Subaltern Agency and the Political Economy of Rural Social Change

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I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work that has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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Abstract

Twenty years after the fall of Suharto in Indonesia, most political studies of Indonesia's post-New Order democratic 'transition' have left the ideas, forms of organisation, strategies and impacts of lower class struggles largely unexamined. Scholarly works that address the dynamics of social and political change have largely focussed on the mixed outcomes of decentralisation and democratisation of state power for elite actors since *Reformasi,* providing little or no framework for conceptualising popular political action in the context of this institutional restructuring. Drawing on propositions from Marxist political economy, Gramsci's concept of hegemony and social reproduction theory, this thesis develops analytical approaches for investigating the dynamics of rural subaltern agency in post-New Order Indonesia, focussing on how rural subaltern actors 'do politics'. The approach applied here extends the analysis of political studies beyond the state, its institutions and hegemonic practices by focussing on the persistent, albeit often fragmented, popular struggles to secure control of resources and shift social relations of power in favour of subaltern and other non-elite classes. It considers the connections between everyday popular encroachments on hegemonic power, social movement struggles and moments of social and political crisis with the potential for transformative social and political change.

Using qualitative data from extensive fieldwork in Central Java, the thesis demonstrates that legacies of subaltern struggles over power and land as a resource are reflected in villagers' contemporary relations with state institutions and other forms of social organisation. They organise across multiple scales, and employ diverse tactics including shifting alliances with other social actors to further their interests. Their political claims are strongly informed by cultures and ideologies that have their roots in previous periods of collective action, which are reproduced or transformed though their experiences in contemporary social struggles. Finally, the thesis considers how these diverse expressions of subaltern social struggles might contribute to progressive forms of agrarian development and the broadening and deepening of pro-poor democratic struggles in Indonesia.

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Table of Contents

Abstract		I
Acknowledgements		Iii
Table of Contents		v
List of Tables and Figures		ix
List of Acronyms		x
Chapter 1. Subaltern Agency and the Political Economy of Rural Social Change		1
1.1	Introduction: Rural Subaltern Agency as a Field of Inquiry	1
1.2	The Scholarly Context	6
1.3	Research Design	13
	Methods and Fieldwork	17
	Data	21
1.4	Structure of the Study	23
Chapter 2. Critical Approaches to Conceptualising Rural Subaltern Agency		26
2.1	Introduction	26
2.2	A Theory of Capital based on Class Struggle	28
	Materialist Dialectics	29
	Social Reproduction Theory	31
	The Constitution and Reproduction of Rural Social Classes	33
	The State as a Social Relation	37
2.3	Subaltern Ideas and Ideologies	38
2.4	Subaltern Ideas and Social Movement Leadership	42
2.5	Conclusion	43
Chapter 3. Dialectical Materialist Approaches to Rural Class Struggle Histories		46
3.1	Introduction	46
3.2	Pre-Capitalist States and Social Class Struggles	49
3.3	Dutch Colonialism	53

	Dutch Colonial State 1830 – 1949	57
3.4	Independent Indonesia	62
	Old Order	63
	New Order	68
	Crisis of the New Order Regime	75
3.5	Reformasi	77
	Land Policy	78
	Decentralisation	81
	Village Law No. 6/2014	84
3.6	Conclusion	86
Chapter 4. Everyday Agrarian Politics: Magelang Case Study		90
4.1	Introduction	90
4.2	Section One: Land Access and the Social Relations of Production	92
	Establishment of Colonial Village Structures	93
	Land and Privilege Under the New Order	96
	Shifts Away From the Village (and Back Again)	98
	Reproductive Strategies of Smallholders post-*Reformasi*	99
	Summary Profile of Sidomukti Village	108
4.3	Section Two: Village Politics and Popular Organisation	109
	Impacts of the 1965-66 Mass Violence	109
	Village Politics Since Reformasi	112
	Village Leadership	113
	Village Head	116
	Village law No. 6/2014 and O*tonomi Desa*	118
	Development in Cultural Perspective	122
4.4	Conclusion	125
Chapter 5. Agrarian Movement Politics from Below: Batang Case Study		127
5.1	Introduction	127

5.2	Section One: Agrarian production politics under Dutch colonialism	130
	Agrarian production politics during Independence	132
	1965 and the Military Coup	130
	Context for the rise in land conflicts in the late New Order	136
	Background Case Summary	140
5.3	Section Two: Subaltern struggles for land and the making of new social solidarities	141
	Farmers’ union organising 2000 – 2007	147
	Mass Mobilisation	148
	Tratak land case	150
	Pagilaran land case	153
	Decentralisation and State oriented strategies	155
	Local Village head elections	158
	Decentralisation and district opportunities for strategic alliances	162
5.4	Post- Script: Omah Tani land cases as of 2017	166
	Tratak land case	167
	Land victories and individual property rights	168
	Pagilaran land case	170
5.5	Conclusion	171
Chapter 6. Subaltern Ideologies and the Formation of Political Claims		175
6.1	Introduction	175
6.2	Methodological Consideration	177
6.3	Historical dimensions of subaltern struggle ideas	179
	Local histories of subaltern struggle ideas	181
6.4	Culture, Religion and Local Belief Systems	191
6.5	Local political economies and the (re)making of social solidarities	197
6.6	Gender and culture	203
6.7	Conclusion	206
Chapter 7. Conclusion		208

7.1	Introduction	208
7.2	Empirical Findings	210
7.3	Limitations	215
7.4	Implications	216
Appendix		222
Informant Profiles		222
Glossary of Terms		224
Bibliography		234

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1.1 Research questions 12
Table 1.2 Overview of fieldwork 19
Table 1.3 Identity of Interviewees 22
Table 8.1 List of cited informants 218

Figure 1.1 Map of fieldwork locations 20

List of Acronyms

Akatiga		Independent non-profit research organisation. Located in Bandung, West Java.
Bappeda	*Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah*	Regional Development Planning Agency
BIN	*Badan Intelejen Negara*	State Intelligence Agency
BLT	*Bantuan Langsung Tunai*	Direct Cash Aid Government financial assistance paid in cash directly to poor families.
BPJS	*Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Sosial*	Social Insurance Provider Agency
BPD	*Badan Permusyawaratan Desa*	Village Consultative Council
BPN	*Badan Pertanahan Nasional*	National Land Agency
BPS	*Biro Pusat Statistik*	Central Bureau of Statistics
BTI	*Barisan Tani Indonesia*	Indonesian Peasants' Front
BUMDES	*Badan Usaha Milik Desa*	Village Owned Enterprise
ELSAM	*Lembaga Studi dan Advokasi Masyarakat*	The Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy
ET	*Eks Tahanan Politik*	Ex Political Prisoner
FPPB	*Forum Perjuangan Petani Kabupaten Batang*	Batang Peasant Farmers' Struggle Forum
FPPI	*Front Perjuangan Pemuda Indonesia*	Indonesian Youth Struggle Front
Gestapu	*Gerakan September Tiga Puluh*	The September 30th Movement. Acronym made by Suharto regime to discredit communists and

		leftist nationalists by referring to them as Gestapo.
Gestok	*Gerakan Satu Oktober*	The October 1st Movement. Acronym made by Sukarno loyalists and leftists to counter the term Gestapu.
Golkar	*Golongan Karya*	Functional Groups. Since 1999 it changed its name to Partai Golkar (Golkar Party).
HGU	*Hak Guna Usaha*	Leasehold rights
IIS		The Institute of Social Studies, Netherlands
IPB	*Institut Pertanian Bogor*	Bogor Agricultural Institute. In 2019 the name changed to IPB University.
IPE		International Political Economy
ITB	*Institut Tekhnologi Bandung*	Bandung Institute of Technology
Jateng	*Jawa Tengah*	Central Java
Kaur	*Kepala Urusan*	Village secretary’s staff
Kasi	*Kepala Seksi*	Village head’s staff
KIS	*Kartu Indonesia Sehat*	Indonesian Health Card There are two categories of KIS holder. 1. Those who join the national health insurance program by paying premiums themselves. 2. Those who join the national health insurance program and the premium is paid by the government (for poor families).

Komnas HAM	*Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia*	National Human Rights Commission
KPA	*Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria*	Consortium For Agrarian Reform
KWT	*Kelompok Wanita Tani*	Women Farmers' Group
LBH	*Lembaga Bantuan Hukum*	Legal Aid Institute
LPMD	*Lembaga Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Desa*	Village Community Empowerment Board
LSM	*Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat*	Non-Governmental Organisation
Musrenbang	*Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan*	Development Planning Forum
Nasakom	*Nasionalisme Agama Komunisme*	Nationalism Religion Communism. Sukarno's platform to unify Indonesia's three main political forces of nationalists, Islamists and communists.
NU	*(Arabic) Nahdlatul Ulama*	Revival of the Ulama (Islamic clergy). Indonesia's largest Muslim organization in Indonesia.
OTL	*Organisasi Tani Lokal*	Local Farmers' Organisation
PDI	*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia*	Indonesian Democratic Party
PDIP	*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan*	Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle
Perda	*Peraturan Daerah*	Regional regulation
Perhutani	*Perusahaan Hutan Negara Indonesia*	Indonesian State Forestry Company. Today it is referred to as Perum (Perusahaan Umum – General Company) Perhutani.

PKB	*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa*	National Awakening Party
PKI	*Partai Komunis Indonesia*	Indonesian Communist Party
PKH	*Paguyuban Keluarga Harapan*	Bright Future for Families Association. These are families that receive direct governments financial assistance designed to support poor families that have children at school.
PMKG	*Paguyuban Masyarakat Gunung Kamulyan*	Mount Kamulyan Community Association
PN	*Perusahaan Negara*	State-Owned Enterprise
PNI	*Partai Nasional Indonesia*	Indonesian National Party
PPP	*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*	United Development Party
PR	*Pemuda Rakyat*	People's Youth
P2KPP	*Paseduluran Petani Korban Perkebunan Pagilaran*	Association of Farmer Victims of the Pagilaran Plantation
P4T	*Paseduluran Petani Penggarap Perkebunan Tratak*	Tratak Plantation Farmer Cultivators' Fraternity
Raskin	*Beras Miskin*	Rice for the Poor. Direct government aid provided to poor families in the form of rice.
RT	*Rukun Tetangga*	Neighbourhood organization. Smallest unit of administration in Indonesia.
RW	*Rukun Warga*	Greater neighbourhood organization. One level above Rukun Tetangga.
SHM	*Sertifikat Hak Milik*	Certificate of Land Ownership

Tapol	*Tahanan politik*	Political prisoner
UU Desa	*Undang-Undang Desa*	Village Law
UUPA	*Undang-Undang Pokok Agraria*	Basic Agrarian Law

Chapter 1: Subaltern agency and the political economy of rural social change

1.1 Introduction: Rural subaltern agency as a field of inquiry

The study of rural social change in Southeast Asia and more broadly in the global South has increasingly included examination of the revitalisation of agrarian social movements claiming land and the persistence of rural subaltern smallholder classes (Hart and Peluso 2005; Petras and Veltmeyer 2006; Rachman 2011; Rigg and Vandergeest 2012; Lucas and Warren 2013; Rigg et al 2016). The structural factors driving economic development in the global North that in the 20th century saw the peasant smallholder almost disappear, have not brought the same results in the global South. While there is no doubt that capitalism and modernity have decisively infiltrated Southeast Asian social and geographical space, how rural subaltern actors[1] engage with and respond to the possibilities presented are highly varied, sometimes running counter to the direction of state policies that encourage more urban and market-oriented economic trajectories for rural actors (Rigg and Vandergeest 2012). Many rural subaltern actors in Southeast Asia have not been drawn more firmly into the urban and rural wage-labour economy, nor have a majority of smallholdings been replaced by higher productivity capitalist farming enterprises (Rigg and Vandergeest 2012; Li 2014; Rigg et al 2016). Rather millions of poor people are struggling to obtain or maintain secure access to land as a means to claim some form of autonomy and survival (Bernstein 2000; Rigg et al 2016). The failure of peasant farmers[2] to disappear and their often dynamic initiatives in pursuit of ongoing rural futures has led some to consider

[1] The concept of subaltern is used here in the tradition of Gramsci. “A distinguishing characteristic of the subalterns and the subaltern groups is their separatedness one from another (*disgregazione*). Not only are there multiple subaltern social groups or classes… but they are also disconnected and quite different from one another: while some of them may have achieved a significant level of organization, others might lack all cohesion, and within the groups themselves there exist various degrees of subalternity and marginality” (Buttigieg 2018, 9-10). For the purpose of this thesis rural subaltern groups or classes refers to rural lower class actors engaged in social struggles over power and material resources needed for their livelihoods and social reproduction. They include rural smallholders who work as peasant farmers, petty-commodity producers, and as land poor rural wage labourers engaged in farm and non-farm livelihood activities.

[2] Vandergeest and Rigg refer to peasants as people who traditionally derived their livelihoods through farming, through relations at least to some extent outside of market and capitalist relations (2012, 6). This concept applies to some actors referred to as peasant or peasant farmer in this thesis. As well the word *tani* (*petani*) in Indonesian can be translated as either peasant or the more commercial oriented ‘farmer’. For agrarian movement activists and many *petani* in Indonesia the word *tani* has a radical political history tied to the struggles of ‘peasants’ during the Sukarno era (Lucas and Warren 2013, 27). Here the use of peasant can refer to the small farmer producer as well as land poor and landless activists struggling to access land.

the material basis for their persistence (Vandergeest and Rigg 2012; Rigg et al. 2016) and what implications this has for a concept of rural subaltern or peasant 'politics' (Bernstein 2000).

