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CONTRADICTIONS IN THE STUDY OF LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY IN INDONESIA

1. Introduction

The study of legitimate political authority in Indonesia is compartmentalized. On the one hand there is the tradition of developmental anthropologists who emphasize the role of the state as the source of legitimacy. In these studies legitimate authority is connected to macro-sociological theories of development. On the other hand there is an increasing number of studies which explicitly attack this approach as being too western and thus unfit to shed light on specific Indonesian perceptions of power and the state. In this second tradition we find a number of phenomenological studies especially on Java and Bali, as well as a series of structuralist approaches to indigenous political institutions. The first tradition starts from the notion that new legitimacies are being created, and emphasizes the importance of new 'modern' power relations and related conceptions of authority. The second states that it will not be possible to understand modern processes and perceptions unless these are framed in an analysis of Indonesia's past, which cannot be understood, as Geertz (1980:123) puts it, through 'tired commonplaces, the worn coin of European ideological debate'. The first category of studies assumes that older concepts of legitimate authority are disappearing, while the other emphasizes that we can only understand Indonesia's modern political realities on the basis of insight into indigenous views and institutions.

In this essay I shall look critically at both sets of approaches. Though a development anthropologist by training and personal inclination, I agree with quite a number of criticisms which have been extended to my own tradition. The interventionist inclinations which are strong in the Weberian and Marxist branches of development anthropology have indeed led to views on Western history being projected into the analysis of political change in Indonesia (Quarles 1985). This has led me to study

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some structuralist and phenomenological works which promised that blind spots would be filled with illumination. But I have found that those who, for example, set out to look at 'Power' through traditional Javanese lenses (Anderson 1972) or to construct an ideal type of the 'Indic Indonesian state' as a starting point for a developmental history of Indonesia were – upon reflection – not fulfilling their promises. Geertz (1980) constructed only this latter ideal type and therefore missed Weber's point, who always constructed ideal types in pairs.

In the second and third section of this essay I shall look at some of the strengths and weaknesses of these two traditions insofar as problems of legitimate authority are concerned. Are they complementary in the sense that together they allow us to understand the dynamics of legitimate authority in Indonesia? I shall argue that each of the two approaches manifests specific shortcomings and is unable to fulfil the broader tasks they set out to achieve. Parts of my criticism derive from Mary Douglas' review of a number of studies of religion in the context of modernization. She puts forward two lines of argumentation, which I feel are relevant to my purposes (Douglas 1982). First, she mentions the bias of integration. She refers to studies which take the diminishing role of religion in modern society for granted. The integrative functions of religion in the past are being lost as new processes of integration take place through bureaucratization and increase of scale. These studies are biased, Douglas states, because the integrative function of religion in the past is overemphasized. They also seem to ignore the possibility of new forms of integration being 'over-narrow, unbalanced, distorting and so on' (Douglas 1982:7).

These remarks have a wider significance. For the analysis of changing legitimate authority they mean that there are two pitfalls. On the one hand, the integrative function of indigenous models of legitimacy may have been overemphasized. On the other hand, modern conceptions of legitimate authority related to the state or bureaucracy may often divert our attention from possible distorting and unbalanced effects alongside the integrative.

The second bias which she mentions is relevant, I think, for understanding some of the shortcomings of indigenous models of power and legitimate authority. Coherence and consistency between the ideas and perceptions of participants is overemphasized. The logic of language is also cut off from its context of concrete actions and relations. Instead of a 'machine' of modernizing relations, we find here a model in which the logic of ideas and words has been stressed too much (see also Parkin 1982; Hobart 1986). This becomes clear in structuralist studies of Indonesian ethnic political systems, in which emphasis is laid on the *correspondence* of indigenous ideas and institutions. In these approaches the notions of order – both as *ordre conçu* and as *ordre vécu* – are indeed very strong (cf. Moyer 1982; Schwimmer 1982).

In the final section I shall look into some of the consequences of my criticism of these two kinds of approaches. I shall put forward some ideas in which not correspondence but contradiction comes forward as an essential concept for the understanding of legitimate authority. I argue that the two traditions mentioned above are mutually much more similar than is usually admitted. Presenting the two as a dilemma is, I think, wrong. The ideal types which are put forward in both traditions are similarly biased because they are too closely connected to systems of justification of – modern or indigenous – élites. All these models of legitimate authority therefore fail to indicate the contradictions which are addressed in these justifications, especially the contradiction between the accumulation of power and the quest for consent, legitimization.

