in the elections of 1971, one of Lombok's most important Tuan Guru sided with Golkar, reportedly as a sign of gratitude to Suharto for his role in destroying the PKI. In return, the military and other government officials assisted Tuan Guru in their efforts to proselytize (*dakwah*) in North Lombok's traditionalist hinterland. The primary target of these *dakwah* campaigns were the Wetu Telu communities of northern Lombok. The Wetu Telu posed a hazard to Islamist campaigns because of their unique combination of Sasak ritualism and counter-reformist Islamic priesthods. Together with sympathetic members of the local military command, Tuan Guru forced many hamlets to replace Wetu Telu tradition with more orthodox forms of Islamic ritual.⁴

Two of the most powerful proselytizers were Tuan Guru Haji (TGH) Mutawalli from Jeroaru, East Lombok, and Tuan Guru Haji Zainuddin Abdul Madjid from Pancor, East Lombok, the founder of the largest Lombok-based religious institution, Nahdlatul Wathan (NW). TGH Abdul Madjid created an impressive network of educational institutions such as Islamic day schools (*madrasah*) and boarding schools (*pesantren*) while TGH Mutawalli was responsible for the conversion programs in northwest Lombok. In addition to his role in the development of educational institutions, TGH Abdul Madjid also undertook attacks against East Lombok's Chinese minority in 1965-1966 (Fathurahman Zakaria 2001). TGH Abdul Madjid's role in the eradication of communist and Chinese merchants in East Lombok attracted the interest of Suharto's military who later requested him to mobilize support for Golkar among Lombok's religious clerics in the 1971 elections. TGH Abdul Madjid agreed and he continued to serve as Golkar's campaign manager in East Lombok for the 1971 and 1977 national parliamentary elections. Golkar won majorities in Lombok at both elections, and TGH Abdul Madjid represented the province of West Nusa Tenggara in the National Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat, MPR).

In 1982, however, at a time when many Muslim leaders were unhappy with Suharto government policies, TGH Abdul Madjid announced he was leaving it to Nahdlatul Wathan followers to determine their own choice of

⁴ For instance, in Tanjung, a sub-district of West Lombok historically allied to Balinese forces, local military officers worked hand in hand with East Lombok's Tuan Guru to destroy sacred sites and ancestral altars as part of a broader effort to dissuade Muslims from performing non-Islamic rituals. As late as 1974, soldiers from Tanjung's military command forced villagers to stand in rows on the community soccer field to profess their adherence to the prophet and holy book of their religion or be considered *kafirs* (infidels) – in effect criminal communists.

party.⁵ Consequently, his supporters were arrested or intimidated, and government aid to NW schools was cut (Muhammad Nasihuddin Badri 2001:23-25). Largely due to pressure from the military, Abdul Madjid was forced to return to Golkar before the elections of 1987 and remained a supporter until his death in October 1997.

Nahdlatul Wathan grew more powerful than ever under TGH Abdul Madjid's stewardship during the 1990s, but when he died in October 1997, a conflict erupted between his two daughters over who was to replace him, both as head of NW and as a central player in the political dynamics of East Lombok. Less than a year later, Suharto resigned from office. The end of the New Order and the death of TGH Abdul Madjid left Eastern Lombok without the leadership that had guided their institutions for more than 40 years. In the wake of their father's death, TGH Abdul Madjid's daughters organized militias to fight a battle over legitimate rule of Nahdlatul Wathan. Other leaders took advantage of Lombok's situation to fill the gap in clerical leadership. Guru Ukit and TGH Sibaway, the sons of the aforementioned Islamic proselytizer, TGH Mutawalli, rose to the occasion to form Amphibi, an anti-crime militia that would later become Lombok's largest and most important collective of vigilantes.

The emergence of community-based vigilantism

With Suharto's regime in shambles, local claims to authority and security stimulated an inward-looking return to the community, while fears of 'phantom' provocateurs operating at the national level imbued local vigilantism in Lombok.

Indonesia's civilian militias are not an entirely new phenomenon. In 1997, the armed forces added to their already extensive arsenal of civilian auxiliaries a voluntary civilian community policing body called *pamswakarsa*.⁶

After Suharto had stepped down, many provincial governments saw the formation of local *pamswakarsa* as a 'grassroots' security system capable of replacing Suharto's top-down military style of authoritarian rule.⁷ Lombok's

⁵ He called the choice *ban-bin-bun* meaning respectively *banteng* (bull, the symbol of the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (PDI), Indonesian Democratic Party); *bintang* (star, symbol of the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP), Muslim United Development Party) and *bunut* (from the Sasak word for banyan tree, the symbol of Golkar).

⁶ Awaloedin Djamin 2002:2. Although this term only became popular after the 1997 legislation it was first mentioned by then Wapang Kopkamtib, Jendral Widjono Suyono, when he suggested that a self-funded (*swadana*) and voluntary (*swadaya*) civilian security force be encouraged to provide security for residential areas (*lingkungan pemukiman*) and work environments (*lingkungan kerja*). Kepolisian Republik Indonesia (Polri), Jakarta, Amanat Kapolri, 1-7-1979.

reformist and conservative leaders welcomed *pamswakarsa* as a new form of 'people's power' capable of taking care of security concerns. *Pamswakarsa* were interpreted as a by-product of regional autonomy initiatives and a quasi-Islamic form of moral vigilantism where citizens were free to impose their own moral sanctions upon their crime-ridden communities.⁸

The economy of theft in contemporary Lombok

Most people in Lombok appealed to local security groups because of the crisis-related crime wave hitting both Lombok's rural and urban communities in 1998 and 1999. The monetary crisis had pushed Lombok's peasantry into destitution. Lombok's poorest peasantry relied on wage labor, and not regular harvests, to support their families. In the village of Pemenang Timur, where I was conducting research, over 60% of the farm land was owned by loan sharks who held ownership over harvests until the often small loan was repaid. During the economic crisis not only did the labourers' wages not go up but the everyday costs of sustaining their households made it impossible to recover their pawned property. Conversely, the crisis weakened rupiah inflated remittance payments sent by Lombok's migrant workers in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia to several times their previous value.⁹ For instance, the numbers of formal migrant workers sent by the West Nusa Tenggara (Nusa Tenggara Barat; NTB) Department of Labour abroad doubled from 10,264 workers in 1997-1998 to 20,893 in the crisis years of 1998-1999 most of whom went to Malaysia, the cheapest destination for Indonesian workers to reach. The majority of NTB's workers sent abroad during those years were undereducated, under skilled workers from rural Lombok and Sumbawa. The total remittance payments sent home by these labourers increased even more dramatically. In 1997-1998, migrant workers sent home Rp 37,122,960,000. Twice that number of workers sent home Rp 243,586,395,107 in 1998-1999.