The growing body of empirical work that documents the struggles of rural subaltern actors in Indonesia and more generally in the global South, has made little impact on scholarly explanations of social and political change in post-Suharto Indonesia. Current explanations of social and political change have focussed on the mixed outcomes of decentralisation and democratisation of state power for elite actors in Indonesia since *Reformasi,* providing little or no framework for conceptualising popular political action in the context of this institutional restructuring. Liberal-pluralist explanations of these mixed outcomes rely on 'democratic transition' theories assuming that progressive social and political change can and should occur within the context of existing capitalist social relations of production and capitalist state institutions (Mietzner 2012; Ford and Pepinsky 2013). These literatures assume that subaltern politics are not significant[3] (for example, Liddle 2013, 74). Where popular agency is acknowledged it tends to focus on middle classes or 'civil society' not on the agency of subaltern actors. An exception here is Aspinall (2013a, 2013b), who acknowledges some of these limitations arguing that the role of lower class popular agency in the fall of Suharto and in the democratic dynamic that has developed since 1998 needs to be re-evaluated. In contrast to Aspinall however, who adopts a largely liberal-pluralist approach in his examination of Indonesian politics, this thesis will apply a critical political economy approach.

This thesis examines the makings of rural subaltern politics in post-New Order Indonesia, focussing on how the rural poor 'do politics' and what their political claims look like. Drawing on new empirical evidence the thesis explores how the juncture of struggles over power and material resources in particular land, the making of social relations between social groups and classes, and the ideas and ideologies of subaltern actors demonstrate some definite correlation with different expressions of subaltern agency. It builds on earlier detailed empirical studies made within the critical agrarian studies tradition that have

[3] Liddle (2013, 72) focuses on the agency of political elites as 'leaders' who have followers. He denies that fundamental change is necessary and believes that capitalist democracy can be managed to provide better outcomes for all people.

examined the linkages between studies of rural change and the dynamics of rural social movements (Breman and Wiradi 2002; Lucas and Warren 2003; Hart and Peluso 2005; Moyo and Yeros 2005; Petras and Veltmeyer 2006; Caldeira 2008; Peluso, Affiff and Rachman 2008; Rachman 1999, 2011, 2016; Bachriadi, Lucas and Warren 2013; Lucas and Warren 2013). However, despite the richness of empirical investigations on rural social movements in Indonesia since the late 1990s, including the documentation of hundreds of locally based claims by ordinary farmers to assert and defend their rights to land (Peluso, Afiff and Rachman 2008; Rachman 2011; Lucas and Warren 2003, 2013; Rachman 2011; Bachriadi, Lucas and Warren 2013; McCarthy and Robinson 2016), these studies rarely examine more explicitly how these struggles might enrich our theoretical understandings of the broader processes of social change taking place.

New political economy approaches in the agrarian studies tradition draw on Marxist explanations of capitalist development, that is, the relationships between land, labour and capital (Li 2014). However, they often rely on structuralist analyses to explain the broad brushstroke dynamics of rural change (Breman and Wiradi 2002; Hart and Peluso 2005; Rigg and Vandergeest 2012; Li 2014; Rigg et al 2016) and rarely examine the dynamics of rural subaltern class agency more specifically. I note here some important exceptions that examine the dynamics of 'exclusions' or conflicts over rural land between an expanding array of social actors in Southeast Asia (Hall, Hirsch and Li 2011; Li 2014). This literature frames the analysis of conflicts over land as a resource in terms of 'access', rather than only one of property rights (Ribot and Peluso 2003; Hall, Hirsch and Li 2011), effectively broadening the fields of contestation that fall under examination. Here access is defined as the *ability* to derive benefits from things, giving focus to questions of power within given social relations rather than narrowly focusing on questions of formal legal rights to land (Ribot and Peluso 2003). It is this broader concept that is applied in the project.

Critical agrarian studies that examine the dynamics of agrarian social movements in particular, often focus on the outcomes of organisational claims on the state and its mediators to improve the life conditions of rural subaltern actors (Lucas and Warren 2003; Peluso, Afiff & Rachman 2008; Rachman 2011; Bachriadi, Lucas and Warren and 2013) with less attention paid to the dynamics of social class conflict that underlie rural subaltern peoples' struggles. The examination of agency in these literatures focus principally on social

movement organisations and their leaderships, or, on the constraints on rural subaltern actors (the subjects of the movements themselves). Further, agrarian studies of Java often rely on generalisations about the dynamics of social-class contestation across rural Java that reinforce assumptions about the powerlessness of rural subaltern actors themselves (Hart, Turton and White 1989; Breman and Wiradi 2002; Hart and Peluso 2005; Peluso 2012). Where powerlessness is not assumed, the role of other actors, such as students, intellectuals and NGOs is nonetheless taken to be critical (Hart and Peluso 2005; Peluso, Affif and Rachman 2008; Bachriadi, Lucas and Warren 2013). These assumptions of powerlessness of rural subaltern actors as distinct social groups or classes, leads to a general pessimism about the possibilities for progressive social and political change when national and international scale agrarian social movements fail to deliver meaningful reform that favours poor rural social classes. However, where state actors have refused to act consistently in favour of subaltern classes, specifically smallholder farmers and landless rural actors, there has been limited examination of what alternative courses of action may be taken by these same social actors and their social movement allies. Nor has it been considered, that if the interests of these social actors may sometimes be best served at local or regional scales, how should we then apply our critical understanding of the efficacy of subaltern agency when it does not appear to make generalised impacts at national and international scales?

Studies that apply a critical (Marxist) political economy approach to political crisis and consolidation of power tend to provide top-down analyses of capitalist hegemony and the consolidation of oligarchy to explain the state of politics in Indonesia post-Suharto. Critical political economy[1] literatures that can explain the dynamics of class struggle politics in capitalist society in general fail to identify theoretical frameworks that adequately explain the dynamics and significance of popular subaltern action in in the post-dictatorship period (Hadiz 2003, 2010). These political economy approaches rely on structuralist explanations to describe how powerful oligarchs have been able to defend and extend their wealth and power by re-orienting patrimonial strategies through decentralised political structures (Robison and Hadiz 2004; Hadiz 2010; Winters 2011). These analyses focus on the state, its institutions and hegemonic practices while ignoring the persistent, albeit often fragmented, popular struggles against them. While they argue that the degree of political change

required to undermine the balance of wealth and political power in Indonesia would be nothing short of revolutionary, they provide no view on how this kind of political change might take place.

Hadiz (2006) argues that the failure to make more significant political gains for ordinary people after the fall of the dictatorship in 1998 lies in the destruction of the left in the mid 1960s that was a necessary pre-condition to the rise of the Suharto dictatorship. This argument sidelines what happened politically amongst subaltern actors after the destruction of the PKI and other organised left-wing groups. Further, many scholars downplay the role that subaltern classes played in the economic and political crisis of the late 1990s, focussing on the impacts of the Asian economic crisis and tensions within the New Order regime to explain the downfall of the Suharto dictatorship (Aspinall and Fealy 2003; Robison and Hadiz 2004; Hadiz 2010; Winters 2011). These assumptions lead to the conclusion that subaltern agency is insignificant and requires little or no attention. This is demonstrated where no attempts have been made to explain the ongoing and persistent feature of mass land occupations involving tens of thousands of rural subaltern actors and their ongoing land conflicts[4] in political analyses. Where rural subaltern agency is examined, it largely remains within the bounds of participation in or success in elections as the primary measure of the role and impact of popular agency (Aspinall and Rahman 2017; Mahsun 2017).

In light of this, the focus of this study is specifically on the agency of rural subaltern classes themselves and their part in making the social and political changes taking place in rural areas. It builds on the 'Murdoch School' approach in critical political economy with its grounded understanding of how capitalism and class politics operate in the Southeast Asian region, while extending its analysis beyond elite actors to examine local political economies where subaltern actors are engaged in political and social struggles. The Murdoch School approach examines struggles between coalitions of social and political forces, that is classes and class fractions, for power and control over resources. These struggles over power and the making of social relations between these social classes are heavily conditioned by the material dynamics of capitalist economic development. This analytic framework "draws

[4] This condition also characterised the period leading up to the military coup and mass violence of 1965-66.

heavily on Marxist state theory of Nicos Poulantzas (1973) and Bob Jessop (1990, 2008) (Hameiri and Jones 2014, 6)". Further, the study builds on critical traditions in social anthropology, political sociology and social geography and follows the analytical shifts in the study of Southeast and mainland Asia and the Middle East, which takes both political economy and everyday politics seriously (Scott 1985; Kerkvliet 2005; Bayat 2013; Elias and Rethal 2016). The purpose here is to develop tools that allow us to identify, investigate and understand more about the dynamics of subaltern agency in processes of political change, from the everyday, to conditions of political crisis and regime change.

The approach applied here follows in the tradition of social anthropologists (Li 2014) and political sociologists (Bayat 2013, 2015), who examine urban and rural peoples' understanding of their own lives, their hopes and fears, and the social and political projects that engage them. This involved applying a broad working definition of subaltern class 'agency' during the conduct of the project as, the actions taken by people 'in their own interests' as defined by themselves. Further, this study privileged examination of agency where it appears to be collectively organised. The empirical findings are then analysed to inform a more focussed study of the character and dynamics of rural activism and the implications for the study of social and political change.

1.2 The scholarly context

I situate this study within two fields of study – one concerned principally with political studies of the dynamics of social and political change (Bernstein 2000; Brenner et al 2010; Hadiz 2010; Aspinall 2013a, 2013b; Bayat 2013, 2015; Barker et al 2013; Elias and Rethal 2016; Engelhardt and Moore 2017), the other, with the revival of agrarian social movements as a global phenomenon and the re-making of rural peasantries in the global South (Breman and Wiradi 2002; Lucas and Warren 2013; Moyo and Yeros 2005; Peluso, Afiff & Rachman 2008; Rachman 2011; Bachriadi, Lucas & Warren 2013; Vandergeest and Rigg 2012; McCarthy and Robinson 2016; Rigg et al 2016; Scoones et al 2018). The former provides the framework to consider the political significance of rural subaltern agency. The latter, while empirically rich, lack tools of analysis that would situate the study of subaltern agency in the broader frame of social change theory. This limits our ability to investigate and understand the dynamics of how rural subaltern actors participate in social struggles that bring them in conflict with hegemonic power and how these dynamics change over time.

Conventional political studies generally limit their investigations to questions and processes implied in the study of governments and states and the organised efforts to influence what these institutions do, or to change them altogether. A critical political economy approach is applied in this thesis to focus attention on the relationship between social struggles over power and control of material resources and broader questions of history and culture. A critical political economy approach allows us to explain how differences in social relations of production across Java demonstrate a logic that can be understood as being rooted in their respective regional histories of social struggles, the making of cultures and the unevenness in the developing mode of capitalist production. That is, that the struggles by groups of subaltern actors in conflict with other social actors, shape the trajectories of development of political and economic structures at different scales, from the local to the national.

Contemporary developments in social movement studies tend to lack a theoretical analysis of capitalist social relations and thus miss the class struggle, the dynamics of class contradictions and how these influence the current organisation of capitalist power. Further, social movement studies do not capture dynamics of social-class contestation by subaltern actors where these actors are not explicitly engaged in a struggle against the state or a private institution, that is where subaltern actor's actions have not been defined by academic observers as 'social movements'.

Here I extend on 'everyday' political economy literatures (Scott 1985; Kerkvliet 2005; Bayat 2013; Elias and Rethel 2016), proposing a theoretical approach that can explain the diversity of rural subaltern people's actions as part of a single whole, one that makes the connections between everyday popular encroachments on hegemonic power, social movement struggles and moments of social and political crisis with the potential for transformative social and political changes. Further, adopting an approach that allows us to capture and explain the tensions in agency-structure dynamics resulting in changes that take place beyond as well as within the state and other forms of acknowledged institutionalised power.

Theoretically this thesis attempts to bridge a gap between a Marxist analysis in the field of critical international political economy and social movement studies. Thus far there is a "limited crossover between social movement studies and critical political economy,

even though collective agency – or potential class struggle – should be critical to Marxist analysis and conversely, a theory of capital centred on class struggle could offer a lot to social movement studies (Engelhardt and Moore 2017, 272)". A principal theoretical challenge here lies in the conceptualisation of agency. Here I concur with literatures that argue that social movements are only one form of 'contentious politics' and that everyday forms of contentious politics as well as revolutions, strikes and other forms of popular action need to be (re)integrated in to a more coherent theoretical approach (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001; Barker et al 2014). Thus I draw on critical political economy analyses (Bernstein 2000; Barker et al 2013; Engelhardt and Moore 2017) that argue for a renewed study of dialectical materialist approaches to the study of social classes, contentious politics and class struggle.