2. Modernity as a political program and a base line for analysis

'Modernity' is never there. It is a construction of the future, a vision of potentialities which may come to fruition if only some time for fostering and the necessary means are allowed for. The concept is primarily political and provides legitimacy to the actions and programs it entails. Modernity is a promise of a better future, and so shapes the views of the present. Through the emphasis of the future, the present comes to belong to the past which must be changed (Leach 1982, introduction).

Development anthropology has long been directly associated with these political myths of modernity. The elaboration of theoretical perspectives has been closely connected with the contents of political promises of modernity. D. H. Burger, one of the first development-oriented scholars in the Dutch East Indies, has made this clear. Looking back on advances in scientific knowledge about colonial society in the nineteen thirties, he wrote some interesting lines. He stated that the increase of scholarly insight into indigenous society had gone hand in hand with an increasing involvement of the colonial government in the daily affairs of the Indonesian population. He discerned three stages. First the upper strata, the kingdoms and royal élites were looked at, then, at the beginning of the twentieth century, attention was given to the representatives of the local population, *volkschoofden*, and after that the social and economic processes of change and the impact of colonial measures on village life were studied (Burger 1966:319-323). Burger did not question the close interrelationship which he saw between the nature of scientific knowledge and the administrative involvement of the government. He was a liberal who viewed his studies as the tools of a social engineer. His analysis of the social and economic history of Indonesia was framed in the context of western penetration (Burger 1975). From this perspective he inevitably came to the conclusion that it would be foolish to call for a restoration of indigenous society. This would not only be anachronistic, but also

quite impossible. He engaged in a bitter debate with Boeke, who called for the restoration of Javanese village society (Boeke 1966). Given his Europacentric approach to Indonesian history, the important question for Burger was how these 'modern' influences would benefit the indigenous population.

He saw his studies as tools which could influence the government's policy, and after political decolonization, the United Nations which he served. It was the government's legitimate obligation and right to play the role which history had placed upon it. In his view of Indonesian history, it was imperative for the government to be a modernizing agent. In this sense his approach is paradigmatic for a tradition of studies in which the role of the colonial and postcolonial state is conceived as the legitimate source from which planned change springs. The debates between different branches of developmental anthropology concerned primarily the *kind* of changes deemed necessary. As Schoorl (1974:31) has put it: 'nations which want to achieve or maintain political independence are forced to modernize as much as possible'. The political centre so becomes a legitimate source and moulder of social change.

This perspective had analytical consequences. It influenced the analysis of legitimate authority in Indonesia in manifold ways. In this essay I shall emphasize two fields in which specific biases related to the development anthropological agenda come forward. This can shed light on the ways legitimate authority is studied, viz.:

- The overemphasis on the national level over against other levels.
- The frantic search for 'the' local scene.

Geertz's analysis of the *kiyai*, or Islamic teachers, may illuminate my first point. The roles of the *kiyai* are studied in a specific historical context. Geertz's opening sentence immediately makes this clear. 'One of the most serious problems facing the post revolutionary Indonesian political élite has turned out to be maintenance of mutual understanding between themselves and the mass of the peasant population.' (Geertz 1960:228). This sentence shows that Geertz was impressed by the magnitude of that national problem at the end of the nineteen fifties. From this position changes are analysed. *Kiyai* were religious educators, first operating within a local Javanese mystical context, and having a personal clientele. During the colonial period the *kiyai* kept the political centre at a distance, but gradually processes of integration within the Islamic *aliran* took place, in which they became mediators between the local and national levels. After independence, as the importance of national political affairs, especially of the ministry of religion, increased, the nature of the relations of the *kiyai* with their local followers began to change. These had been 'multiplex', embedded within the local economic securities of land, owned by the religious schools, *pesantren*, or in economic

ties with Islamic entrepreneurs in the region. The *kiyai*'s religious authority changed into transmitting, intermediary roles between the national and local scenes. According to Geertz the transactional nature of the roles became more important, the *kiyai* becoming part of an '*agama kuburan dan ganjaran*', or a religion of graveyards and gifts.

This well-known essay shows many of the characteristics of the developmental approach. The roles of the *kiyai* change as local spheres are incorporated. The emphasis is on the impact of the national over against the local level. This is presented as a general process. Multiplex, diffuse relations precede the narrower, single-stranded ties of national institutions. And the erosion of religious authority at the local level is caused by the diffusion of legitimate national power structures to the periphery.