Largely because of remittance-related purchases, criminals were not only making off with cattle but were also stealing valuable goods such as

⁷ Regional autonomy Law no. 22/1999 made vague references to the increased autonomy of village authorities in the management of community security.

⁸ There also developed militias that defended the interests of particular ethnic groups. Lombok's Sasaks had their own version of such an organization called *Desak Datu Sasak*. Although they were primarily known as an organization prepared to defend any cause that paid, they were regularly involved in pro-Sasak and anti-outsider demonstrations. This was most obvious when they set up roadblocks to check cars for Australian tourists in protest of the Australia's military involvement in the UN peacekeeping forces operating in East Timor.

⁹ Figures released by the West Nusa Tenggara Provincial Department of Labour Office in Mataram, Lombok.

televisions and motorcycles purchased by migrant labourers upon return to their villages.¹⁰ According to one Amphibi militia member, Lombok's thieves were becoming so 'picky' that, after scouring a house for precious goods, the thief left a note for the owner of a black and white television reading, 'get a colour TV and then I'll come and steal it!' Although Lombok's *pamswakarsa* later developed ties to the military, their organizations began with a primary focus on communal security (and not the moral erasure of theft) as the subject of their vigilance.

The rise of anti-crime militias in Lombok was particularly unusual because Lombok was famous for sustaining such a large group of well known and, in many instances, popularly admired criminals. Each of Lombok's districts possesses a village where thieves are not only treated with respect but acquire rank according to their accomplishments. In northern Lombok, for instance, the thieves of Bon Jeruk were famous for elaborate raids on rival communities. A Sasak leader in the West Lombok village of Pemenang, Amaq Nursih, described to me how, after a group of men in a neighbouring village succeeded in killing the criminal attempting to rob them, the thief's family came from Bon Jeruk to retrieve the body.

They treated the corpse of the man, a criminal, like the body of a hero just returned from war. If we succeed in capturing and killing one of Bon Jeruk's thieves, we have to be prepared to face the consequences. If a Bon Jeruk man is killed in your village, his family will hunt you down until you or one of your kin is dead.

In January 1998, during the height of the crime wave, some of Mataram's young gang members continued to speak admiringly of their thief heroes who were so *wanen* (brave, invulnerable) that they could stop a car full of wealthy tourists with their bare hands.

Despite long and vigorous police campaigns against crime and criminal networks during the New Order, theft in Lombok has always been very persistent. This was especially evident during the post-Suharto years when unemployment and remittance payments from international migrant labourers dispersed wealth and poverty in uneven and sudden spurts throughout the poorer regions of Central and eastern Lombok. For Lombok's unemployed men few options were available. Those with family assets sufficient to serve as collateral against a loan paid the hefty 'departure' fee required to become a migrant labourer in Malaysia.¹¹ For them (about 100,000 of Lombok's 2.4 million residents) their future was relatively bright. Most of

¹⁰ The prices of new motorbikes and televisions inflated much later than staple goods or *sembako* (*sembilan bahan pokok*; nine staple goods that included rice, sugar and cooking oil). This is one of the reasons why remittance recipients purchased TVs and motorbikes.

¹¹ Tenaga Kerja Indonesia (TKI, Indonesian migrant labourer) or Tenaga Kerja Wanita (TKW, female migrant labourer).

Lombok's men had no such assets, however, and they were forced to choose between part-time jobs as labourers or to become criminals.

Many of Lombok's non-criminal men chose to join *pamswakarsa*, which offered forms of masculine and symbolic capital similar to the bravado enjoyed by the island's 'noble' thieves. This similarity presented *pamswakarsa* as more than mere village thugs. Instead, they were brave defenders led by Lombok's Tuan Guru Muslim clerics who equipped them with a mystical invulnerability and an Islamist air of moral righteousness. They could also claim to be among the men responsible for dispelling Lombok of its most cunning criminals. For the other men who chose crime as their means of self-actualization, they had the opportunity to apprentice themselves to Lombok's great thieves and to study the irresistible arts of illusion and deceit.

Reciprocities of theft

Whether respected or not, many of Lombok's criminals are not merely thieves but also ritual practitioners capable of preserving a man's dignity during the ritual theft of his bride (*merariq* or *merangkat*). Many great criminals are also skilled magicians who pass on the arts of invulnerability to their disciples. Great thieves are referred to as the 'Lord of Thieves' (Datu Maling) and are often consulted by politicians and the military. To speak of more practical matters, to this day the best way for a groom to show respect for his future in-laws is to steal his bride, their daughter, from beneath their protective roof.¹² This is not to say that theft in Lombok is culturally sanctioned. Instead, it is important to recognize that Sasak forms of ritual theft evidenced in marital rites and spirit loss (*ketemuq*) are referred to and dealt with in the same way as those who suffer from criminal theft. Spirit loss (*ketemuq*), marriage by theft (*kawin maling*) and criminal theft (*memaling*) are all perceived as forms of partial loss and not 'total' theft. Just as a family loses its daughter to marital theft, or a farmer is deprived of his spiritual vitality (Sk. *semangat*) by an envious spirit, victims of theft in Lombok are rarely fully disowned of their stolen goods. Instead, victims of such thievery are given the opportunity to recover the stolen object. In the case of bride-theft, the thieving son-in-law is made to repay the family for their loss (of a daughter) in the form of 'prices