This study applies an approach in the tradition of critical historians and political sociologists (Tilly 1978; E.P Thompson 1980; Linebaugh and Rediker 2000; Bayat 2013, 2015), who analyse the material connections between everyday forms of subaltern self-assertion, social movements and world historical movements while considering the specific conditions of rural subaltern actors. Asef Bayat's (2013, 2015) studies of the struggles of the urban poor, who engage in an everyday politics he refers to as the 'quiet encroachment of the ordinary', provide critical insights into the dynamics of individual and collective agency. Here I consider the application of his findings to rural subaltern actors in this study, where people's…

> … desperate struggles may assume organised, audible and collective forms when the gains are threatened or when opportunity for collective resistance and mobilisation becomes available – and when, for instance, the police control softens, the state slips into crisis, or some large contentious movement comes to fruition. Under such conditions the dispersed struggles of these non-movements may coalesce into and become part of broader political struggles (Bayat 2015, S35).

Further, in applying Bayat's (2015) approach of taking seriously the micro-scale cultures and practices of everyday resistance, we are better able to make the connections between these fragmented expressions of subaltern agency and moments of regime crisis and political upheaval where actors are drawn into collective forums for political action, often for the first time.

Contemporary studies of social movements in Southeast Asia tend to focus on the study of movement leaders within organised institutions such as trade unions or on middle class social movements and their struggles against the state (Ford 2013; Rodan 2013). They seek to explain the operation of these actors in relation to state power but often lose sight of the urban and rural subaltern subjects of social movements. The consequences of this focus on movement leaders in academic inquiry requires further examination, in particular the influence it has had on social science understandings and subsequent theoretical examination of how social and political change takes place.

This thesis argues for a theoretical approach and an ethnographic practice, that allow us to detect and analyse as a cohesive whole the repertoire of actual (and future potential) forms of popular action that rural subaltern classes engage in. These expressions of subaltern agency include the mass land occupations of the early period of *reformasi* that involved hundreds of thousands of actors in claiming rights to land. In other cases, they include the quiet more everyday actions of local rural communities that have resulted in the election of more representative local leaders who respond and act together with their village members to respond to everyday struggles for survival. In examining the diversity of subaltern actions in later case study chapters we will see that a confluence of factors can be identified to explain the circumstances in which subaltern actors establish relations of social solidarity and under what circumstances their interests conflict. Central to the approach required here is the need to determine the class character of the modern peasantries, who they are and how they are constituted. This includes positioning subaltern class actors as historically situated subjects which allows us to explain the differences in these actors' life situations across space and time.

To understand the diversity in the experiences of local rural communities I apply Bernstein's approach which "investigates the constitution and reproduction of peasantries through the social relations, dynamics of accumulation and divisions of labour of capitalism/imperialism, without any assumption of either anachronism or 'backwardness' (2000,27). This approach assumes that "by the end of the colonial era the vast majority of farmers referred to as 'peasants' had been constituted as petty commodity producers within capitalism (ibid, 29)" that is, not as the remnants of a prior (feudal) mode of production. Thus, if peasant production in the global South is based on "agricultural petty

commodity production, constituted by class relations (and contradictions) of capital and labour and located in the shifting places of agriculture in the imperialist periphery (Bernstein 2000, 40)" what implications does this have for an examination of 'peasant' politics?

Much of the literature on rural Java, both in the agrarian studies tradition and more recent studies of village politics, (for example Hart 1986; Ito 2011; Aspinall and Rahman 2017) examine paternalistic class structures where the rural poor are subservient and powerless, dominated by wealthy and politically powerful landowning classes. Studies of the decentralisation policies rolled out in a succession of legislative reforms have drawn pessimistic conclusions about the possibility for democratic transformation and the reordering of rural power relations in more progressive directions (Ito 2011; Aspinall and Rahman 2017). But what these studies often miss is the struggles of subaltern social actors over power and resources that take place outside of state institutions, or that social relations of power reflected in state institutions do not always represent the main sites of contestation of subaltern actors. The empirical findings of this study confirm the views of Hefner (1990), Hart and Peluso (2005) and Li (1999) that there are other diverse social and political experiences of subaltern classes in Java. Therefore we require tools for analysing a wider range of contemporary class structures of rural Java that allow us to detect more precisely the dynamics of social-class conflicts[5] and the remaking of social relations in post-New Order Indonesia.

In chapter three I argue that these different Javas reflect the variations in historical dynamics of class-social contestation since the period of the Dutch colonial state. Legacies of social class conflicts during the colonial period have produced different patterns of social relations of production and reproduction across diverse geographical areas. The historical dynamics of social conflict in different regions have seen some rural communities more or less secure their access to the means of production, while in others the access to the means of production, both land and the ability to farm it, is constantly under contestation. Further,

[5] As the original design in this study did not include lowland agricultural regions it is not possible to assert that there are distinct differences in lowland and highland rural cultures per se. However, as the case study findings (and relevant literatures - Hart and Peluso 2005; Rahman 2011) explored in chapters four, five and six will show, there are major differences in social experiences within highland cultures across different regions. Research in lowland rice-cultivating areas that applies a similar approach and method used in this study would provide evidence for further empirical comparisons.

the political ecology of certain commercial crops has underpinned sometimes rapid changes in social relations within local political economies by accelerating processes of social stratification among upland farmers in some regions (Li 2014).

This study will show that variations in social relations of production are reflected in local level social organisation and state (village government) institutions, significantly influencing how ordinary people 'do politics'. In some cases local village structures actively involve village members in their decision-making and activity, while in others the majority of village members are excluded from participation in as well as the benefits of village governance. A further factor examined in this context is the dynamics of urban-rural mobility which has remained an ongoing feature of rural political economy since the Asian crisis of 1998, reflecting a persistently malleable rural social structure. In times of economic and social crisis the rural economy and its flexible social structure have been capable of reabsorbing large numbers of people leaving urban conditions of instability and crisis. This phenomenon warrants specific attention as more rigid rural structures historically have been important factors in the consolidation of market-driven urban-rural capitalist social relations and the permanent loss of smallholders' access to the means of production.

Finally this thesis highlights the ideas and ideologies of rural classes in different expressions of subaltern agency, as part of the examination of what drives people to act in the ways they do. I examine the historical dimensions of subaltern ideas and ideologies in the making of 'Indonesian national identity' and the ongoing contestations over these identities while focussing specifically on the cultural repertoires available to subaltern groups in their expressions of religion, folklore and popular beliefs. I explore how changing expressions in cultural and religious identities reflect contestations over power and changing social relations taking place at the local level. Further, I consider how the dynamic, ongoing and uneven development of social relations of production across rural spaces influences the formation of identities and social solidarities at local level. The examination of these ideas becomes important in identifying the circumstances in which people decide to form relations of social solidarity, that is to cooperate and band together, and in what circumstances their interests might conflict.

Based on empirical evidence in this study I argue that the ideas and ideologies of subaltern classes are intrinsically connected to the contradictions inherent in social relations

not only of capitalist production (or oppressions and exploitations) but also reproduction (what we understand as the means of subsistence and survival). Social relations of reproduction should not be dismissed as secondary non-economic struggles but form central parts of a social whole. Globally we see this play out in the large numbers of struggles around social reproductive issues under neoliberalism where the state plays less of a role in social reproduction (reduction of subsidies, privatisation and/or withholding of health and education services, restriction of access to key resources such as land, water and housing), in particular their impact on gender relations as responsibility for social reproduction is increasingly a private (no longer a state) matter. Neoliberal reforms employed by capitalist states have provoked a proliferation of social struggles globally, including landless people's movements, which in so many cases, are about the immediate need to survive (Petras and Veltmeyer 2006; Caldeira 2008; Karriem 2009). These struggles are fundamentally about who has the right to survive and these struggles I argue have a specific class character.

Gramscian approaches to subaltern common sense and popular culture as forms of political thought are instructive here, specifically the idea that subaltern culture is a significant material force in which political resistance may be embodied. Reed summarises Gramsci's purpose in *Prison Notebooks* as "to conceptually and historically understand the psychology of the masses or their 'spontaneous philosophy'; … to comprehend how people make sense of their world, their daily lives, and, most importantly, how political struggles form their perspectives as subaltern subjects (2013, 563)". In Gramsci's view the basis for the formation of solidarities and collective struggle is *not* limited to marginality, rather it is based on human experience in the making of social relations (Featherstone 2012). It is these human experiences and the making of social relations by subaltern and other actors that are examined in chapter six. We will see that solidarities are made and re-made through human practice, that is, through the creation and reproduction of human cultures. The making of social relations in capitalist society involves social struggles over power and access to and control of resources which may include the making of social solidarities to secure power and access to resources. In the case studies examined here, I will show that social solidarities and rejection of hierarchy are significant not only in subaltern actors' ideas but in how they

go about making social relations. Further, that human experiences gained in these social struggles always have the potential to generate new forms of identity and political practice.

Gramsci's concept of hegemony provides a framework for examining how this potential might be realised. The political, ideological and cultural struggles of a subaltern group to liberate itself involves the acquiring of consciousness – the movement from non-critical to critical thought, from action to conscious action. Further, that subaltern groups become (counter) hegemonic when they move beyond their individual or immediate economic interest, to the political interest to the hegemonic. In other words, from the expression of individual will to the 'general will' (Fontana 2012, 130). It is to the expression of individual will and the creation of a shared 'political interest' or 'general will' that the case studies discussed in later chapters pay close attention to.

1.3 Research design

This thesis seeks to explain how ordinary people engage with politics, that is the various ways that subaltern actors exercise agency and why they do it in the ways that they do. The study examines the period since the fall of the dictatorship in 1998 specifically, as its starting point for examining the changes made and experienced by rural subaltern actors. Three different regional locations with different socio-demographic profiles were chosen for examination, with each location presenting a different social character and historical context.

Ethnography provided tools of inquiry to uncover individual's motives and behaviours as well as the material conditions of subaltern actors' livelihoods. An inductive approach was applied in the initial process of data analysis which highlighted three primary factors that warranted closer examination in the exercise of agency by subaltern actors. These factors were: i) access and historical relationships to land; ii) social relations of production and reproduction; and iii) the ideas and ideologies of subaltern actors. A theoretical framework was then devised that pays attention to the historical dynamics of social class conflicts and capitalist development in Java in order to explain the diverse life realities of subaltern actors across case studies. This framework was not intended in the first instance to invite generalised empirical conclusions about rural subaltern actors, but rather to provide tools of analysis to examine the different material realities of subaltern actors

across space and time, their ideas and associated cultural expressions and how different expressions of agency contribute to social and political change.

The study makes explicit theoretical examination of how rural subaltern classes are constituted and what implications this constitution has for developing our understanding of a 'rural subaltern politics'. The study develops a single framework of analysis to explain different expressions of agency, from everyday struggles, to social movements to subaltern actions at moments of political crisis. The framework invites us to consider the potential transformative character of all forms of subaltern agency, the interconnections between these different expressions and the implications this has for the examination of social and political change.

Principal research question
1. How have social actors from subaltern rural classes, specifically landless peasants, smallholder farmers and other rural poor people, with different social interests from those in power, engaged in social and political action in the post-dictatorship era?"
Subsidiary questions
2. How do subaltern actors understand and demonstrate the exercise of their rights and aspirations both individually and/or collectively? 3. What influence have local cultures, historical (social) experience and forms of social organising had on post-dictatorship subaltern social and political action at a grass roots community level? 4. How and why do subaltern actors engage (or not) with institutions of the state? 5. Does the exercise of subaltern class agency challenge the interests of those who hold power (or does it support the status quo)? 6. What changes in structural factors since *reformasi* support, hinder, or render more complex, the exercise of collective agency among subaltern groups? 7. Do patronage or inherited '*aliran'* or party affiliations influence social and political action of subaltern actors?

Table 1.1 Research Questions

Drawing on propositions from Marxist political economy, Gramsci's concept of hegemony and social reproduction theory, this thesis develops explanatory analytical tools capable of providing answers to these research questions. Marxist scholars apply a dialectical materialist lens arguing for a theory of capital based on class struggle. Here social struggles are not understood separately from the economic and political processes they respond to, nor can changes in these processes be understood apart from these same social struggles (Engelhardt and Moore 2017; Wood 2006).

Scholars applying Marxist approaches to theories of social change argue that all social classes exercise agency and that the dynamic forces of social change lie in the conflicts and social struggles that take place between different social classes. The state in this view is understood as a social relation, where different institutional forms reflect the social relations between different social groups with more or less power in given circumstances. Thus, the state can be understood as an expression of the outcome of class conflicts and struggles over power at a given point in time as well as a site of social contestation. Therefore, the concept of agency applied here includes the broad repertoire of actual forms of popular action (social struggles) that subaltern classes engage in, from the everyday to the revolutionary.

Marxist theory that places the labour of producing our world at the centre of its analysis, should conceptualise human production as the creation of social relations and their symbolic forms, and the making of the producers (human reproduction) themselves. Thus, this study proposes that the social relations of production should be understood as encompassing the whole world of production and reproduction of power and culture. In this case, the ideas, ideologies and cultures of subaltern actors are understood as the symbolic forms of social relations as they are experienced and articulated in the process of social struggles and these constitute the basis for conceptualising a 'subaltern politics'.

Struggles to gain and retain access to land form part of social reproduction strategies. Social reproduction theory allows us to integrate social relations of reproduction in to our conceptualisation of class struggle. In other words, we are concerned not only with struggles between labour and capital but in all manifestations of oppression that arise in the reproduction of these social relations. All forms of oppression and the struggles against them must necessarily be included in our analysis of the constitution of rural subaltern agency.