The belief that developmental history can be analysed in terms of paired ideal types – dating back to the nineteenth century – in which the latest is dominant, may still be found in many contemporary studies. Jackson makes a similar distinction between traditional authority and brokers linking the national and local scenes in various studies (e.g., Jackson and Pye 1978). Again brokerage is regarded as the modern, later, linkage role between the local and higher levels. Local 'traditional' authority erodes, and local leaders become the transmitters of central authority.

The gradual replacement of traditional authority roles in the process of incorporation by the state is sketched in a recent study by Tjondronegoro on the impact of modern organizations on Javanese village society (Tjondronegoro 1984). This Indonesian scholar also takes the view that the results of his research are tools for improving policy-making. Tjondronegoro speaks of two dichotomized spheres: the Western, modern and the indigenous, traditional ones. Each produces its own distinctive forms of social organization. In development policy, he writes, we find a 'top down' approach, leading to insufficient participation by the peasantry. One of the main aims of his book is to show that the government, in emphasizing the level of the village – *kelurahan* – in the execution of its policies, seems unaware that traditional social organizations can only be found at the lower level of the neighbourhood, the *dukuh*. Villagers do not regard the village administration as belonging to their own 'sphere'. Tjondronegoro presents this view as a more viable one to policy makers. Linking policy to the neighbourhood will lead to an increase in contacts between the two spheres. If the modern organizations do come into contact with this traditional sphere, neighbourhood institutions will 'grow into modern organizations, or at least the latter will gain in preponderance' (Tjondronegoro 1984:8).

This study accepts the legitimacy of the government's transforming rural society. The author's primary goal is to improve official policy, to make it more effective and beneficial. In this approach we clearly see the merging of the practical and the analytical dimensions.

Tjondronegoro distinguishes modern social organizations and traditional institutions, and puts these into one developmental perspective, with the first gradually replacing the other. His acceptance of the legitimate role of the government in transforming rural society clearly fits his 'choice' of analytical concepts. The scientific and practical aspects are linked, just as Geertz's early works indicated the analytical consequences of his practical view that problems of nation-building have to be stressed. This leads to constructions of local spheres being traditional and belonging to the past. This brings me to my second point in this section.

Modernity is a myth about the future. This has consequences for the ways the present is looked at. The more the promises of tomorrow are stressed, the more will the present be seen as an extension of the past. Tradition is the logical construction of the present when change and modernization are considered urgent. Managing change and progress also requires conceptions of the present which underpin the possibilities for change. Any government which declares that modernization is important must find tools for implementing its views. It is in this context that the government may look for people's representatives, *volkshoofden*, or informal leaders. The quest for change requires not only 'tradition', but also a view which makes change manageable. The government, incapable of knowing the myriad of local differentiations, is also faced with its incapability to deal with all of them, and must find people who are able to do so effectively. The concept of the local leader, representing all those 'bound by tradition', provides this need.

It is against this background that the popularity of the concept of *volkshoofden*, people's representatives, at the beginning of this century, must be placed. It was the time of 'ethical policy' aiming at the 'uplift' of the Indonesian population, an era of liberalism and goodwill, as those in favour of it would say. The 'discovery' of *adat* law, and of *volkshoofden*, people's representatives, occurred at that time, and local elections were set up in some areas in order to ensure the leaders' representativeness. It is important to note that all this took place in a context of intensive modernization policies. The government needed tools for implementing its policies. I do not want to suggest that there was any deliberate connection. Scientific breakthroughs and practical policies nonetheless were interrelated. Van Doorn (1982) has made some interesting remarks about the new ways in which Indonesian cultures were looked at at the beginning of the century. He states that at that time the colonial government had established physical control over the Dutch East Indies. As the last wars had been won and administrative control was being established, the colonial authorities faced the new important tasks of stabilization and the quest for consent and support. As Van Doorn sees it, the construction of concepts of *Indische* society, in which all the

different parts would together constitute one organic whole, served this purpose. A vision of a new society emerged and ethical policy in its various forms came about (*Papers* 1982; Locher-Scholten 1981). As the quest for consent became important, a new legitimacy was constructed by the colonial power: *Indische* society as a coherent and peaceful whole. Through this promise the colonial government hoped to attain stabilization and consent. The concept of *volkshoofden* provided an important tool in the execution of this policy of stabilization. People's representatives would be able to execute the policy because, it was assumed, they had the power base for it. As Leach put it: the increased need for a new order reshaped the perceptions of the present.