¹² I would distinguish Sasak forms of *kawin maling* (marriage by theft) from Balinese or other 'mock theft' marriages (*kawin lari*) practiced throughout the archipelago. In Lombok, the actual theft of a bride is carefully regulated by formal and traditional decrees. In fact hefty fines are levied against the groom if he communicates his intentions to anyone within the girls village, hamlet or even mosque association (*langgar mesjid*). The groom is fined for lack of 'prowess' in his theft. If he damages windows, fences or any other piece of property owned by his bride's kin group, he is fined.

of tradition' (*aji krama*) or, if the bride's conversion is required, 'the purchase of her religion' (*aji gama*). The victim of soul theft (*ketemuq*) identifies the spirit through hair divination and then pays a ritual ransom (*tebusan*), to the thieving spirit. In a similar fashion, the victim of theft is allowed to communicate with the thief, settle on a ransom price (*tebusan*), and recover the stolen property unharmed.

Criminal networks and tebusan

If a thief in Lombok makes off with someone's motorbike, it does not necessarily mean that the original owner has been fully dispossessed of the bike. For instance, a Sasak friend of mine in Mataram, Gus Par, lost his bike to a band of thieves in 1998 and, within twenty-four hours, he received a phone call stating that the thieves had his bike and they were ready to make a deal:

In order to get my bike back I had to meet at a pre-arranged location and hand over a *tebusan* payment amounting to roughly 20% of the bike's original value. In less than an hour my bike was back in the same position as when it was stolen. The *tebusan* method has changed somewhat in recent years. It used to be hard for thieves to move motorbikes without the official police papers (Surat Tanda Nomor Kendaraan, STNK) or proof of purchase. After the economic crisis of 1997, bike theft was rampant in Lombok and, regardless of how much the victim offered to retrieve her property, the bikes were being sent somewhere else.

While in the past thieves stole from people's fields and barns, after the economic crisis they preyed on luxury items and motorbikes stored in the domicile. The new dynamics of theft in post-Suharto Lombok became increasingly clear when I spoke with Asep, an experienced thief who lived on the outskirts of the village of Perampauan, in West Lombok; an area famous for its criminal networks. He explained how in 1998 the ritualized *tebusan* method described by Gus Par had been replaced by another form of non-retributive and export oriented theft. Motorbikes were no longer ransomed by their original owners but acquired new identities and new owners. Asep explained this shift after the economic crisis when local police assisted them in the export of the bikes complete with new engine numbers and legal titles:

I used to be involved in every aspect of the theft. We would steal a bike, hide it in a safe house and wait for the owner to contact us. If the owner neglected to contact us we would use our contacts to find the owner. We would turn over the bike after we agreed on what we thought was a fair *tebusan* (retributive payment). Now things are different. Most of the experienced thieves don't even steal anymore. They are middlemen (*penadah*). We don't even have to use the *tebusan* method anymore. Instead, a three-phase procedure allows us to move more bikes

more quickly and for more money:

In the first phase, the *pemetik* (literally: picker) or thief will come to us with a stolen bike. We look at the bike and see if it is worth the effort. If it is a high value bike we will accept it and turn over 25 to 30% of the bike's second hand value to the 'picker'. The thieves these days are usually inexperienced high school kids or chumps who, for some reason or another, are forced to steal a bike to make quick money.

The second phase is the *penadah* or 'middleman' phase. The bike arrives in Perampauan after which the mechanics remove the bike's engine number and alter the bike's body and paint job. At this point, the bike is clean and can no longer be traced to any owner, factory or vehicle registration number.

The third, or *penadah II*, or 'second middleman' phase begins after the bike has been fully worked over. At this phase, the police get involved. The military used to be involved in this syndicate but it was taken over by the police when they became more powerful in 1999.¹³ At this phase, they make a new engine number so that it is impossible to tell it from an original factory issued number. They then distribute the bike to other areas and issue new motorcycle letters. Nobody even knows that the bike came from Lombok. We have no connection to the bike after this point. It is entirely in the hands of the next phase of bike sellers.

In 1998, a new form of hustle arose to address the needs of bike owners eager to recover their bikes through the *tebusan* method. Asep called the hustle *dangdut* after the Indonesian pop music genre popular in Lombok at the time.

Dangdut is simple. You see, even though we have already erased the bike's engine number and sometimes even impressed a new one to replace it, we still receive requests from the original owner to return the bike for a *tebusan*. When we realized that we could make money off such hopes we cooked up a scheme where, even though the original bike had already been sent off the island, we would keep the bikes original engine number and make a metal facsimile out of old 100-rupiah coins. When requests for a particular bike came in all we had to do was produce an engine number rubbing and force them to turn over the money. Sometimes they wanted the license plate as proof before they turned over the money so we kept those handy too. We usually ask for *tebusan* as large as Rp 4 million (approximately US\$ 450.00) for nice bikes. People pay the *tebusan* but their bike can not even be traced to their registration papers anymore.

The use of such 'mock' *tebusan* schemes like *dangdut* forced people in Lombok to take immediate retributive action. Unable to retrieve their bikes, Sasak victims of theft appealed to the police. Even though the victims paid 'operational fees' or bribes, the police was unable to return the stolen goods to their owners. Villagers grew suspicious. As early as July 1997, villagers wary of

¹³ In April 1999 the police was officially separated from the military making the police an independent but grossly understaffed and under-funded national security institution (ICG 2001a).

police involvement in local theft burned down the police station in Janapria, East Lombok. When the economic crisis struck in 1998, charges of police complicity in crime piqued and local efforts to stave off the crime wave intensified.