This study will show that there are several factors that we should pay attention to when examining the exercise of rural subaltern agency. Firstly, there are notable differences in historical experiences of rural subaltern struggles across Indonesia. The outcomes of these rural social struggles have had major consequences for subaltern actors' access to and control over land across different regions of Java. Further, these struggles have resulted in diverse social relations of production manifesting as differences in regional and local

political economies. These social relations strongly influence how subaltern actors' participate in institutions of social organisation. Legacies of social struggles across generations are reflected in local level social organisations and subaltern actors' relations with state institutions, significantly influencing how these actors engage politically. Subaltern participation in village government structures and non-state institutional forms of social organisation reflect historical legacies of the dynamics of social-class contestation across different geographic locations. Whether state institutions, such as village government, become forums or sites for effective social contestation, or where subaltern actors establish their own organisations independent of the state, reflect these legacies.

Secondly, subaltern actors' ideas, cultures and ideologies have roots in subaltern folklores and local wisdoms which are reproduced or transformed through people's own experiences of social struggle. People's ideas manifest as representations of specific social interests and ways of thinking that reflect social conflicts over power and access to and control of resources. Solidarities and collective struggle are a dominant feature of the case studies examined and emerge out of human experience in the making of social relations. These human experiences and the making of social relations demonstrate the potential to generate new forms of identity and political practice and their ideas and ideologies are made and re-made through the creation and reproduction of cultures.

Finally, this study will show that subaltern actors (and their allies) organise across multiple scales, employing diverse tactics to further their interests. In some cases, violent repression and criminalisation of smallholder activists remain an important part of state responses to forms of rural popular organisation, independent of state institutions. In others, subaltern actors' acts of resistance sometimes escape the scrutiny of observers because they organise through state and non-state institutions, across scales, outside national urban politics and in social organisations that are often illegible to their opponents. Despite the fragmentation of nationally coordinated social movements and popular political parties, the findings in this study indicate that the ideas and actions of rural people are organic expressions of class antagonisms and struggles for power and control of material resources, not dependent on the existence of party formations or nationally coordinated mass social movements.

Methods and Fieldwork

Prior to this fieldwork study I lived in and worked as a social activist in rural villages in Central Java from 2002 – 2012. I was concerned with how lower class actors in Indonesia might be able to make their lives in more transformative ways. Therefore, this study purposively privileges the ideas, opinions and experiences of subaltern actors in order to understand how they know the world, the opportunities and constraints that shape how they go about changing it and the purpose of their actions. The original design for this study was informed by small research studies I conducted during my undergraduate and honours programs and during my work experience in Java. It was driven by a desire to understand the ways that ordinary people can strengthen their capacity to make change that is meaningful to them while contributing to broader social and political struggles that address questions of the deepening environmental crisis, women's emancipation and the underlying causes of social and political conflict and violence. This drive indeed shaped the ontological view of the entire project, the purpose of the inquiry and how it was designed.

The present study is grounded in an 18-month period of fieldwork in three districts in Central Java, as well as long term professional and social involvement with rural village communities in several districts in Central Java prior to this. For reasons of length and clarity the fieldwork from one of the districts provided background data for several aspects of the thesis but was not included as a specific case study. The months of fieldwork there provided specific insights in to the ideas and ideologies of rural subaltern actors as well as informing my understanding of the variations in different geographical political economies. My professional and personal experiences over ten years, while not drawn upon explicitly in this study, cannot be separated from the approach and methods I employ. These depend upon my cultural and language proficiency, social and kinship relationships in Central Java which enabled my relative ease of moving in and out of different cultural and social environments.

The present study relies in the first instance on qualitative data from rural Java collected in 2016-17 and follow ups in 2018 and 2019. The data I collected includes field notes based on observations during live-in periods in each location, everyday conversations, semi-structured interviews, participation in meetings, participating in routine domestic activities, working in the field, as well as newspaper articles, previous research reports, village records and archival documents from the farmers' union that was the focus of one

case study. Geographically, the sites for fieldwork included Batang, Temanggung[6] and Magelang districts in Central Java. The sites were chosen to reflect the diverse life situations of different groups of subaltern actors including landless (land poor) rural workers, smallholder farmers and other rural actors struggling to secure livelihoods.

Batang district was chosen in order to investigate landless people's struggles to access and secure their use of land since the fall of the dictatorship. Temanggung was chosen because it was a site of public contestation over the histories of 1965-66 in the early period after the fall of the Suharto dictatorship. Magelang was chosen because many communities became actively engaged in a significant revival of local community based cultural organisations after the dictatorship fell. I stayed in field sites in Batang and Magelang for several days every week for several months respectively, staying in many different farmer's households and in a farmers' union headquarters. I participated in family and farming life, joining the everyday activities of women and men, attending local meetings and hanging out in people's houses when they weren't working. The focus of study in the Batang case study is a district wide farmers' union and two local land claim peasant farmers' groups who initiated the founding of the district wide union. In Magelang the study is based on a single village with more detailed focus on the livelihoods, reproductive strategies, social organisation and cultural practices of residents in three hamlets[7] within this one village. In Temanggung the focus of study was on an informal group of farmer activists who initiated a progressive farmers' organisation when the dictatorship fell. The majority of members were either former political prisoners of the Suharto dictatorship or their children.

In Batang I sought out local farmers' union group members as gate keepers to identifying my research subjects and purposively avoided contact with local village leaders. This was considered safe by my research participants and allowed me to demonstrate through action where my sympathies lie in their struggles. I did not position myself as neutral in the purpose of my study but consciously articulated that I 'took sides' (*berpihak*)

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[6] Fieldwork from Temanggung district provided background and comparative data for several aspects of the thesis but was not included as a specific case study chapter. Empirical data from the Temanggung study is drawn upon in chapters three and six.

[7] This village has 22 hamlets therefore it was not possible to conduct a detailed comparative study of all of them. The three hamlets that were selected for more specific study were proposed after discussions with local village officials and some young leaders active in village and other cultural organisations.

in the struggles they were involved in. I was conscious that this may have introduced a certain 'skew' in my data, but my purpose was to establish rapport and build relationships with my research partners (subjects). I purposively limited my contact with and did not stay overnight with local elite families[8] during the fieldwork periods. Further, I included subjects whose families had members who had been 'victims' of the mass violence and political repression of 1965-66, or repression and incarceration since 1998 in all of my research locations. This was done in order to observe how people made sense of past histories of social and political struggles and the implications for how people discussed and engage in politics today.

In Batang, I participated in the everyday activities of union members and organisers from meetings with district government officials to legal advocacy meetings, from registering motorbikes to surveying land using GPS to measure plots of land to be allocated to farmer households after a recent land victory. I became involved in the everyday lives of union members from two different local land claim organisations in their homes and fields and workplaces. In Magelang, I participated in village (*desa*) meetings and sub-village hamlet (*dusun*) meetings of men, women and youth. I participated in working bees, planting seedlings, renovating residents' houses and cooking for scores of people. I had twelve, one – two night stays over two months in Temanggung, staying with a farmer activist family and making visits to other farmer activists' homes and fields for discussions.

At an early point in my fieldwork program I brought my own family to participate in some activities in each fieldwork location. This was an important part of situating or positioning myself in relation to my research partners (subjects) and how the subjects of my research came to know me. In Magelang, my partner[9] participated in fieldwork as my research partner joining in actively conducting discussions and interviews with people and documenting local events and activities. These included weddings, funerals, births, national independence day events, Javanese cultural rituals and performance events and blessing ceremonies for events such as a community preparing to renovate a resident's house. Our

[8] I did stay with local hamlet leader families in Magelang who in this context I do not classify as elites because there are no relationships of landlord patronage present in these cases.
[9] My life partner is a Javanese man born in 1969 and raised in Central Java. On my first meeting with my research participants I was seen by many as an 'outsider' (*londo* - white fella). However, when my family began to participate in my fieldwork, my status in some part changed to that of being accepted more as an insider who conformed to expected social norms and obligations within given social relationships.

son became friends with children and adults in these communities joining in with community events or hanging out in friends' houses. This approach in the conduct of fieldwork allowed me access to people and their lives that may not have eventuated without the participation of my own family.

I made regular short field trip visits to all fieldwork locations between March 2016 and July 2016. This was to identify and initiate contact with key informants, begin to get to know people and the locations, discuss with some key informants how to go about meeting people who would be able to help with the research project and fulfil government administrative requirements for foreign researchers.

Intensive Fieldwork periods

Place	Batang	Magelang	Temanggung
Period	June – October 2016	June – August 2016; December 2016 – March 2017	July – August 2016; November – December 2016
Follow up visits	December 2016 - January 2017; June 2017; July 2019	August – September 2017; November-December 2017; July 2019	
Total time	8 months	10 months	2 Months
Number of key informants	35 key informants	64 key informants	8 key informants
Total key informants	107 key informants		

Table 1.2 Overview of Fieldwork Informants

I conducted semi-formal interviews with key informants on at least one occasion. In addition to key informants, I had informal discussions with many people over months during meetings, special events and cultural activities. These conversations informed my observations which were recorded in field notes. In Magelang and Batang the people and organisations I spent time with knew who I was and that I was there to learn with them about their lives and concerns. In accordance with ethics requirements, key informants were aware that I would record some of our conversations, but that all references to conversations would be de-identified except in the case of reference to government officials or specific organisational representatives. The name of the village that became the focus of my research in Magelang has not been referred to by name. In Batang, a single union

activist with a national political profile and district heads are referred to by name[10] while local farmer group members have not been referred to by name or organisational position.

1.1 Map of fieldwork locations

Data

Observations, field journal notes that record many informal discussions and semi-structured interviews constitute the most significant qualitative data used in the thesis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Magelang with village and hamlet leaders, farmers' group members, village cultural performance artists, women farmers' group members, youth activists, high school students, men and women farmers, residents working in non-farm occupations and hamlet religious leaders. In Batang, semi-structured interviews were conducted with union secretariat organisers, the union legal advocate, women and men farmer activists from local land claim farmers' groups, local trans community activists and the elected Batang district head[11]. In Temanggung semi-structured interviews were carried out with eight members of an activist farmers group established in 1998.

Women constituted one third of my key informants. I purposively approached women for discussions but in large part did not make audio recordings of my conversations

[10] These actors are referred to by name in the public domain in print and online media, research publications and other sources.

[11] This district head was included for interview as he had made a political contract with the Batang farmers' union and relied on the union for his successful election.

with them. Many of the discussions were informal, held during their everyday activities while cooking, washing, preparing seedlings, harvesting vegetables or playing with children which made recording conversations problematic. These were the most conducive environments for having wide-ranging discussions with women. In Magelang, some discussions with women in two hamlets and the village government office were recorded when we were participating in meetings or sitting indoors for several hours discussing, however these opportunities were more the exception.

Men constituted two thirds of the key informants. In Magelang, in my role as researcher, I had access in the first instance to men as the public representatives of the village and the respective hamlets. The same applied in Batang in the union secretariat house. In the evening when people are more available for lengthy discussions, groups of men will frequently gather in one another's houses, at the community night watch patrol post (*pos ronda*) or the union secretariat house. This meant that I had more opportunity to meet and discuss with groups of men in an informal setting than I did women and this influenced my opportunity to recruit women as key informants. Staying with families however, did allow me to discuss with individual women in their own homes in the evenings, however these were not always extensive discussions as women often slept earlier than men.

In Batang I had access to some of the Farmers' Union archives which included unpublished Indonesian language research reports by Indonesian NGOs, newspaper articles, photographs, land occupation data, land claim case histories, (incomplete) union meeting minutes since 1999, a political contract between the union and the district head elected in 2012, and (black) propaganda produced by political opponents. In Magelang I had some access to official village data on social welfare and development.

Interviewees	Women	Men
Sidomukti village		
Village residents	15	26
Village or hamlet officials[12]	6	16
Omah Tani Farmers' Union		
Farmer activists[13]	10	19
Omah Tani secretariat members[14]	1	4
District officials		2
Temanggung activists		
Farmer activists	2	6
Total	34	73

Table 1.3 Identity of Interviewees

1.4 Structure of the study

The thesis comprises seven chapters. Following this introductory chapter, chapter two outlines a theoretical framework that applies a critical political economy approach to examining the historical development of rural capitalist social relations in Java. This framework facilitates the examination of how rural social classes are constituted and reproduced through the making of social relations, dynamics of accumulation and division of labour of capitalism. The framework developed here revisits Marx and Gramsci's approaches to defining the concept of rural subaltern classes and popular agency. Critically it considers how we might examine as a cohesive whole, the complete repertoire of actual forms of popular self-determined activity that subaltern classes engage in, from the everyday to the revolutionary.

Chapter three examines the political economy of rural Java in historical perspective, focusing the lens on the political dynamics of non-elite and subaltern agency and class struggle politics. It deploys a historical materialist approach to the examination of class struggle politics in order to situate the examination of subaltern agency within different levels of socio-historical contextual analysis. This approach highlights how contestation and conflicts over power and resources by subaltern classes has contributed to the rise and fall

[12] These people hold structural positions in village or hamlet governance such as village head, village secretary, village section heads (*Kasi* and *Kaur*), hamlet heads and the heads of women farmers' groups.
[13] These people are local farmers' group members from two Batang land claim groups.
[14] Two of these people are local farmers' group members as well as secretariat members (secretariat members are not paid).

of successive political-economic regimes as well as allowing us to explain the significant diversity in local and regional political economies that are examined in subsequent chapters.