There is a resemblance between the period of ethical policy and the first phases of Indonesian independence. The new Indonesian government also had to modernize in order to survive, and a new developmental scientific mood emerged. Tradition was reinvented, now in the context of the formidable tasks of nation-building. This agenda not only shaped practical policies, but also scientific research. Studies of *the* religion of Java, *the* Javanese family, *the* *kiyai* etc. give no account of the regional and local differentiations within ethnic groups but have a general pretension as far as ethnic boundaries are concerned. A new past fitting the needs and exigencies of the nineteen fifties and later was invented. The concept of development, *pembangunan*, became especially important in the language of the Indonesian government after the cataclysmic events of 1965 and 1966. The first cabinet under the new order was called '*kabinet pembangunan*'. Again the concept served the need for stabilization by promising a better future, after physical control had been re-established. And as Tjondronegoro's study shows, the need to find the viable local communities and their representatives arose again. The quest for 'informal' leaders has become almost an obsession.

I have argued so far that there are specific interests shaping the developmental approach. The bias of integration mentioned in the introduction is clear. This analytical preoccupation must be placed in the context of a political vision that a new society and change are important, even vital. Many students have criticized this approach. Wahid (1975), for instance, argued that, apart from the gradual erosion of local *kiyai* roles in the emerging national context, processes of localization of religious leadership roles could also be discerned. He explicitly contradicted Geertz's earlier general pretensions. Others showed that during the era of ethical policy many *volkshoofden* did not represent local 'communities' at all. Instead of linking tradition to change, integrating local parts into a national whole, a great many of these intermediaries exploited their position for their own purposes and kept the distance between the parts in good order (Drooglever 1982; Sartono 1982). The general pretensions of later developmental concepts have also been sharply criticized. Jackson's concepts of traditional leadership and

brokerage fitting different phases in the process of national integration have been severely attacked (Van Dijk 1982; McVey 1981). His general pretension cannot explain the much greater variety of changes in the relations between the central authorities and the local scenes. This perspective seems primarily to reflect the views of a political centre which seeks to transform society into a new integrated whole. In the same way Tjondronegoro fails to study the various forms of modern social organizations when he looks at their impact in rural society. Modernity in the sense of the Weberian ideal type of bureaucracy is almost taken for granted. Newer theories of bureaucracy which clearly attack such notions of modernity as greater efficiency and effectiveness are not discussed. He therefore fails to consider the possibility of modern social organizations being patrimonialized (Sutherland 1979), or becoming arenas in which contrasting forces lead to inefficiency, waste and inertia (e.g., Vroom 1980). The developmental agenda is part of a 'political mood' in which the urgency of new tasks shapes the ways in which the execution of legitimate authority is studied. The criticism has led to alternative approaches. I shall now look at some studies which have taken the indigenous views of legitimate authority as a starting-point.

3. Participant's view of legitimate authority: an alluring alternative?

The concepts of local representatives, *volkshoofden*, informal and traditional leaders, emerged when modernization was a primary political need and change seemed urgent. The question of in how far older indigenous concepts of legitimate authority changed as modern influences exerted themselves was not answered. Anderson was one of the first to formulate a new agenda: 'My intention . . . is to describe the picture of social and political life seen through traditional lenses and to draw explicit contrasts with the picture seen through the lenses of modern social science' (Anderson 1972:2-3). Geertz also set out to establish a new approach to the study of developmental processes. His book on the Balinese state, *Negara*, has aims that go beyond an analysis of the pre-colonial Balinese state: 'On the basis of the Balinese material, one can construct therefore, a model of the *negara* as a distinct variety of political order, a model which can then be used generally to extend our understanding of the developmental history of Indic Indonesia (Cambodia, Thailand, Burma)' (Geertz 1980:9). They do not, however, engage themselves in the analysis of developmental change. These studies are meant to make this possible. Both Anderson and Geertz regard their analyses as a basis for that. They seek to fill the void which was created when the history of development was written backwards, starting from the notion of the legitimacy of the modern state. It must be assessed, however, what significance can be attributed to these efforts.

One of the major characteristics of both studies is the emphasis on the

transcendental, religious nature of power. The power of the king is depicted as a manifestation of the world beyond, which does not come from successful struggles for control. Therefore, Anderson writes 'Power' with a capital P. To the Javanese, he writes, Power is a concrete reality with its own dynamics and characteristics. It may rest or move to particular people, but this is never moulded by human action. Power contracts according to its own dynamics, diffusing and contracting at other moments again.