Bujak: ex-criminals tracking criminals

At the height of the crime wave in late 1998 and early 1999, reports of a new community-based civilian security militia, *pamswakarsa*, circulated throughout Lombok. In Jakarta General Wiranto had mobilized *pamswakarsa* to protect the Special Session of the People's Congress (MPR) in November 1998. Prior to the MPR meeting in Jakarta, nearly all of Lombok's famous Tuan Guru had gathered in front of the governor's office with the military commander for eastern Indonesia, General Adam Damiri, and Lombok's new governor, Harun Al'Rasyid to show their support for the event and the Habibie presidency (*Lombok Post* 5-11-1998). Two months later, Lombok's anti-crime groups were called *pamswakarsa*.

The first of Lombok's *pamswakarsa* to initiate the war on crime was Pemburu Jejak or Bujak which literally means 'tracker' in Indonesian.¹⁴ Because Bujak consisted of a mixture of ex-criminals and streetwise thugs, they were able to work through contacts in criminal networks to intervene in the *tebusan* arrangements. Bujak mediated in the thief-victim relationship and often brought the *tebusan* cost down considerably. At the time, Bujak was lauded for its ability to protect its client communities from 'total theft' (in other words without *tebusan*).

It is important to note that Bujak's operations focused on the return of stolen goods and retributive money offering (*tebusan*) and not upon the criminal himself. Nevertheless, if Bujak caught a criminal in the act of theft he was often killed immediately. Not to kill or, at least, capture the criminal would be to confess complicit involvement with the crime at hand, which Bujak's former thieves could not afford to risk.

According to many young Sasak men the term *pamswakarsa* sounded too 'Jakarta' to take root in Lombok. Instead, they saw Bujak's emergence as the result of neglected ritual obligations and pointed at the role of Central Lombok's nobility in Bujak's activities as part of the reason for the recent death of Lombok's 'noble' thieves (Datuk Maling). As a young nobleman and Mataram 'tough' explained:

¹⁴ As early as 1994, Lombok's police force employed Central Lombok's most notorious ex-convicts to form Bujak. At that time Bujak was not a community-based security body but an unofficial group of bounty hunters to help track stolen goods.

The elders of my household support Bujak with their old weaponry. Each year our ancestors' ritual weaponry (*pusaka*) must be bathed in the blood of a sacrificed cow. The nobles neglected to continue this tradition and, as a result, our weaponry began to call out for human blood. Many of Bujak's noble members carry our ancestral weapons on their nightly rounds for this very reason. When a criminal is discovered in the act of theft the magical weapons fly out of their sheaths on their own accord. They find their victim and kill him without any human involvement. The weapons forced Bujak back into action, not crime.

Bujak's war on crime inspired young men and social groups throughout the island to take the law into their own hands. Nevertheless, for youths who admired many of the thieves being killed by Bujak patrols, it was difficult to accept Bujak's murder of Central Lombok's old and respected thieves. Despite their success in returning stolen goods, Bujak's thuggish reputation contributed to a steady decline in public support for the organization. By August 1998, Bujak was forced to accept the moral supremacy of another militia, Amphibi, based in the Islamic heartland of eastern Lombok.

Bujak and Amphibi

In early 1999 Bujak came under fire. Not only did the organization consist of former criminals but it was also rumoured to be involved in crime against communities that did not join their ranks or pay their dues. Bujak distributed stickers among its clients and, according to residents in Central Lombok in 1999, a stickerless house meant 'fair game' to Lombok's Bujak-friendly thieves. While Bujak owed its resurgence to the criminal complicity of Lombok's police force in the ongoing crime-wave, Bujak's lack of a strong moral leadership inspired the formation of what was to become one of Indonesia's largest militias, Amphibi.

Amphibi was formed in the small town of Jeroaru, East Lombok. Its leaders were none other than the sons of the famous *dakwah* pioneer of the 1970s, TGH Mutawalli. Like their father, both brothers were attributed certain magical abilities. Amphibi was, by August 1999, the new banner of moral vigilance for tens and thousands of East Lombok's Islamic youth. The sudden appeal of Amphibi was only partly due to the re-emergence of Islamic politics and Islamist militias at the national level. Like other militant Islamic groups around the country, it attributed its formation to the moral weakness and criminal complicity of the police in immoral businesses and conflicts. But also, the death of senior religious leader and Nahdlatul Wathan's founder, TGH Abdul Madjid, only contributed to the mergence of Amphibi and the demand for a new kind of charismatic leadership. For instance, TGH Abdul Madjid's own daughters divided Nahdlatul Wathan into two separate camps as they vied for sole leadership of the organization and formed two separate

militias to defend their interests. The combined effects of the separation of the police from the military, the death of TGH Maulana Sheik and the fall of the New Order made room for new forms of religious legitimacy in post-New Order Lombok.

In early 1999, TGH Abdul Madjid's feuding daughters embraced forms of both messianic and modernist legitimacy reminiscent of the early twentieth-century when reformist Islam and messianic rebellions developed side by side. Rahun, the older sister and committed modernist, evicted her younger sibling, Raihanun, from Nahdlatul Wathan's headquarters. In response to her eviction, Raihanun moved to the mountain village of Anjani, the former home of early twentieth century messianic movements. Meanwhile, Rahun remained in Pancor, the orthodox center of her father, and watched her followers slowly shift to follow her charismatic sister in Anjani, where, it was told, the visage (*kharomah*) of Raihanun's deceased father displayed post-mortem favour for the messianic daughter and often appeared during Friday prayers at the mosque. Less than six months after Raihanun's eviction, both sisters had amassed large militias.

Amphibi, Lombok's largest *pamswakarsa*, possessed a similar form of religious charisma. Amphibi's leaders, the brothers TGH Sibaway and Guru Ukit, combined archaic Sasak-mysticism and moralistic modernism. TGH Sibaway headed his own *pesantren* in Jeroaru, East Lombok, and was respected for his abilities to draw young 'toughs' into the fold of Islam. His tendency towards more idiomatic Islamic mysticism was reminiscent of his father who employed local idioms and mythology to persuade Wetu Telu to adopt orthodox Islam during the military-backed *dakwah* missions of the late 1960s and 1970s.¹⁵ TGH Mutawalli's other son, Guru Ukit, was less orthodox in his practices. While his bother was known for his devotion, Guru Ukit was believed to have inherited the magical powers of his father. Renowned for his drinking and unconventional behaviour, Guru Ukit's street-wise ways wooed Jeroaru's less than pious toughs to join Amphibi.¹⁶ The brothers, each bearing traces of their father's religious charisma, recruited over a 100,000 members to their ranks only five months after Amphibi became formally active in April 1999.