Chapters four and five build on this analysis examining some of the differences in historical experiences of rural subaltern (class) struggles in two different cases studies. In both case studies the outcomes of successive generations of social struggles have resulted in varied patterns of subaltern actors' access to and control over land today. The implications of these different patterns of access to land are reflected in local level social relations and state institutions (at village, district, provincial and national levels of government).

Chapter four widens the contemporary analysis of popular agency, examining the struggles of subaltern actors in a village without great agrarian differentiation, with no major state or corporate presence, where the majority of residents are smallholders and a majority remain active as smallholder farmers. I examine the strategies applied in subaltern actors' struggles to retain control over their smallholdings alongside the structural conditions within their local political economies that support these. Further I examine how the introduction of the new Village Law No. 6/2014 has resulted in improved opportunities for subaltern participation in and control of village resources in this case study, in stark contrast with other empirical studies of contemporary village politics.

Chapter five builds on recent agrarian social movements scholarship, focussing specifically on the agency of landless and land poor subaltern actors themselves. The social relations of reproduction are highlighted here when examining not only the phenomena of wide-spread, often fragmented, struggles of landless and land poor workers for access to and rights to hold land, but *also* their capacity to retain their access to land if their claims are successful. It analyses the changing forms of organisation and alliances chosen by subaltern actors which highlight the contrasting opportunities and constraints presented through decentralisation policies adopted since 1999, to those examined in the chapter four case study.

Drawing on Gramsci's conceptual and historical approach to the study of subaltern cultures, chapter six examines more explicitly how the subjects in this study make sense of their world and how their political struggles inform their perspectives as subaltern actors. It explores how popular beliefs, folklore and religion provide some of the essential

constituents of subaltern hegemonies and of new social formations that are always in the process of emerging. I focus on identifying the moments, conditions and local histories, where the physical experiences of making social relations have influenced the ways in which social actors make decisions to collaborate around self-identified common interests, or not. This approach highlights the dynamic character of social struggles taking place at local level where contestation over ideas and practices, as well as power and resources, is ongoing, responding to the changing structural and environmental conditions in which subaltern actors develop their survival strategies.

The final chapter of this thesis serves as a concluding chapter highlighting the principal findings in this study, as well as its empirical and theoretical implications.

Chapter 2: Critical approaches to conceptualising rural subaltern agency

> In his *Age of Extremes*, Eric Hobsbawm (1994, 288–9) declared that 'For eighty percent of humanity, the Middle Ages ended suddenly in the 1950s …'. He was referring to peasants: 'the most dramatic change of the second half of this century, and the one which cuts us forever from the world of the past, is the death of the peasantry' ('which had formed the majority of the human race throughout recorded history') (Bernstein 2000, 25).

2.1 Introduction

The part played by rural subaltern classes in recent social and political change in Southeast Asia is largely under-theorised. In part this flows from assumptions about the political insignificance and marginality of smallholder peasant farmers who are often treated as anachronistic classes in the process of disappearing (Hobsbawm 1994). Where they are acknowledged, they are assumed to be more or less powerless, because analyses of power focus principally on the absence of mass lower class political parties or view elections as the primary measure of the role and impact of popular agency (Robison and Hadiz 2004; Hadiz 2006, Liddle 2013).

> … there is no doubt that with the shift from centralised rule by an authoritarian president to a system of power decided within the shifting world of electoral politics, parliament and political parties, the terms of power also shifted for different elements of the former regime (Robison and Hadiz 2004, 34).

The theoretical approach adopted here in part responds to Aspinall's challenge, that "we need an analysis of (Indonesian) class politics that takes them [non-elite actors] into account… rather than writing them out of the frame" (2013b, 238). However, unlike Aspinall who adopts a largely liberal-pluralist approach this thesis proposes a critical political economy approach. In applying this approach I argue that questions of power are contested not only, or perhaps primarily, within the limits of electoral politics, parliament and political parties, rather they are contested through social conflicts and political struggles conducted in the making of social relations between contending elite, subaltern and other social groups and classes. In line with this, I argue for a view of the capitalist state as both a field of struggle and as the material condensation of power relations. Further, the theoretical framework allows us to examine not only the diverse repertoires of subaltern popular

action, but also how rural social classes are constituted and the implications this constitution has for understanding contemporary rural capitalist social relations.

The purpose of the theoretical framework I propose here is not to provide a new take on theoretical approaches to the study of 'social movements' on one hand, or of 'everyday politics' on another. Rather *it is an exposition of how subaltern classes are constituted and the different expressions and forms of social struggle they engage in*, from the everyday to the revolutionary. For the purpose of this thesis, this analysis is not limited to agrarian petty commodity producers (peasant farmers) and those directly involved in agricultural production, but extends to all rural subaltern actors including landless workers[1], smallholders who work in non-agricultural pursuits[2], non-agrarian petty commodity producers and people involved more specifically in tasks of social reproduction[3] in rural places. The theoretical framework I propose here, was developed in the first instance to support the examination of key empirical findings in this study that appear critical in explaining how and why rural subaltern actors exercise agency in the ways that they do. More generally, the framework facilitates the examination of the more general question; Can popular subaltern class struggles, in all their forms, generate more progressive forms of social relations, "and otherwise contribute to progressive change including the broadening and deepening of (a popularly based) democracy (Bernstein 2001, 41)"?

The first theoretical challenge here lies in the conceptualisation of subaltern agency. Here I concur with literatures that argue that social movements are only one form of 'contentious politics' and that 'everyday' forms of contentious politics as well as revolutions, strikes and other forms of popular subaltern action need to be (re)integrated in to a more coherent theoretical approach (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001; Barker et al 2013). Here I argue for an open conceptualisation of class struggle drawing on theories of social reproduction that includes sites of struggle and social actors that go beyond narrow industrial/economistic approaches often associated with Marxism (Bhattacharya 2017). A critical political economy approach allows such as conceptualisation of subaltern agency

[1] Often the subjects of agrarian social movements. These subjects may not have any prior experience or links to rural places and to land but have joined land occupations, for example, as a means of survival. See Caldeira (2008) on the Brazilian Landless peoples' movement.
[2] Working in agricultural (hoeing, harvesting) and non-agricultural employment (building labourer, carpenter, timber processor).
[3] The provision of everyday needs such as food, housing, water supplies, childcare, healthcare and education.

when it applies a theory of capital based on class struggle. Here subaltern agency can be conceptualised as any struggle by subaltern actors in the productive and reproductive realms including the reproduction of culture. Thus, this thesis revisits Marx' and Gramsci's approaches to defining our concept of rural subaltern classes and popular agency. The approach I apply here is in the scholarly tradition articulated in the works on Marxism and social movements of Colin Barker et al (2013), Engelhardt and Moore (2017), and Bernstein (2000, 2010) who considers the constitution of the global peasantry more specifically. Further, I apply approaches from critical human geography (Ekers and Loftus 2012; Featherstone 2012) which foreground the work of Gramsci in examining how subaltern struggles generate expressions of identity and political practice.

2.2 A theory of capital based on class struggle

The Murdoch School of critical political economy has developed a grounded understanding of how capitalism and class politics operates within nation states in Southeast Asia. While much of the work in this tradition has focussed on conflicts within social elites in order to understand the transformations in state rule in the region, it has demonstrated its capacity to explain the development of the precarious labouring classes in the neo-liberal transformations in the region and some aspects of non-elite agency. The approach applied here expands the analysis to include the agency of subaltern groups and classes more specifically. In doing so I draw on Marxist approaches that emphasise agency and the making of social relations of production to examine processes of social change. Here I build on a tradition of empirically grounded academic literature that considers a systemic or 'social whole' approach that a Marxist theory of capital based on class struggle implies (Thompson 1980; Stoler 1985; Wood 1998; Kipfer and Hart 2012; Ekers and Loftus 2012).

> Against the caricatured 'structuralism' so often adopted in academic discourse, Marxism's emphasis falls on agency, on people 'making their own history'. The very social relations of production are themselves the product of ongoing agency, even in alienating forms, on the part of those who currently suffer their continuation (Barker et al 2013, 13).

A theory of capital centred on class struggle argues that our current social reality is the condensation of previous social struggles and is always in a dynamic process of change. This approach argues that capitalism is the totality of social relations within this (capitalist) mode of production; the realisation of its processes, of changes and developments within these social relationships, cannot occur outside of the social sphere. Social struggles cannot

be understood separately from the economic and political processes they respond to, nor can the changes in economic and political processes be understood separately from social struggles[4] (Engelhardt and Moore 2017, 272). Social struggle is inevitable as the development of capitalism was never a foregone conclusion nor a peaceful process (Marx/Mandel 1992). A dialectical materialist approach argues that there are some generalisable tendencies of the capitalist mode of production but how they unfold is dependent on human activity or human agency (Wood 2016).

Dialectical materialism

The empirical findings in this research confirmed the importance of examining subjects as historically situated actors, considering both the spatial and temporal conditions of their social struggles. This was necessary not only for examining my subjects' experiences since 1998, but to explain the inter-relations between local and regional social struggles and the different historical trajectories of local political economies. A social theory that applies a dialectical materialist approach here seemed appropriate. This approach allows us to situate and examine subaltern struggles historically as well as spatially within the social relations of production and associated economic and political structures of which they form part. Marx's dialectical approach emphasises the mutual relations between three 'levels' of a social formation, the social relations of production, the political sphere of social struggles and contestation, and the cultural sphere of sense and meaning-making that are co-constitutive of all social practices (Jessop 2018, 333). It exposes the contradictions between the material forces of the capitalist mode of production based on capital labour relations and the profit oriented, market-mediated dynamic of accumulation, and the resistance of social actors to the exploitative and oppressive character of capital-labour relations . In the context of this research, the differences in social relations of production across Java demonstrate a logic that can be understood as being rooted in their respective regional histories of social struggles, the making of cultures and the unevenness in the developing mode of capitalist production. Here we firmly situate social and class struggles within the context of a

[4] The dynamics of capitalism and class struggle figure prominently in all of the following studies, sometimes constraining and sometimes inciting or enabling collective action: Michael Schwartz's *Radical Protest and Social Structure (1976)*, Francis Fox Piven and Richard Cloward's *Poor People's Movements(1977)*, Charles Tilly's *From Mobilization to Revolution (1978)*, Theda Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions (1979)*, and Doug McAdam's *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency (1999)* (See Hetland and Goodwin 2013, 84).

developing capitalism. The application of a dialectical materialist approach facilitates the integration of 'the economic', 'the political' and 'the cultural' as constitutive dimensions of a social whole, that is, as ontologically inseparable (Engelhardt and Moore 2017, 276).

Dialectical materialism is a way of seeing social phenomena as internally related, dynamic and historical (Thompson 1978b, 346). Social actors and the relationships between different actors should be situated in the context of their historical processes and conditions, rather than trying to categorise these actors and their activities in a way that proposes to explain or even to predict history. Dialectical materialism is a way to comprehend the tendencies and contradictions, conjunctures and constraints, that have led people to their present predicament and to highlight the ways that actors make sense of, navigate and participate in the making of these tendencies and contradictions. One of the ways to safeguard against such an approach leading to socially determinist or voluntarist explanations of social relations and their processes is to consistently apply theory to real empirical cases (Havemann 1964, 136. In Engelhardt and Moore 2017, 278), assuming that its object of analysis is always in some form of flux in relation to space and time. It is this method that is applied in this study.

This theoretical approach should allow the detection and analysis, as a cohesive whole, of the repertoire of actual forms of popular self-activity that subaltern classes engage in, from the everyday to the revolutionary[5].

> Central to this (class struggle) is the relation between capital and labour – those who appropriate surplus value and those who produce it – and it is through this constant struggle that classes emerge (Engelhardt and Moore 2017, 272).
>
> To put it bluntly: classes do not exist as separate entities, look around, find an enemy class, and then start to struggle. On the contrary, people find themselves in a society structured in determined ways (crucially, but not exclusively in productive relations), they experience exploitation (or the need to maintain power over those whom they exploit) … they commence to struggle around these issues and in the process of struggling they discover themselves as classes (Thompson, 1978a, 149).

It is this experience of social struggle and the social relations created and reproduced by humans in dynamic and changing ways that are the focus of this study.

[5] Here it is assumed that all social classes exercise agency as the dynamic force of change is in the conflicts and social struggles between different classes that social change takes place (Laurence Cox and Alf Gunvald Nilsen 2014, 56).

Scott's analysis of everyday forms of resistance - as opposed to spectacular outbreaks of revolutionary protest - is based on his understanding of class relationships. Classes emerge through human experience in given social relations, and our interpretations of that experience, do not exhaust the total explanatory space of social action, because "the messy reality of multiple identities will continue to be the experience out of which social relations are conducted" (Scott 1985:43). This concept of "class" is embedded in particular histories of social relations, thus gaining its unique power and meaning (Sivaramakrishnan 2005, 347). Therefore 'class' is a lived social relation produced through social struggles and the ways that people experience their structurally and ecologically constrained situations, rather than a static position.