There is a paradoxical relation between the quest for power in the secular political sense and having Power as an emanation of transcendence. As Geertz puts it: 'The more one moved toward imaging power, the more one tended to distance oneself from the machinery controlling it' (Geertz 1980:132; see Anderson 1972:13). This is one of the major themes in both studies. The paradox of being the immobile centre in which Power manifests itself and having secular political power at the same time, distinguishes the Indic-Indonesian political systems from others (Geertz 1980:125-127). The king – and not the priest – represents purity and so links the hierarchical order of their realm to the world beyond.

The contrast with the developmental approach is clear. We must ask, however, whether the models of indigenous legitimacy and power can be seen as better starting-points for the study of developmental change. Two interesting comments regarding the validity of Anderson's view on the Javanese conceptions of power contradict each other. They may help us to see if Geertz's and Anderson's studies provide us with indeed new ideal types of legitimate authority.

Koentjaraningrat largely corroborates Anderson's analysis and adds some comments regarding the problems of preservation of power. He rejects Anderson's view that the kings solve this problem by using magical energy, *kesakten*. Koentjaraningrat states that other people possess magical energy also and yet can never aspire to be kings: folk dancers, and even thieves and criminals. However, he leaves the problem of how kings do preserve power unanswered (Koentjaraningrat 1980:135). In contrast, Ina Slamet, also a major Indonesian social scientist, is less positive. She writes that there is almost no connection to the realities of struggles for power and the political conflicts which pervade Javanese society as much as any other. She asks ironically if the views propounded by Anderson only deal with 'the idea of power'. She does not see any connection with Javanese interacting and fighting for power (Slamet 1982:23).

In a review of Geertz's study of Negara, Schulte Nordholt (1981) limits himself to the question of whether it sufficiently reflects the political institutions of Bali before 1900. He makes the interesting remark that Geertz's informants must be placed in context. The ideas about the pre-colonial state were put forward by members of an élite

which had lost its actual power. Is it not possible that the data are coloured by this? They may constitute justifications of a past which is lost and even romantic nostalgia. It is possible that we are facing an invention of colonial Bali, not by 'distorted' Western scientists, but by specific Balinese informants who saw their precious world shattered in colonial times and modern Indonesia. We are not looking here through Balinese lenses, but through those of a specific élite. When it is true that the informants were descendants of a class which had lost its political power, then it becomes understandable that we find almost nothing in Geertz's account of the unavoidable and dirty aspects of statecraft. The informants may cling to the past through images of legitimization, and so see the king as a 'still point in the turning world'. The expressive realities of renunciation and withdrawal from the vicissitudes of power struggles held the political machinery together, Geertz states. But can these be separated from the world of 'war, horses, women and power', as he calls it so beautifully?

This means that we need to be more precise and ask whose Javanese or Balinese lenses we are looking through. Whose constructions of the past are we dealing with? Opposing *the* Javanese views to Western models will not do. It is important to take good note of some remarks made by Anderson. He writes: 'The central problem raised by this conception of Power . . . is not the exercise of Power, but its accumulation' (Anderson 1972:8). In the historical sources he used, emphasis was laid on self-deprivation and renunciation instead of on political self-aggrandizement. But if accumulation is the central problem, is it not possible that the emphasis on purity is so strong because a war had already been won or a political struggle settled? When the Javanese idea of Power is concerned with the central problem of its accumulation, then the model becomes much more precise. It can only mean that it explains what has happened in a past when accumulation of power took place. If the emphasis on magical energy, and purity, so far removed from the realities of suffering and loss is related to processes of power accumulation, then the model becomes much more precise. It can only mean that it explains what has happened in a past when accumulation of power took place. The Javanese idea of Power is an attempt to reshape the past when conflicts have been settled, and a promise of a more peaceful future as far as the ruler is concerned. Thus we must understand the idea of Power as having been constructed by a royalty which is looking for stability and consent after dirty wars. It means that we are not dealing with *the* Javanese idea of power, but with Javanese legitimations and explanations of wars won and conflicts settled.

My interpretation of the value of these studies so becomes much less general than is claimed. It is possible that we are looking through the lenses of specific élites and not 'the' Javanese. And then Geertz's claim that he has constructed a new ideal type of the Indic Indonesian state

cannot be accepted. These constructions are not indigenous models, but justifications of rulers.