¹⁵ TGH Mutawalli was famous for his use of magical displays of power to persuade Wetu Telu to adopt more orthodox Islamic ritual. A contemporary of Nahdlatul Wathan's founder TGH Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, TGH Mutawalli, was famous for his use of cultural idioms to persuade traditionalist Muslims to adopt orthodox doctrine (Cederroth 1981).

¹⁶ Guru Ukit appears and disappears in mysterious ways. According to one close relation of Guru Ukit's, he has been known to relieve himself almost ritualistically after saying his prayers in the mosque proper. To many of his followers such unusual behaviour suggests that his mystical gifts were even greater than those of his late father. Unlike his brother, Guru Ukit was friend

Localizing national vigilantism

Amphibi's leaders were by no means estranged by contemporary political and security trends of the post-Suharto 1999 elections by constructing 'Amphibi security posts' (*pos keamanan* Amphibi) in communities under its care. Painted in bright orange and emblazoned with an Arabic script seal and motto, Amphibi's security posts resembled New Order style 'community guard' platforms (*pos siskamlng*) as well as more recent political party stands (*pos partai*). Vigilance was in the air and, whether politically reformist or security-oriented, Amphibi's efforts were not wasted on Lombok's residents.

Amphibi's leaders also combined political fashion with their own notoriety as *sembik*, magically endowed men, when they designed the Amphibi uniforms. During the 1999 election period, Lombok's youth coveted the *rompi*, a multi-pocketed sleeveless vest worn by party paramilitary members (*satgas partai*) and campaign leaders (*jurkam*). Only party-paramilitaries were allowed to use these vests. When Amphibi began recruitment for their night brigade several months after the election, it announced that each of its guards would receive a *rompi* and that every group of 30 men would be given a walkie-talkie for quick coordination 'in the field' (*di lapangan*). TGH Sibaway himself read mystical mantras into the vests to render the Amphibi guard invulnerable. Amphibi became a young man's dream. Not only did its members gain access to moral religious authority derived from a prominent Tuan Guru and his powerful brother (Guru Ukit), but they too would be able to wear the *rompi* and speak through walkie-talkies like the party paramilitaries they saw in action during the 1999 campaign. Sitting astride their motorcycles or lounging at the Amphibi security post the Amphibi guard was the very picture of masculine authority.

In July 1999, Amphibi began to recruit men to become active patrol guards to protect East Lombok's communities. Whereas Bujak relied on bounty payments from the owners of stolen property, Amphibi actually charged its active guard 120,000 rupiah per man for the honour to wear the orange Amphibi vest and hunt criminals in their communities. Bujak relied on ties with criminals to recover lost goods whereas Amphibi used walkie-talkies to coordinate anti-criminal chases in the area. Bujak had the use of sacred weapons from certain noble houses while Amphibi members had mystically inscribed *rompi* rendering them invulnerable. It was not long before Bujak and Amphibi had a showdown.

to Balinese, Chinese, Christians and Buddhists. Guru Ukit also built a house in the magical forest, Gawah Sukaroh, and gave his sons non-Islamic spirit names (*aran pemalik*) such as Taming Muter and Sigar Penyalin.

Amphibi expansion

On 2 August 1999, Amphibi and Bujak engaged in a full-scale battle on the border between East and Central Lombok. 'The beach, the forest, the fields of the village of Pene, Central Lombok were orange with our colours as we went to battle with Bujak' an Amphibi member said.¹⁷ Although neither group claimed injury nor fatalities, men present at the battle admitted that many people had been killed in the showdown.¹⁸ Amphibi's victory was apparent when it started to open guard posts throughout central, northern and western Lombok. By December 1999, Amphibi had registered 220,000 active members, nearly 10% of Lombok's population and 25% of all adult males in East Lombok.¹⁹ Amphibi's operations targeted middlemen for stolen goods and, unless they confessed to their crimes, killed them publicly. The police could do nothing to prevent Amphibi and Lombok's *pamswakarsa* from taking over their functions.²⁰

Unlike Bujak or the other *pamswakarsa* in Lombok, Amphibi developed a modern form of policing criminal networks on the island. Through a combination of religious authority and police methods of surveillance and 'crime prevention', Amphibi drew up lists of 'TO' (*target operasi*) or operational targets which were little more than names of men collected from other thieves interrogated while under Amphibi detention. Amphibi replaced Bujak's ritual *tebusan* scheme, which tended to focus on the stolen property, with a security apparatus bent on the identification and eradication of immoral criminals. Because of this shift in focus and procedure, Amphibi ranks diversified in late 1999. They were no longer loosely affiliated militias but sub-divided into special intelligence divisions broken down into groups of 'trackers' (*pelacak*) and 'hunters' (*pemburu*). 'Trackers' collected information concerning particular criminals, their activities and hideouts, while 'hunters' traced and caught criminals on the run. Amphibi gave captured thieves a choice. If thieves attempted to run, they were killed. If a thief chose not to run he was asked to 'repent' or *mentobat* in the mosque at Jeroaru witnessed either by Guru Ukit or TGH Sibaway. After their first *mentobat*, criminals were forced to confess the names of their partners in crime, hence the TO list of operational targets. After their second *mentobat* they would be held at Amphibi's jail in Jeroaru. Depending on the crime, TGH Sibaway, the judge (*hakim*) in Amphibi's court,

¹⁷ Interviews with Amphibi leaders in Jeroaru, East Lombok, October, 2002.