> Marxism does place the labour of producing our world at the centre of its theory of history, but this does not … involve the narrow, producer-focussed theoretical focus imputed by others. For human 'production' is not merely 'material', the making of things, but equally the production (or construction) of social relations and symbolic forms, and indeed the self-making of the very producers themselves [reproduction] (Barker et al 2013, 18).

Thus the 'social relations of production' should not be defined as simply the immediate relations between capitalist and worker 'at the point of production'. It should be understood as encompassing the whole world of production and reproduction of power and culture.

Social reproduction theory

Like Scott (1985, 1990) I am concerned with recovering the agency and ideologies of rural subaltern actors to show how, in the context of rapid agrarian change, their social and political struggles play a significant part in creating new and diverse agrarian realities. In this sense, theory must encompass and be able to explain people's responses to all manifestations of exploitation and oppression. Theory that can encompass the social relations of reproduction is necessary to investigate and understand the diverse actions that subaltern actors engage in that go beyond the arena of economic production alone. Integrating social relations of reproduction in to our conceptualisation of class struggles allows us to examine, for example, the struggles of women and people from diverse ethnic or racially identified social groups to participate in public forums and be included in

productive work, or to consider how social reproductive work in the domestic sphere is carried out, within our theoretical frame.

Marxist theory that seeks to explain the capitalist mode of production must explain not only the social relations in the sphere of production but also in the (re)production of social relations and their symbolic expressions in the form of cultural production. Social reproduction theory seeks to explain how capitalism functions as a social system beyond the public or purely economic realm (Bannerji 2005; Federici 2012; Bhattacharya 2017; Engelhardt and Moore 2017). 'Social relations of reproduction' is a term used to refer to all that goes in to reproducing life and labour, from the means of subsistence, to the reproduction of labour that guarantees the re-generation and well-being of others (specifically, but not limited to, the bearing and raising of children and care for the sick and elderly) and the reproduction of cultures and social practices that support these. It necessarily includes all public and social institutions that have a role in the reproduction of these social relations. From a Marxist perspective this allows us to capture all forms of social relations that are required to *reproduce* life and labour. Thus all forms of social relations that subaltern actors engage in, including those required for reproduction of cultures, must necessarily be included in our analysis of the constitution of rural subaltern agency[6]. This necessarily includes examining the creation and reproduction of the solidarities and identities of subaltern groups and their symbolic and other cultural expressions.

This approach allows us to conceptualise the social relations of subaltern actors in the private as well as the public spheres and to examine the contradiction inherent between social reproduction and capitalist reproduction. Social reproduction holds a dual character of reproducing humans *and* society outside of the needs of capital, but also of reproducing labour power for capitalist production, which leads to a constant struggle to further extend capitalist relations in to the sphere of how labour-power is reproduced and who must bear the costs (Engelhardt and Moore 2017).

[6] All experiences of exploitation and oppression and the accommodations and resistances arising from confrontational struggles, or silent encroachments against them must be explainable. For example, how do people obtain water, housing, land and reproductive rights in a context where governments do not guarantee them. Similarly, struggles that emerge as highly individualised expressions of agency, where there is an absence of struggle, conflicts that emerge between subaltern groups, or the fragmented emergence and dissipation of organised collective expressions of agency should also be explainable.

This has played out in the rise of significant (and often fragmented) struggles over social reproductive issues, where neoliberal policies dominate the agendas of capitalist states, increasingly pushing the burden of social reproduction on to individuals rather than being provided as public services. These include subaltern struggles over access to land, water and other natural resources, over health care, against racism (for example, *Black Lives Matter*), and for the protection and shelter of refugees. These are struggles over who has the right to survive and they have a distinctive class character (Bhattacharya 2017). The study of the social relations of reproduction in this study are significant for analysing the phenomena of wide-spread, often fragmented, struggles of landless and land poor workers, as well as smallholder farmers' capacity to retain their access to and control of land. In other words, what social relations do smallholder petty commodity producers engage in in their struggles to successfully reproduce themselves. The approach applied here acknowledges both the potential for conflict as well as social solidarities to emerge between subaltern individuals and groups as they engage in these struggles.

The constitution and reproduction of rural social classes

How we conceptualise who constitutes the rural subaltern classes is to some extent contested. Studies of the (re)making of agrarian lives and rural places in the 21st century demonstrate that rural livelihoods are made through farm and non-farm activities and that not everyone is a smallholder (peasant) farmer, or employed directly in agricultural production. Agrarian change has not unfolded as many had predicted, in particular the phenomena of smallholder peasant farmers who are changing what they do and how they think of themselves, but without 'disappearing'. This is noted by Rigg and Vandergeest (2012, 6) who summarise the dominant assumptions here:

> "… family farms will disappear, peasant villages will polarise into landowning capitalists and landless workers, everybody will move to the city, rural-urban migrants will return and take refuge in their village of origin, there will be a re-agrarianisation of the countryside, and collective rural traditions will disintegrate in the face of the forces of individualism" (2014, 1).

What is more commonly agreed upon, is that capitalism is increasingly dominant in Southeast Asian social and geographical space, and that how subaltern rural actors engage in social relations and the making of new opportunities out of these processes of agrarian change are highly varied.

Rural subaltern classes here are defined as rural lower class actors engaged in farm and non-farm activities that contribute to their struggles for their survival (or reproduction), and often for some measure of access to and control over land resources. They include landless and land poor rural workers, petty commodity smallholders, and other subaltern actors that struggle to remain living in rural places, where agricultural production remains the dominant economic activity and where other economic activities support its reproduction.

Bernstein (2000) examines the persistence of the 'peasantries', or smallholder farmers and other rural subaltern actors, considering how they are constituted and reproduced through the social relations, dynamics of accumulation and division of labour of capitalism. He applies a dialectical materialist approach to examine the contradictions of capitalist development in the imperialist periphery (Global South), specifically in the rural context, to explain their persistence. His theoretical framework situates peasant farmers in the Global South in the same theoretical frame as family farmers in the industrialised capitalist countries arguing that what differentiates them is not "any intrinsic logic of their forms of production (e.g. subsistence or commercial) but how they are located in the international division of labour of imperialism (2000, 27)."

Farming enterprises across the North and South "exhibit great diversity in their size, scale, social organisation and labour processes (forms and combinations of family labour, free and unfree wage labour), their degree of capitalisation and mechanisation and their forms of insertion/integration in markets and commodity chains (Bernstein 2000, 29)." The survival of the rural smallholder farmer, in particular in the Global South, can be in part explained by structural factors related to the international division of labour which has i) consolidated certain spaces for agricultural petty commodity production, ii) resulted in ongoing crises in industrial and urban employment, and by agential factors where efforts to retain a hold on even very small pieces of land is reflective of people's struggle for survival as well as their particular identities ((Bernstein 2000, 2010; Rigg et al 2016).

In the Global South, 'petty commodity production' specifies a form of small-scale (family or household) production in capitalism engaged in more or less specialised commodity production and constituted by a particular combination of the class defined places of capital and labour. The agents of this form of production are capitalists and

workers at the same time because they own or have access to a means of production and employ their own labour. "'Peasants' become petty commodity producers in this sense when they are unable to reproduce themselves outside of the relations and processes of capitalist commodity production, when (these processes) become the conditions of existence of peasant farming and are internalised in its organisation and activity (Bernstein 2000, 29)." This does not imply a lack of or loss of agency, rather, that as their position in the labour process has shifted, thus the terrain for their social struggles has also shifted.

Bernstein (2000, 30) argues further that the rural petty commodity (peasant-farmer) producer is subject to differentiation which theoretically can be described as three distinct classes – poor, middle and rich peasants. *Poor peasants* are subject to a simple reproduction squeeze as capital or labour or both. Their poverty or extremely low levels of consumption (*reproduction as labour*) reflects their intense struggles to maintain their means of production (*reproduction as capital*). Their loss of reproductive capital leads to their becoming landless or land poor workers. *Middle peasants* are able to meet the demands of simple reproduction in both reproductive spheres, while *rich peasants* are able to engage in expanded reproduction: to increase the capacity of land and/or other means of production at their disposal beyond the capacity of family/household labour, and therefore able to hire wage labour and accumulate.

In practice the differentiation of peasants into separate classes is a tendency within capitalism, not an inevitable outcome. This tendency has its own contradictions, most significantly for the purpose of this study, because 'peasants' are not only engaged in farming but in fact combine agricultural petty commodity production with many different economic activities.

> …they rotate between different locations in social divisions of labour constituted variously by agricultural and non-agricultural branches of production, by rural and urban existence, and by the exchange of labour power as well as its combination with property in petty commodity production (Bernstein 2000, 31).

Their movement between rural and urban existence and their successes or failures in efforts to remain as agricultural petty commodity producers are indicators of the complexities of how people struggle in making their lives in capitalist society. The current phase of capitalist development in many cases is likely to result in a greater reproductive squeeze, putting greater pressure on poor petty commodity producers (Li 2014; Rigg et al

2016). Along with landless rural workers they are part of the expanding unemployed and underemployed classes or 'footloose labour' in the countryside and in the cities and towns of large areas in the Global South (Bernstein 2000; Li 2014). The reality of some form of autonomy that even small landholdings provide, as well as the limited or lack of urban or rural industrial employment options on the horizon, mean rural actors have to create new ways of supporting rural livelihoods in farm and non-farm activities. The empirical evidence in later chapters demonstrates that in the case of Java, this small measure of autonomy has supported a persistently malleable rural social structure. This malleability notably restricts the application of market relations to all spheres of social life – where many elements of social production and reproduction remain part of the social sphere and where culture reinforces social, not individual or private responsibility for these elements.

In this context, if the peasantry is both constituted and differentiated by class relations, and there is ongoing mobility between peasant classes, what implications does this have for a concept of rural subaltern agency? This 'precariousness' including ongoing mobility that characterises many subaltern actors' lives, has implications for the formation of solidarities and identities, where geographies of knowledge are generated and exchanged between subaltern groups moving between urban and rural contexts (Featherstone 2012). Bernstein makes the point that, "capitalism is structured through a variety of specific conditions and forms of exploitation and oppression (albeit linked by an underlying 'logic' of accumulation and class power), which are not experienced uniformly by those subject to different locations in its social division of labour (2000, 41). There are many ways in which (social relations of) power fragments the circumstances and experiences of the oppressed (Mamdani 1996, 272). Therefore, we cannot always predict in what forms people will respond to experiences of exploitation and oppression. The experience of ordinary people's struggles and the making of social relations, in the context of given opportunities as well as constraints, will frame the possibilities for people's actions.

If we take this as given, we should abandon any concept of a 'pure' class subject, and rather expect that *people will act in response to multiple forms of exploitation and oppression in various ways in given circumstances*. They may act as individuals or as groups, through locally generated practices, in issue or geographically based alliances, in organisations that respond to immediate needs, as well as in longer term struggles with

people from different social classes. Here it is *the act in response to (multiple) forms of exploitation and oppression* that becomes the defining point for conceptualising expressions of subaltern agency.

The state as a social relation

Our theoretical conception of the state has direct implications for how we conceptualise social struggles and conflict between social classes. The ontological view applied in this thesis demands an analysis of the state that is consistent with a theory of capital based on class struggle and that is able to capture the repertoire of struggles, from the everyday to revolutionary struggles for power, that subaltern actors engage in. This requires a theory of the state that goes beyond an analysis simply of social movement struggles and electoral strategies and outcomes (Engelhardt and Moore 2017, 284-5), to one that grasps the nature of power relations inherent within the state and its institutions.

Here I apply the view of the capitalist state as both a field of struggle and as the material condensation of power relations. I describe the state as a capitalist state "because it represents the artificial separation of political and economic power necessary for capitalist hegemony and it provides institutional support and legitimacy for private property relations. In this view the state is neither a single bloc representing exclusively one (capitalist) class, nor is it a neutral institution. Neither is the state "a static institution, but relational, dynamic and embedded in class struggle …. In some ways a barometer for class power (Engelhardt and Moore 2017, 285)". Because the state is the material condensation of social power relations, therefore its character, institutions and apparatuses can be understood as the results of past social struggles (Poulantzos 2008). Thus the current form of the state is both the material expression of past struggles and acts as the frame for current struggles[7] (Jessop 2008), and the examination of this social relation provides a dynamic measure for analysing the status of class power.

In material terms the historical outcomes of class struggles over time are reflected in subaltern actors' changing relations with state institutions (from village, district, provincial and national levels of government), significantly influencing how ordinary people act

[7] This point is critical in order to explain the vastly different relationships of local village members to their village government and its officials, and other state institutions and actors, in the two case studies discussed in this thesis.

politically[8]. In this context I apply a disaggregated view of the state – that is that the state itself is not a consistent monolithic body representing a singular capitalist class interest, rather, that in different jurisdictions[9] class struggles play out in often dynamically different ways. The state always contend with opposing groupings some of which are quietly and indirectly subversive, others of which are openly confrontational (Migdal 2001). Various parts or fragments of the state may ally with one another, or with groups outside the state to further their goals, but which may have unanticipated consequences in the shape of shifting power relations in favour of groups outside the state. These alliances and networks can also neutralise the sharp territorial and social boundaries or demarcation between the state and society. This point becomes critical in explaining the vastly different relationships of local village members to their village government and its officials and other state institutions and actors examined in later chapters.