More than twenty years ago the same point was raised by C.C. Berg (1964). He sharply criticized Krom's history of Java. According to Berg, Krom based his study on the assumption that the chronicles he used gave a historian's account of history. Berg argued that contextual analysis had shown that the narratives were shaped by concrete political interests of the kings and were supposed to serve as justifications for their ascendancy to power. The justifications took the form of narratives, in which history was reshaped. Two 'fundamental ideas' behind the Javanese idea of Power, fertility and harmony, are related to the problem of accumulation. This can mean that people were killed and war had ravaged the land. These central themes then deal with the future, they are specific promises in the guise of a rewritten past. If this is true, we have been looking at Javanese promises of progress and 'modernity' different from and yet comparable to the promises of development by the modern Indonesian state.

4. Contradictions in the study of legitimate authority

Both approaches study processes of developmental change in Indonesia. Each takes a different ideal type of legitimate authority as point of departure. The first assumes the primacy of the legitimacy of the modern state, legal rational authority or modern bureaucracy. This 'choice' leads to a specific evolutionary perspective. Development is studied 'backwards', starting from concepts related to the future. Concepts of traditional authority and traditional corporate units are derived from this perspective. Many scholars have been engaged in a search for traditional units. Tjondronegoro, whose study was mentioned, came to the conclusion that only the *dukuh*, or neighbourhood, could be regarded as such, and not the *desa*. The failure of government policy to modernize the local scene led to renewed research on 'viable' communities which can be approached. There is still a frantic search for informal leaders, as well as other kinds of people's representatives. A basic element of this view of developmental change is that of incorporation and integration. The analytical apparatus is derived from views held by the political centre. The second approach was provoked by it.

This second approach starts from the participants' view of their own culture. Development history can only be analysed when it is known *where it started from*. It must be based on indigenous models of power, the state and legitimate authority. On that basis developmental history can be written.

On the surface these two approaches are contradictory. We seem to face a dilemma between these two options, the one placing developmental change on the basis of indigenous concepts of legitimate authority and the other starting from 'blatant' ethnocentrism and so on. *But in*

my view this dilemma is false. The two approaches are much more similar than different. If my reading of the studies of Geertz and Anderson is right, we do not see through *the* participants' glasses. On the contrary, their studies present justificatory models of Javanese and Balinese élites. The central issue addressed in them is the problem of accumulated power. The indigenous views which are put forward explain that problem in a justificatory way. The absence of power struggles, dynastic disagreement and wars can only be understood because these have been settled, and the outcomes are explained in such a way as to achieve stability and consent in the future. This is, however, precisely what the concept of modernity is also about. The upsurge of ethical policy with its ideals of modernization and assimilation at the beginning of this century can only be fully understood in the context of a colonial power aiming at stabilization when the expansion of its realm had reached its limits. With the ideals of ethical policy, specific promises were made to the Indonesian citizens. When these ideals would be shared by the population, it would mean that the legitimacy of the colonial government would have been established, and political stability achieved. And stabilization of power is best achieved when both rulers and ruled are engaged in the search for a more peaceful and just society than is found in the present. So the model of promises is presented in the hope that it will meet with consent and thus stability in the future. In just the same way did the need for development emerge after former colonies had become independent. They too, needed concepts for stabilization and integration (Quarles 1984). The signs of divine Power, *wahyu*, and the concept of the immobile Balinese king mirroring macrocosms and so 'paradoxically' holding his realm together, are just in the same way élite interpretations and explanations of differences of power. When these 'explanations of the king' will be accepted, peace will reign and the land will be fertile again. The notion of order in these explanations is quite important. It may well be that the concept of *makrokosmos* is vital, because it entails *kosmos* as a promise of order after war and chaos. We are not facing a contradiction between a 'western scientific theory' and the indigenous point of view. Claims of legitimate authority put forward by all these political élites contain explanations of what has happened and promises of a better future. The indigenous models promise peace and fertility. *Pembangunan*, development, is a similar promise of the Indonesian government.

Weber designed the ideal types of *legitime Herrschaftsverbände*, legitimate authority, for a specific purpose. He wanted to understand two interrelated political processes: (a) the efforts of rulers to gain consent for the established power and order, and (b) the process of legitimation, the giving or withholding of consent by the ruled. His starting-point for analysis was established power. His distinctions only refer to the grounds on which legitimacy was claimed (Weber 1968:46-48). The historical

dimension of his approach aims at understanding what happens after these claims have been made.