¹⁸ One of the difficulties of writing about this conflict is that very few people will admit the number of people who died. According to the *Lombok Post* (3-8-1999) 11 men with injuries and one corpse were sent to the Selong Hospital but Amphibi members claimed that truckloads of victims had been evacuated to be treated locally.

¹⁹ National Census Survey 1998.

²⁰ Interview with Amphibi members in Jeroaru, East Lombok, October 2002.

would decide the duration of their sentence. After the thief's third offence, however, the criminal would be considered 'on the run' (*buron*) after which Amphibi's 'hunters' would take over and he would be traced and killed.

The Sengkongo incident

One of the most sensitive cases occurred when Amphibi attacked a Balinese nobleman's family in a Balinese village near Lombok's provincial capital of Mataram. As a nephew of one of Amphibi's victims explained:

At approximately 1:00 a.m., 18 December 1999, 45 trucks full of Amphibi militia drove from East Lombok to Mataram in search of two Balinese men suspected of fencing goods for thief networks in the hamlet of Sengkongo, Mataram. They were, to use Amphibi's words, TO or operational targets. Upon reaching the village Amphibi demanded the men to surrender themselves. Seeing the presence of over a 1000 armed men in the village, a landless old flute player, I Gusti Made Banjar, struck his *kentongan* wooden slit gong to sound the communal alarm. Upon hearing this, Amphibi guards killed him instantly with scores of deep machete wounds.

After dragging I Gusti Made Banjar's broken body down the road in Sengkongo, Amphibi cried out demands for Si Kentung, the alias of I Gusti Made Padma of the same community. Amphibi suspected I Gusti Made Padma of thievery and cut off one of his upraised hands and severely wounded the other. Amphibi left the community of Sengkongo on the morning of 18 December. Passing by the Mataram market of Beretais, Amphibi made victory rounds waving the severed hand of I Gusti Made Padma who was, after further police investigation, found innocent of the crimes Amphibi claimed he had committed. (ICG 2003c.)

The evening after the Sengkongo killing Amphibi trucks paraded the Lingsar area, the location for the ritual battle-of-rice-cakes between Sasaks and Balinese to be held the following morning.²¹ Read as a direct challenge to the Balinese minority on the island tensions rose as Lombok prepared to celebrate Christmas, Balinese New Year (Nyepi) and the end of the Muslim fasting month of Lebaran in the same three-week period. The Sengkongo incident was barely mentioned in the regional press for fear that Balinese would seek retribution against Sasak Muslims in Bali.²² Over the following month, several meetings between Balinese Hindu leaders and Mataram's mayor did not result in justice for the killing of I Gusti Made Banjar. Instead,

²¹ The Lingsar rice-cake battle is often explained as a cathartic opportunity for Balinese and Sasak young men to beat up on one another without causing a conflict. In 1999, the Lingsar ritual was run by the police and military and, because it was held during the fasting month, there were very few participants. Interview with Balinese men at Lingsar temple, October 2002.

Lombok's Balinese were allowed to form their own militia called, Dharma Wicesa (Balinese: Dharma Power). And so militias beget militias.

The Mataram riots

On 17 January 2000, only a month after the Amphibi attack on Sengkongo, over 20,000 Sasak Muslim men crowded into Mataram to hold a religious gathering (Tabligh Akbar) in protest of the violence against Muslims in Maluku. Within three hours, small, organized groups ran through the streets of Mataram targeting and burning Christian homes and churches and emptying boxes of hymnbooks to be torched in the streets. During the course of the riots, most of the Chinese owned stores and Christian housing complexes located outside of the Balinese protected enclave of Cakranegara were burned to the ground or looted.

Many theories about the riots circulated. A simple economic analysis would reveal that Lombok's peasantry had more than enough reason to target West Lombok's market centres. Since the outset of the economic crisis, Sasak sellers accused Chinese and Arab merchants of taking advantage of the irregular inflation of *sembako* goods for profit.²³ In fact, as early as January 1998, Mataram's Chinese merchants regularly closed their stores in response to rumours that poor Sasaks from East and Central Lombok were preparing to attack markets in the provincial capital of Mataram. Not only were shop owners stockholding goods, but Mataram merchants were buying up gold in Lombok's hinterland at pre-crisis prices. Once peasants became aware that urban merchants were wily destructing their meagre savings, it was feared that they would seek retribution by looting the town's Chinese-controlled market centres.

There were other reasons that contributed to the riots in January 2000. To members of intelligence units the riots came not as a surprise. They had warned the villagers in my research area to avoid Mataram on the 17th of January. By the 15th, scores of trucks were pouring into Mataram in preparation for the event. Riding on the heels of the recent violence in East Timor, it was hard not to assume that a conspiracy was afoot. At the national level, tensions between the recently elected President Abdurrahman Wahid and General Wiranto had piqued since the military backed violence in East Timor had made international and domestic observers wary of Wiranto's

²² Interview with *Lombok Post* and *Bali Post* reporters March 2003.

²³ *Sembako* referred to 'nine staple goods' required by most Indonesians to stock their kitchens. The prices of these products, especially rice, sugar and cooking oil, fluctuated wildly according to varying degrees of inflation, stockpiling, and racketeering in Lombok's markets.

counter-reformist intentions. Meanwhile, Wahid's ambivalent stance towards the Christian-Muslim conflicts in Maluku had created an outcry of protest by Indonesia's conservative Islamic groups. A CD-rom tape of the violence in Ambon showing a pregnant Muslim woman and her child being killed was distributed throughout the Muslim communities of Lombok. Also, a fake Christian missionary book was distributed ending with the phrase, 'all Muslims must be exterminated'. It was made to look as if Christians had made the book.²⁴ Some conspiracy theorists blamed Jakarta-based actors for the Mataram riots and pointed in this respect at the role of Eggy Sudjana, the chairman of the Persaudaraan Pekerja Muslim Indonesia (PPMI, Indonesian Muslim Merchants Association) and associated with General Prabowo Subianto, whose right hand man, Hairul Muslim, was among the men involved in the Tabligh Akbar meetings of 13 January 2000, before the riots.²⁵ Eggy Sudjana and friends worked with the Tablig Akhbar committee and agreed that the head of Amphibi would be responsible for security at the demonstration scheduled for 17 January 2000. Strangely, however, on the day of the violence, Amphibi's walkie talkies were not operational, while another group began distributing flyers to all the mosques crying for war against Christians.