At the same time the capitalist state has a distinctive class character with a strong tendency to organise and represent a hegemonic project in the interests of the different capitalist classes while disorganising and, where required, physically breaking the resistance of subaltern classes. This presents a particular challenge, where we "… ought to be able to think through the ways that existing political and 'civil society' organisations may simultaneously both challenge and support broader sets of exploitative and repressive social relations and to fashion strategies for opening up the opportunities that such contradictory forms contain (Barker et al 2013, 22)".

2.3 Subaltern ideas and ideologies

The study of the cultural repertoires of subaltern classes engaged in popular action are critical in understanding the expressions of subaltern ideas, ideologies and practices, and in the making of social classes themselves. Here I develop a framework that allows us to examine the relationship between the ideas of subaltern actors and their exercise of agency. I apply two complementary approaches to examining the relationship between articulations of subaltern ideas and ideologies and subaltern class agency. In the first instance I draw on Gramsci's concept of hegemony, in particular, his more explicit

[8] This is examined in specific case studies in chapters four and five.
[9] Jurisdictions here refer to levels of government – local, district, provincial or national – or to state agencies (and their enforcement arms) such as the Department of Agriculture, State Forestry Commission, the National Land Agency or the Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Cultural Affairs.

articulations on the cultural repertoires and ideological expression of subaltern classes in the form of folklore and popular beliefs. Further, I draw on Gramsci's ideas on the uneven development of cultural and political solidarities and identities across spatial contexts.

Secondly, I draw on the ideas of the Bakhtin circle[10], in particular Vološinov, who uses a 'dialogical' approach to language, to present a materialist theoretical approach to examine how speech as a human activity allows us to conceptualise language in its largest sense as a part of people's social being. Vološinov argues that language is the transitional link between the socio-political order and ideology in the narrow sense. Its contribution here is twofold – it allows a processual conception of class and how classes are constituted, as well as, a way of talking about the development of political claims and about the subjects who make them (Barker et al 2013, 27).

I draw on Gramsci's concept of " hegemony" to explore the making of subaltern ideas, applying the argument presented by Roseberry, that, 'hegemony' is not a concept that implies consent, rather it is a concept to help us to understand social struggles, the ways that words, images, and symbols, organizations, institutions and movements are used by subaltern actors to talk about, understand, confront, make accommodation with, or to resist their oppression or exploitation. 'Hegemony' is a material and meaningful framework for living through, talking about, and acting upon social relationships characterized by domination, exploitation and oppression (1994:361).

Gramsci positions social solidarities as integral to the generation of collective political wills to act to change these social relationships (Featherstone 2013, 68). He pays attention to the spatial practices through which solidarities are constructed and the ongoing formation of identities that take place in the development of social solidarities. The dynamic, ongoing and uneven nature of development between rural and urban spaces, and across different rural spatial contexts, influences the formation of these identities and social solidarities, which in part explains the often fragmented and sometimes ambivalent nature of identities and social resistances. At the same time, Gramsci highlights the *practices* through which social solidarities are constructed and alliances are formed. It is the *conduct*

[10] Bakhtin (1994) sought to develop a 'dialogical' approach to language. Dialogical theory offered an alternative to approaches based in 'framing' or the ideas of Foucault. It avoided both the linguistic idealism that resurfaced in postmodern critiques of social history and the crass materialism of Stalinist Marxism (Barker et al 2014, 27).

of political activity and the making of connections between actors that supports the formation of solidarities, collective political will and subaltern (counter) hegemony.

While this study assumes that collective action is the dynamic force in changing oppressive or exploitative social relations we should not ignore the function of individual agency. Gramsci's concept of praxis underpins a concept of agency of the individual, where "praxis…is the point at which conscious knowledge intersects with physical and sensuous movement or motion" (Fontana 2012, 129) out of which is realised particular will, before there is collective will. Politics is then the means through which subaltern groups enable members to "work out consciously and critically [their] own conception[s] of the world" (Gramsci Q11, §121; SPN 323. In Fontana 2012, 144). The realisation of particular (individual) will here does not automatically manifest as challenges to elite hegemony, however realisation of individual will is critical before there is the possibility of collective will.

Gramsci viewed the role of subaltern classes and the expression of their own cultural forms as critical in counter-hegemonic (anti-capitalist) mobilizations (Reed 2013). Counter-hegemony (or subaltern hegemonic ideas) cannot unfold independent of popular beliefs, indeed they are the essential constituents of a new type of politics and of a new social formation that is always in the process of emerging. This view is explicit in Gramsci's articulations of the philosophy of praxis. "A proposition of the philosophy of praxis is (often) forgotten: that popular beliefs and similar ideas are themselves material forces…. (Gramsci 1987: 165)". Therefore, folklore, expressions of political or religious affiliation, articulations of struggle consciousness against any manner of oppression or exploitation, in short, the ideas and ideologies of subaltern actors are an expression of the contradictions of capitalist social relations (exploitations and oppressions) of production and reproduction.

Gramsci emphasized both domination and agency in his cultural theorizing effectively revealing how cultural practices that maintain a status quo order can paradoxically function to undermine or resist it (Reed 2013, 584). In this view, people are capable of critically utilizing existent frameworks of interpretation to conceptualise and engage in political actions that are counter-hegemonic. Popular religion or local belief systems often contain an oppositional potential as a practical constituent of common sense – they already exist (often) in opposition to officially sanctioned religious doctrine or to given conceptions

of the world that are promoted by elite actors. If we apply this view it requires us to recognize what is *politically intelligible* in the familiar and practical sense (Ibid) and to examine the signs, symbols, forms of speech and the deployment of language by subaltern actors with a given purpose.

Vološinov's view was that signs are not simply arbitrary elements of a linguistic structure, but rather are sites 'of a process of signification', and signification itself 'emerges in the course of social interaction' (Blackledge 2013, 268). Signs cannot adequately be understood except in relation to their use by concrete actors in concrete contexts, therefore we must understand these signs as being deeply rooted within society's material base (Lecercle 2006, pp. 106–7). The process of signification can be closely associated with identity formation where association with particular identities forms the basis for identifying 'who are we' and who are the 'antagonistic others'. These processes of identity formation influence the choice of spaces or fields of contestation and negotiation between "us" and the "antagonistic others".

Different social actors use signs in a variety of context dependent ways that can convey different context dependent meanings. Vološinov held the view that social being is 'refracted', not 'reflected', within language where the concept of refraction is used in a way that suggests the relative autonomy of political ideas without losing sight of their materiality (Lecercle 2006, 109–10. In Blackledge 2013, 10).

> Every sign . . . is a construct between socially organised persons in the process of their interaction. Therefore, the forms of signs are conditioned above all by the social organisation of the participants involved and also by the immediate conditions of their interaction. When these forms change, so does sign. And it should be one of the tasks of the study of ideologies to trace this social life of the verbal sign. Only so approached can the problem of the relationship between sign and existence find its concrete expression; only then will the process of the causal shaping of the sign by existence stand out as a process of genuine existence-to-sign transit, of genuine refraction of existence in the sign (Vološinov 1973, 19).

Vološinov's focus on speech as a concrete human activity allowed him to conceptualise language in its largest sense, as a part of people's social being. That is that there is a relationship between social being and consciousness realised through experience, in which class conflicts are fought, in part, as conflicts over meaning within language. Something like this conception of the mediating role of experience and the contested nature of language (especially in struggle) has been a commonplace within the historical

work of the British Marxist historians (Blackledge 2013, 266). They view ideological conflicts as significantly determined by the practical activities of people organised in a given mode of production, through their productive social relations and class struggles. In this sense society's economic base is not 'a thing', but an interdependent collection of more or less antagonistic human practices (McNally 2001, 113). It is in the context of these antagonistic human practices that the meanings of words are generated and fought over. Here Vološinov's emphasis on the importance of living speech has methodological implications for the conduct of empirical research examining subaltern classes and how we interpret the expressions of popular ideas.

2.6 Subaltern ideas and social movement leadership

There is a strong argument presented by Barker et al (2013, 5-6) to explain the weakness or lack of mass popular organisations in the form of popular political parties since the 1980s and 1990s, despite ongoing mass expressions of 'fragmented' popular subaltern agency, as a global phenomenon[11]. I argue that inherited notions from past periods of struggles of what popular organisations should look like, may block us from understanding new or alternative forms of popular organisation that could provide new paths towards transformative change. This is important to consider as previous institutions or organisational infrastructures utilised by subaltern actors may no longer be useful as vehicles for political action[12] or they may be the target of official repressions[13]. If this is the case, then we need to pay more serious attention to how we might strengthen subaltern bases of social power through alternative institutions of social organisation, or capturing and reorienting those that exist in conjunctures that warrant such an approach.

Social movement theory has increasingly focussed on the study of representative national and even transnational organisations seeking to explain the operation of the

[11] Here the view that the weakness of representative subaltern parties and movements in Indonesia since *reformasi* stems from the crushing of the PKI and mass organisations of subaltern classes in the 1960s alone (a form of Indonesian 'exceptionalism') does not stand up to scrutiny.
[12] Problems of co-optation, opportunism within labour and social movements, the anti-subaltern class actions taken by many social democratic parties in different national government as global phenomena (Barker et al 2013) have resulted in mass political disillusionment for many activists, intellectuals and ordinary citizens.
[13] People who engage in political strategies with certain organisational forms, such as, mass mobilisations including occupations, failure to comply with discriminative laws or opposition to the free expression of ideological ideas (such as the ban on Marxism-Leninism in Indonesia) may systematically become targets of state (including extra-state) repression.

leaders of these groups in relation to state power at national levels. This approach misses examining how actual social contestation over power and control of resources is enacted by subaltern actors themselves. This focus on movement leaderships has had epistemological consequences for the direction of social movement theory, narrowing significantly how we conceptualise popular agency and processes of social and political change. Agrarian social movement actors who base their strategies on negotiations within the boundaries of state institutions miss what Gramsci refers to as praxis, that is, the significance of the physical action component involved in subaltern struggles which underpin the creation of social solidarities, of 'collective will' and potential new hegemonies (Fontana 2012, 129).

Gramsci argues that "the confusion of class-state society and regulated society is peculiar to the middle classes and petty intellectuals, who would be glad of any regularisation that would prevent sharp struggles and upheavals. It is a typically reactionary and regressive conception (1987, 258)." At its roots is a pessimistic view of the (actual and potential) social power of subaltern actors. Social movement leaders are often disconnected from the everyday struggles for survival of the subjects of the movements they claim to represent and unaware of the different forms of struggle that these subjects engage in. As a consequence, they pay little attention to the actual political activity that subaltern actors conduct and the solidarities and alliances that are most important to them.

2.5 Conclusion

Marxism simultaneously entails a theory of the organisation of power within modern society, a theory of popular agency and a theory of transformation with strategic consequences (Barker et al 2013, 13). In this regard this thesis proposes a return to the study of human agency that employs a theory of capital based on class struggle. Such a theory requires us to be able to identify, examine and explain all expressions of resistance and struggle against all forms of exploitation and oppression that subaltern actors engage in. Integrating the social relations of reproduction in to our conceptualisation of class politics broadens our field of vision as to where class contestation takes place. In this context, I take the view that questions of power are settled through political struggles conducted in the making of social relations between contending elite, subaltern and other social groups and classes. Therefore, our analysis of processes of political change must extend beyond the limits of electoral politics, parliament and political parties.

The linguistic and postmodern turns in historical social sciences have challenged us to think more closely about the constitution of social subjects and to pay attention to the specific social relations of different social actors in relation to production and reproduction. However, the tools of analysis that we require, I argue, need to be consistent with a grounded, materialist and social relational theory that allows us to examine the development of subaltern political claims and of the political subjects who make them. We should recognise that the making of social relations between multiple actors, within as well as across geographic spaces, will produce different expressions of political claims, dependent on the conditions, cultures, experiences and political ideas available to subaltern actors.

Rising precariousness and increasing mobility between urban and rural spaces has become a dominant feature of subaltern existence. This mobility has had implications for the formation of solidarities and identities, where geographies of knowledge are generated and exchanged between subaltern groups moving between urban and rural contexts, as well as for the fragmented nature of identities and social resistances. While exploitation and oppression of subaltern actors remain an essential feature of capitalism, then the only way to overcome these ultimately is to challenge and to change the foundations of the organisation of society. But where subaltern and other social actors have not yet reached these conclusions, this does not mean that their agency does not contribute to progressive change. Rather, it demonstrates that the dynamics of capitalist development produced out of class struggles to this point have not yet led to more consolidated transformative victories in favour of subaltern peoples. Reasserting the primacy of human agency allows us to examine and imagine the potential pathways to more fundamental change.

One critical element in social movement theory that needs to be systematically challenged is the idea, that a regulated society that would prevent sharp struggles and upheavals, should be a goal of social movements. From the position of subaltern actors this is a reactionary conception and should be replaced with more serious study of how to strengthen the bases of social power of subaltern classes. Rather, there must be more serious attention paid to investigating the 'cultures of resistance' that generate all manners of popular subaltern challenges to the 'rule of law', that is, where subaltern actors take

action in their own interests against laws or regulations that are in conflict with their social needs, cultures, identities and political demands.