Hill has made some interesting remarks which are important in this context. He says that it is primarily important to look at the contents, the arguments of the rulers' claims. Authority, *auctoritas*, is etymologically linked to the Latin verb *augere*, to add, to augment. Authority is a process. Something new and better is created. Authority is religious because this new extra is not to be found in the 'real world'. The concept of legitimate authority is therefore both political and religious. The concept is political insofar as the attempts to gain consent by the rulers and the withholding or awarding of this by the ruled are concerned. This is the context in which Weber studied the different forms of legitimate authority. The concept is religious insofar as the world beyond the relations of rulers and ruled is involved. Something extra must be added, a new world created. Not only the charismatic leader makes use of religious arguments, but so do the 'traditional' leaders and the modern state. Van Baal (1981:113) quotes De Heusch, who emphasizes the religious aspect of political power, too: 'Political science derives from the comparative history of religions'. The claims of legitimacy constitute the process of ruling in the literal sense: the promises are made in metaphors of order, explain the past, create tradition, and promise a better future, in the form of modernity, fertility, and so on. We shall have to look, Hill suggests, at the nature of the claims, because they refer to specific problems to be coped with. These claims are related to the nature of chaos and disorder before the king acquired his power. A look at the religious dimension of the ruler's claims will enable us to connect the history of chaos and accumulation of power to later attempts at creating a new order.

I shall now give two illustrations of problems underlying the claims of legitimate authority being related to the consent which they meet with later on. I have taken them from quite different contexts: the first one concerns the colonial government and the second a king, *raja*, on the island of Timor. By choosing these two examples, I shall try to emphasize the similarity of the problems and contradictions in all types of legitimate authority, traditional as well as modern.

Van Doorn's analysis of late colonial Indonesia provides us with a good example of this (Van Doorn 1982). He analyses the efforts of the colonial government in creating a new *Indische* society. The first conceptions of this new society emerged at the beginning of this century. Ethical policy, which then constituted the new political agenda, was only one of the manifestations of this quest for a new integrated society. The aims of westernization and assimilation connected with different sorts of 'development' programs were not shared by all the Dutch. Van Doorn states that around 1900 it became imperative for the colonial government to

constitute a new vision of and model for colonial society. The process of colonial expansion had come to an end. Military control over the whole of the Dutch East Indies had been established. The Dutch were facing a situation of bewildering plurality and segmentation. So, once physical power had been accumulated, conceptions of a new order had to emerge and the quest for legitimation started. Van Doorn places the emergence of concepts of colonial order explicitly against the background of a multitude of segmentation processes: socio-economic, religious, cultural. The protestations of order underlying liberal reforms and assimilation processes as well as the more conservative views of, for instance, de Kat Angelino, who called for a society in which 'unity was not to be confused with uniformity', coped with these problems of disorder and the danger of increasing segmentation. The problems of order presented themselves as urgent once power had been established.

Van Doorn's study is also important for a second reason. His analysis shows that the quest for order did not result in consent, legitimation and integration at all. On the contrary: '*Indische* society began to split apart even before it was formed' (Van Doorn 1982:137). Not only did the efforts to 'preserve tradition' and incorporate some existing ethnic political institutions into a new order lead to the continuation of plurality, but, more importantly, so did the processes of modernization. Inequality of educational opportunities, for instance, came to be more keenly felt as a school system was gradually set up. Modernization strengthened nationalist political motivations. Economic competition stimulated the political oppositional role of Islam. And the first seedlings of nationalism emerged already in 1908 among those *priyayi* whom the Dutch sought to assimilate. So, while the problem of order became important because of a staggering fission and segmentation once the Dutch gained physical control, the quest for order created even more segmentation and disorder for the colonial government.

The second example may indicate some of the difficulties of taking the participants' view of their culture as point of departure for the writing of developmental history. I have taken it from a major structuralist study: Schulte Nordholt's *The Political System of the Antoni of Timor*. The case I shall refer to is important because it involves the interactions between Atoni lords and elders in the area of Miomafo on the one hand and the Dutch civil service on the other. The issue at stake is the question of who will become the successor to the *raja*, king, in Miomafo (Schulte Nordholt 1971:291-306). It is an elaborate account of the ways in which the claims and counterclaims to succession were argued, each candidate offering different versions of political history, leading to the formulation of his specific rights. Schulte Nordholt describes in great detail the subtle fusions between specific interpretations of political myths, the recanting of affinal relations and particular political interests. The final meeting in