After the riots, many of Lombok's academicians, politicians and activists were arrested for their involvement in the Tabligh Akbar held prior to the riots. National actors, most notably Eggy Sudjana, were exonerated for lack of sufficient evidence. By lack of any real explanation of how and why the riots were organized, conspiracy theories gave meaning to violence and reinforced the credence of half-truths regarding the role of Wiranto and his partnership with military-friendly radicals. Conspiracies aside, in a very real way, Amphibi exerted its power over post-riot Lombok without challenge lending further credence to the theory that Amphibi had anticipated and profited from the insecurity Mataram's riots had produced.

²⁴ A police intelligence officer in Lombok concurred that, in fact, during the month prior to the riots both the 'anti-Islamic' handbook and the CD-rom coverage of the murder of Moluccan women and children were being circulated throughout Lombok.

²⁵ According to the head of Majelis Mujahiddin Indonesia for West Nusa Tenggara, Baharuddin Anwar, Lombok's Muslim leaders held meetings on 13 January 2000 to prepare for the Tabligh Akbar protest of violence against Muslims in Maluku scheduled for the 17th of January 2000. A letter was apparently signed on that day and sent to Lombok's Christian community demanding that they write a letter condemning Christian violence on Muslims in Maluku. 'The letter was signed by TGH Sibaway, head of Amphibi and listed as the head of PPMI (Eggy Sudjana's organization) in West Nusa Tenggara. When we contacted him to confirm whether he had signed the letter or not TGH Sibaway denied it' said Catholic leader Remmy Giusnaga.

Amphibi's decline

Within two months after the riots, it was not police or the military that were empowered, but instead Amphibi had established branches throughout western Lombok with memberships, they claimed, swelling to more than 600,000. What initially appeared to be a somewhat overzealous approach to neighbourhood crime control had become an island-wide moral movement. Even the governor, Harun Al'Rasyid attended Amphibi ceremonies and the island's businessmen made large 'donations' to Amphibi's headquarters. Villages not included in the Amphibi network formed their own small village-based militias to prevent an Amphibi incursion into their communities.²⁶ The emergence of counter-Amphibi militias was most popular in villages, such as Perampauan, known to harbour large criminal networks. In fact, the Perampauan-Amphibi conflict of January 2001 showed most clearly how village-based militias were capable of undermining Amphibi's dominance.

As indicated above, Perampauan is famous for its criminals and its 'service' for victims of stolen goods. The Perampauan conflict began with the death in December 1999 of I Gusti Made Banjar of Sengkongo, the Balinese hamlet located in the larger village of Perampauan. The loss of I Gusti Made Padma's hand was due to a larger effort of Amphibi to track down 51 Perampauan thieves. Amphibi insisted that Perampauan village authorities surrender the men or suffer the consequences. TGH Sibaway himself came to Perampauan and swore in about 17 Perampauan residents during the months of March and April 2000. Their TO status remained, however, and over the upcoming months, tensions rose between the neighbouring 'Amphibi village' of Bongor and the 'thief village' of Perampauan.²⁷ In part to forestall the development of an Amphibi branch in their community, Perampauan leaders developed their own village-based *pamswakarsa* called Perkasa Pengsor. Perkasa Pengsor was limited to simple night security activities and, unlike Amphibi, did not operate outside the village boundaries of Perampauan.

On 10 January 2001, Perampauan villager Saida and two friends were on their way to the beach when they were ambushed by a group of masked Amphibi members. This attack was, according to Perampauan residents, a trap to draw out Perampauan aggression. Perampauan residents and Bongor Amphibi members engaged in full-scale battle in front of the Bongor Mosque using handmade fire-arms and large fishing bombs. A man from Bongor was killed by a handmade fire-arm and both sides suffered serious injuries from arrows, machetes and spears.

²⁶ Elang Merah (Sakra), Sapu Jagad and Ababil (TGH Bodak) in East Lombok, Perkasa Pengsor in Perampauan (West Lombok), Pemenang Bersatu in Tanjung (northwest Lombok), and Dharma Wicesa for the embattled Balinese minority and Langlang Jagat among northern Lombok's Wetu Telu were all formed as counter-Amphibi militias.

²⁷ Interviews in Perampauan and Bongor, April 2003.

The morning after the Bongor battle, Perampauan residents stood watch as Amphibi prepared to launch a dawn attack on the village. According to Perampauan residents present during the attack, at 5:30 in the morning 6,000 Amphibi members from East Lombok arrived in Perampauan in open air trucks. The Perampauan religious leader, TGH Mansyur told the villagers to 'protect our village from the PKI (communist party)'.²⁸ To everyone's surprise, Perampauan's villagers resisted Amphibi's offensive and killed at least 20 of Amphibi's front line militants.

Amphibi's failure to defeat Perampauan was the beginning of the steady fragmentation of the organization in 2001. Amphibi's pan-Lombok appeal and its reputation for *kebal* (invulnerability) were dampened by the news of Amphibi's thousand-man flight from only a few hundred home-village defenders. Wisely, West Lombok district head, Iskandar, had made use of regional autonomy discourse to allow the formation of village-based *pamswakarsa* in Perampauan. With their own *pamswakarsa*, Perampauan residents were portrayed not as criminals and infidels but as villagers upholding the principles of solidarity and autonomy, one of the reformist principles of regional autonomy legislation. After their defeat, Amphibi continued to maintain large branch offices in western Lombok but they no longer obeyed the East Lombok leadership. Instead, Mataram's Amphibi branches began to run petty-extortion schemes to supplement their increasingly localized incomes. Very little of this money was sent to Amphibi headquarters in East Lombok and, according to Amphibi officials, they could do little to control their men in West Lombok.