which a decision had to be reached took place under the chairmanship of the *controleur*, the civil servant responsible for the region. This Dutch administrator, with an interpreter and secretary, were the only outsiders. 'Like the dukes of Shakespeare's royal tragedies, the *usif* (lords) identified themselves with the territory and the people they represented; in this case this identification with their tribe went right back into the mythical past' (Schulte Nordholt 1971:303). Carefully chairing the meeting, the *controleur* had all claims and counterclaims scrutinized by the others. Finally he concluded the discussions and presented his decision to the meeting, to be submitted to the authorities in the island's capital of Kupang later on. He underpinned his decision by referring to the most vital interests of them all: maintaining the unity of the realm and following the advice of Us Senak, 'the greatest' of the lords. Then Schulte Nordholt makes some remarks which are important in the context of my argumentation. The other aspirants accepted; Noimuti, 'because it realised that it was too small to become independent. And Bikomi bowed its head to the decrees of a foreign power and the demands of a new age. But the *raja* will never possess real authority.' Had the Dutch not interfered, the decision would probably have been the same, but 'with one main difference: the characteristic nature of the autochthonous political community . . . would have remained intact' (Schulte Nordholt 1971:306).

This case has important implications for our understanding of legitimate authority. Why could the new king not possess real authority? Not because he had presented poor arguments or possessed insecure rights. To my mind Schulte Nordholt emphasizes the breach between the past and the future because the flow of control over the *ordering* of society had slipped out of the hands of the *raja*. That is more important than the preservation of traditional structures. The *raja* had become the making of a foreign authority. Traditional authority had turned into something like a theatre. Power had not been accumulated by the new *raja*. Indigenous processes of balancing the different claims to ascendancy had taken place, but had not resulted in a decision. That decision was taken elsewhere. The king now owed his position to the structuring power of the colonial administration. This being so, how could he be held responsible for the land and its fertility? Although his hereditary claims were regarded as impeccable, he was not the successful moulder of myth and tradition any more, nor a credible moulder, *auctor*, of the future. The realm and its political institutions had started to crumble – only a first step, but already a big one.

Despite many structuralist claims that we have to start analysing the developmental history of Indonesia on the basis of the perceptions and corresponding institutions of the past, these remarks of Schulte Nordholt imply a different view. His study of the political system of the Atoni informs us of a period which is over.

5. Some concluding remarks

Above, I mentioned Mary Douglas' remarks on specific biases in the study of religion in the context of modernization. These were the bias of integration and that of coherence and consistency. These biases refer to the theoretical approaches, discussed in the second and third section respectively.

Many of the debates in developmental anthropology have been fought over the question of which legitimacy had to be stressed. We have seen the agendas of structural functionalism and the legitimacy of the state being attacked by agendas of counterpoint and emancipation. On this basis competing views on the developmental process have emerged. The bias of both camps, in my opinion, is the close link between the historical analysis of development processes and the constructions of the future of one particular group.

My criticism of those who take the participants' view of their own culture as a starting-point is that they are making a similar mistake. De Josselin de Jong (1977) has made a comparison between two districts in Malaysia, the first one, Rembau, being wide open to foreign influences and the second, Jempol, being much more isolated and self-contained. In Rembau there was strong anti-*adat* agitation by the protagonists of Islam, while the attachment to traditional culture was much greater there than in the more isolated area of Jempol (De Josselin de Jong 1977:243). This attachment led to a process of increasing awareness of tradition. It may even be that the increased incorporation of Rembau in commercial, educational and other respects contributed to this also. The consciousness and attachment especially to *adat*, in conflict with the demands of Islamic law, rose in a considerable degree.

These remarks seem to have a wider significance beyond a mere description of the 'paradoxical' situation in the two districts. The general implication is that there is a stronger attachment to *adat* when it conflicts with other systems. The search for the structures underlying the traditional cultures of Indonesia derives its importance from this view. But it seems more important to look into the question as to under what circumstances tradition is chosen or ignored. The solution of the problems of succession in Miomafu, so gently and unprovocatively handled by the outside world, is regarded by Schulte Nordholt as the starting-point for the demise of traditional political authority. A comparison of these two cases must mean that we shall have to look more closely into the conditions for different processes of change. When is tradition a viable modernity, or when is the promise of 'progress' more alluring? My main conclusion is that legitimacies are always in the process of being constructed. Legitimate orders are 'programs' and cannot be acceptable starting-points for analysis. The notions of order, integration and consistency become important when disorder and chaos have to be overcome. The religious dimension of authority so becomes related to the

political. The quest for order, however, may create new disorders and so give life to new definitions of a better world. We shall have to study these contradictory processes. Tradition nor progress is ever fixed. T. S. Eliot put it this way:

'Time past and time future
What might have been and what has been
point to one end, which is always present.'

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