Regional elections: politicians, clerics and criminals

In mid-2003, heated discussions arose about the election of district heads in Lombok. Especially East Lombok witnessed intense rivalries between competing Tuan Guru and noble camps. Since 1999, each of Lombok's Tuan Guru and militia heads controlled a certain number of seats in the local parliament (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah, DPRD). While during the New Order East Lombok's district heads were recruited from the military, the election of civilian Golkar candidate, Haji Syadan, in 1999 depended very much on the support of Lombok's Tuan Guru, the most powerful of which controlled whole blocks of seats within East Lombok's district parliament. In June 2003,

²⁸ When seen from the perspective of village autonomy, Amphibi's efforts to track and dismember the Perampauan crime-network through forced confessions (*mentobat*) had turned Amphibi into the very embodiment of the 'subversive', a title reserved for PKI and armed separatists under the New Order.

however, a couple of 'wild card' candidates decided to buck the trend of following only Tuan Guru and, instead, used Lombok's criminal networks to gain authority among the members of legislature.

For instance, on 1 June 2003 a group of thieves, organized under the name 'The Night Bats Group' (Grup Kelelawar Maling), held a demonstration in front of the district parliament in Selong, East Lombok. Amaq Kalep, the head of 'The Night Bats Group' voiced his support for H. Lutfi Mali, one of the candidates for district head of East Lombok. Playing traditional drum sets (*kendang beliq*) and dressed in Sasak ritual clothing the thieves marched beside the members of East Lombok's *pamswakarsa*, Elang Merah, the very militia tasked with hunting down and apprehending the men with whom they now marched. When asked whether he feared arrest or attack after confessing to be the head of East Lombok's largest thief network Amaq Kalep stated: 'All of the members here today have already *nyikep* (carry sacred weaponry with mantras read over them), we are fully prepared'.²⁹ Commenting on such open cooperation between politicians, thieves, and *pamswakarsa*, a friend from a Mataram-based Islamic lobbying group explained it best:

It is crucial for a district head candidate to have control over the thief networks in his area. Despite the presence of *pamswakarsa*, each year shows a marked increase in reported crimes. If a district candidate cuts a deal with the thief network he can promise the people that they will be free of crime if he is elected. When people see that the crime has stopped they know that the district head candidate is a man of his word and that he has cut a deal with the criminals. Several of the political Tuan Guru have students in villages known to harbour thief networks. In fact, many of the thieves rely on the Tuan Guru for *kebal* magic and other meditative arts to protect themselves during their stealing raids.

The fact that Haji Lutfi had the authority to recruit both thieves and anti-thief militias to demonstrate at the same event displayed that he knew how closely *pamswakarsa* and thieves actually work in practice. If Lutfi was able to control both groups, he would be able to divert criminal attacks away from communities that supported his candidacy. Of course, Lutfi was not the first candidate to employ such tactics but he was the only one willing to make such an open display of normally behind the scenes moves and political strategy. Despite his efforts Lutfi was never elected.

Conclusion

The fall of Suharto had ushered in profound changes for Lombok. The combined effects of the 1997-1998 monetary crisis, mass-based politics and

²⁹ *Bali Post* 2-6-2003. Amaq Kalep added that the members of his group number 1,791 strong: 'Those are only the heads of the thief groupings. Each head controls anywhere from 10 to 15 subordinate thieves'.

regional autonomy presented Lombok's leaders and communities with new problems and opportunities.

The demise of Suharto's authoritarian regime meant that violence, oppression and the right to define 'criminality' would no longer be controlled by the centralized institutions of the state but would be distributed to Lombok's own leaders. Initially, the responsibility to protect one's community was assumed as a reformist duty against the 'provocateurs' and rogue agents of Suharto's state. This changed when new leaders emerged who established locally defined forms of 'law and order'. In response to Lombok's crime wave, the traditional *tebusan* schemes long employed by criminal networks to hold stolen goods as collateral against bounty payments were replaced by a new style of Islamist vigilance against immoral thieves. It was not long before Bujak's approach to negotiated justice was replaced by Amphibi's much more righteous and unilateral effort to exorcise the immoral criminal from Lombok's communities. Amphibi's reputation for moralist purity over backstreet dealings succeeded to a certain degree and their militia established chapters in virtually every corner of Lombok. The Mataram riots only intensified public desire for community-security and locally defined dominion.

Militias beget militias and by 2001, 'thief villages' (*desa-desa maling*) developed their own counter-Amphibi security posts capable of undermining Amphibi's increasingly bureaucratic and murderous attacks.

As important as it is to look for a Jakarta-based interest behind the Mataram riots, it is even more important to try to understand what local needs Amphibi satisfied in the communities where it thrived. What we discover is not Islamic reformism intent on the implementation of *syariat* law nor a military-backed group of mercenaries, but a heterodox movement full of paradoxes. Lombok's militias are led by charismatic siblings each of whom embody a mutually antagonistic part of Lombok's cultural and political past. Amphibi's Guru Ukit is a drunkard and Sasak mystic while his brother, TGH Sibaway, is an orthodox preacher. Nahdlatul Wathan's feuding sisters are divided in similarly contrasting, but decidedly religious, ways. Rauhun, the elder and more orthodox sister, stands firm in her father's headquarters in Pancor and remains loyal to Islamic rationalism and scriptural purity. Meanwhile, Raihanun the younger sister of the two, fled Pancor to espouse more messianic Islamic themes and relocated her substantial base of followers in the former centre of Lombok's messianic movements, Desa Anjani. H. Lutfi's campaign for district head of East Lombok in 2003 illustrates the nature of the politics of security in Lombok. The Islamic organizations and the various island-wide and local militia groupings embody the particular way in which on Lombok political action has been decentralized. They illustrate the extent to which (anti) criminal action lie at the heart of Lombok's regional autonomy.