Chapter 3: Dialectical Materialist Approaches to Rural Class Struggle Histories

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the political economy of rural Java in historical perspective, focusing the lens on the political dynamics of non-elite and subaltern agency and class struggle politics. It applies a historical materialist approach to the examination of subaltern agency within different levels of socio-historical contextual analysis, highlighting the variations in dynamics of subaltern and elite struggles which have shaped the uneven development of rural capitalist social relations of production and reproduction across Java. The examination of these struggles highlights how contestation and conflict over power and resources by subaltern classes has contributed to the rise and fall of successive political-economic regimes. The historical outcomes of these social struggles are often manifest in subaltern actors' ability to secure and maintain access to land, remembering that access is defined as the *ability* to derive benefits from things, giving focus to questions of power within given social relations. Private and state-owned commercial crop plantations or state forestry industries dominate political economies in some regions, while in others, smallholders and sharecroppers engaged in agricultural and other small-scale petty commodity production, are more dominant. Social cultural attachments to land as 'place' and the formation of identities in the making of social relations in these places are critical elements in contestations that emerge over rights to access and use land. The exercise of subaltern agency in all these cases plays a part in restricting the ability of owners of large capital resources to secure greater control over large land areas. This control by some and contestation by other subaltern actors maintains the pre-conditions for a malleable rural social structure that in some part effectively limits the extension capitalist market relations into many aspects of rural social relations.

This chapter will demonstrate that subaltern actors have long histories of forming solidarities and engaging in collective struggles, the legacies of which remain part of the ideological repertoires of subaltern actors to be examined further in chapter six. Here I analyse the dynamics of subaltern agrarian struggles, or 'politics from below', focussing on the dual fronts of struggles against dispossession and struggles against exploitation (Hall et al 2015). When these struggles are examined in historical view, the dialectical relationship

between social class contestation and the trajectories of political and economic change become more evident. Here I argue that forms and expressions of subaltern agency change and even transform over time, shaping as well as adapting to the changing structural context in which they operate. Here, a dialectical materialist approach allows us to reconnect the linkages between everyday forms of subaltern self-assertion and subaltern actors' participation in historical social movements for change and reform, demonstrating more evidently the part that subaltern actors play in shaping and changing the world.

The empirical findings explored in detail in chapters four, five and six, demonstrate a significant correlation between subaltern actors' historical relationships to land (expressed today in the relative security of their access to land, or not) and the dynamics of social class conflicts in different local and regional political economies. Using the historical material available I present a broad outline of some of the dynamics of non-elite and subaltern histories in Java, tracing some of the particular factors that have shaped subaltern actors' ability to access and control land, from the pre-colonial period to the post-independence state. I build on the insights of Li (1999), Boomgard (1999), Reid (1988) and Hefner (1990) who present the compelling case that in upland and interior regions of Indonesia in particular, popular histories are surprisingly non-linear.

This contrast between upland and lowland areas became important in initial data analysis[1] as the two case studies I examine in subsequent chapters are both located in upland regions of Java[2]. Here I contrast some of the historical differences in the dynamics of political and social struggles over power in the coastal and interior lowland wet-rice regions and the upland rain-fed farmland regions of Java. These contrasts become important in the examination of contemporary political economies where since 1990, more than fifty per cent of cultivated lands in Java are in rain-fed uplands not in lowland wet-rice fields (Hefner 1990, 16)[3]. Here I examine, in general terms, the contrasts as well as the connections

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[1] I was drawn to make these contrasts when much of the literature examining class struggle histories in Java did not appear similar to the conditions found in my case study locations.

[2] The selection of upland areas only for case study was not intentional at the outset, rather they were chosen according to contrasting social phenomena in each case study site (see research design in chapter one). Despite both case studies being located in upland regions of Central Java the dynamics of local and regional political economies are very different.

[3] It should be noted here that highland areas in Java account for more than one third of land area on the island (Hefner 1990).

between lowland and upland political economies, as well as between coastal (*pesisir*) and interior regions.

While some generalisations are made here, the historical outcomes of social conflicts in local and regional political economies often result in different outcomes from those we might expect. Where access to land has been restricted or becomes inaccessible to subaltern groups, agency takes the form of periodic contestation over land through both quiet encroachments and direct conflicts and confrontations. Where smallholders dominate regional political economies and land access is relatively secure, agency can take the form of more egalitarian collective organisation that support subaltern actors' reproductive strategies including their capacity to keep secure access to land. These contrasts are further examined in detail in case studies in chapters four and five.

The dialectical materialist approach applied in this thesis emphasises the mutual relations between three 'levels' of a social formation. This chapter along with chapters four and five focus on the first two 'levels' of the social relations of production and the political sphere of social struggles and contestation. Subaltern actors' historical relationships with and secure access to land are evident in the dynamics of social contestation between different social actors in local political economies and are manifest in their relations with state institutions. When we apply the view that the state is a social relation - both as a field of struggle and as the material condensation of power relations then the examination of this social relation provides a dynamic measure for analysing the status of class power. Migdal's (2001) analysis that states always contend with opposing groupings some of which are quietly and indirectly subversive, others of which are openly confrontational, is applicable both in historical analysis presented in this chapter and in the contemporary cases examined in chapters four and five. Chapter six pays special attention to the third 'level', that is, the cultural sphere of sense and meaning-making that are co-constitutive of all social practices.

A final factor I apply in the analysis of the colonial and post-colonial periods is the view that capitalist social relations of production have penetrated Indonesia since at least the 19th Century, facilitated by the implementation of both colonial and independent Indonesia state agrarian policies. However, the extent to which capitalist social relations of production and reproduction have come to dominate local political economies or not, has in

significant part been dependent on developments in the international division of labour (Bernstein 2000), the development of foreign and indigenous capitalist classes (Robison 1986; Robison and Hadiz 2004) and the struggles by subaltern actors and their allies to resist domination and to reproduce their social relations independently (Hart and Peluso 2005; Hall, Hirsch and Li 2011). The interplay of these factors has had differing consequences for the actual development of capitalist social relations across the territories of Java indicating different dynamics of social power exercised by different social actors.

3.2 Pre-capitalist states and social class struggles

Geography has been a significant factor in the shaping of the political economies of Java and the other island regions of Indonesia (Li 1999; Dick 2002; Zanden and Marks 2012). The chains of volcanic mountains across Java and the associated highlands kept many interior regions and people separate and relatively isolated until the late 19th and early 20th Century (Li 1999; Carey 2008). The dominant modes of production across different regions in Java in the past, and in part until now, were significantly dependent on the geography of the physical landscape, available natural resources and the military capacity of coastal city-state mercantilist regimes or interior lowland kingdoms to secure control over people and more or less extensive areas of agricultural land within their domain. Prior to colonial rule the main concern of Javanese kingdoms was the control of people, not territory (Onghokham 2018).

The Northern Coast of Java was important for centuries in the rise and fall of pre-colonial kingdoms and later for the expansion of Dutch colonial enterprises and territorial control. Successive Hindu-Buddhist and Muslim kingdoms established themselves as city states based on coastal trade settlements, in the first instance in West Java. These kingdoms developed lowland wet-rice systems of agriculture on the fertile plains along the Northern coast adjacent to their port trading areas or to their city state administrations[4]. The First

[4] The ancient (*kuno*) Mataram Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms established themselves in the Southern central plains of Java on the Kedu plain between the Sumbing-Sindoro and Merapi-Merbabu mountain ranges developing interior lowland rice cultivation, and at several sites along the Brantas and Sala river system in Eastern and Central Java. Rivers provided the main means of transport and communication until the mid to late 18th century, with the Brantas river in Eastern Java and the Bengawan (Sala) river ,which flows from North-eastern Java to South Central Java, being the most important river systems (Ricklefs 1993). Several kingdoms were established along these river routes in Eastern Java and in the late 13th Century the centre of power of the Old Hindu Mataram kingdom in the Kedu Plain (near Magelang) was moved to the Mojokerto region on the Brantas River in East Java during the Majapahit period.

Islamic Sultanate to establish itself was the Demak city-state established on the Northern coast of Central Java in the late 15th century. Three further Islamic kingdoms were established, in Banten the most Western region of Java, in Cirebon on the northwest coast and in Mataram[5] in the Southern lowlands of Central Java (Ricklefs 2008).

Lowland wet-rice cultivation was a significant feature of the political economy of pre-colonial kingdoms and city-states. Li (1999) argues that the development of lowland *sawah* (wet-rice) agriculture can be explained by a political rather than an evolutionary logic. It was promoted by lowland interior or coastal lords, not because of its productivity per se, rather because it was suitable for cultivation by subjugated populations who were forced to concentrate in important trading centres and in other centres where they could be monitored, taxed, subjected to corvee regulations and repressed through force when necessary. At the same time, no pre-colonial states were powerful enough to exert systematic control over populations in the uplands and they did not even attempt to control territory.

Importantly, Reid (1988, cited in Li 1999) notes that major population concentrations in pre-colonial Indonesia were located not on the coastal or inland plains, but in the interiors, particularly the upland valleys and plateaus. People established themselves as swidden and smallholder farmers and traders in these regions for economic and political reasons (Li 1999, 5). The highlands provided diverse livelihood options of both swidden and ploughed land agriculture, forest products and mineral resources. Upland mountain people were often self-sufficient in the production of food, textiles and tools and established trade networks through the river systems to the lowlands providing access to markets to trade their produce as well as access to lowland and coastal goods such as fish and salt (Reid 1988, 28; Hefner 1990; Li 1999). Here expressions of subaltern agency are largely state-evading and egalitarian in character as the power relations of coastal plains kingdoms had little to no sway in these mountain areas.

Prior to the 19th Century, trade and communication routes were highly dependent on regional geographies. This factor played a significant part in shaping the limits of territorial power of Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic kingdoms and in providing zones of relative

[5] Ancient (*kuno*) Mataram refers to the Hindu kingdoms of Mataram and differentiates itself with what is referred to as Islam Mataram or Mataram kingdoms.

autonomy for smallholders, swidden farmers and small-scale resource extractors in the upland regions of Java. Outside of the city states and lowland kingdoms, extensive regions of Java in particular in upland areas, were used by petty commodity producers who sometimes grouped together in settlements and were more or less self-sufficient in their means of production and reproduction[6], actively engaging in the trade of commodities with city states (Li 1999; Hefner 1990). The power centres of the lowland kingdoms did not hold great sway in the uplands as the forested terrains in many regions of Java made political control difficult or unviable. Here upland livelihoods across the archipelago provided both the possibility of escape from subordination while the productivity of upland farming systems drew people towards or encouraged them to stay in the uplands (Reid 1988; Boomgard 1999; Hefner 1990). Their means of production and reproduction were within their control and they were able to live in regions of relative political autonomy from the royal courts[7].

This feature of upland Java as zones of secure livelihoods and relative autonomy from feudal states, was significant for many non-elite actors for centuries. In East Java, the arrival of Islam and the establishment of new centres of power on the Northeast coast had a significant impact on non-Muslim Javanists[8] living in lowland and lower slope regions of the Tengger mountains. Islam forbade the enslaving of fellow Muslims, however, non-Muslim people were enslaved by Islam Mataram forces during the 17th century (Hefner 1990). Scott (1990) refers to the distinct traditions of Tengger highlands people in East Java who, in the face of the arrival of Muslim armies, moved to the highlands determined to maintain cultural and religious independence. According to Hefner (1990) the goal of the Tengger uplanders was to avoid being ordered about, a stark contrast to the elaborate hierarchies and status-coded behavior that are presumed to be characteristic of Javanese culture.

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[6] This included producing textiles for clothing and building dwellings from materials procured in their local environments.
[7] Scott (1990) points out that the phenomenon of the encounter between expansionary states in the lowlands and valleys and self-governing peoples in the hills and uplands is hardly confined to Southeast Asia. At the same time the shape of these encounters and their social and political consequences will be unique to each case.
[8] The term *Javanist* is used in Anderson (1990); Hefner (1990 and 2011, esp. p227); Stange (1993, esp p349) to refer to Javanese people who practice *Kejawen* or Javanese spiritualism. "In Javanese language, abangan literally means "red," but the term is a symbol for folk traditions generally. Javanese Muslims of this sort are also called kejawen, or 'Javanist' (Hefner 2011, 227)".

> Their distinct tradition, despite its Hindu content, is culturally encoded in a strong tradition of household autonomy, self-reliance, and an anti-hierarchical impulse… Both the demography and the ethos of the Tengger highlands, then, might fairly be termed a state effect— a geographical place peopled for half a millennium by state-evading refugees from the lowlands whose egalitarian values and Hindu rites are quite self-consciously drawn up in contrast to the rank-conscious, Islamic lowlanders (Scott 1990, 135).

Since the rise of successive Hindu and Islam kingdoms, the remarkable transformation of upland agriculture has in large part been smallholder initiated (rather than the result of direct or indirect compulsion) (Li 1999; Boomgard 1999). Boomgard describes the early and sometimes spontaneous transformation of upland agriculture, initiated from the 17th century, with the introduction of maize as a staple food crop and small holder tobacco as a tradeable commodity in many regions across the archipelago. In these regions a complex productive and relatively stable agrarian system developed and persisted for several hundreds of years. While the data is incomplete and a full picture of the social and political system(s) is not yet possible, Boomgard's data indicates several critical points.

Maize production increased the food staples available in the highlands allowing more people to live at higher altitudes. It was politically significant as it allowed people to escape the oppression and insecurity of lowlands politics and to make their lives as highlanders beyond the boundaries of state control. The co-existence of maize and tobacco indicates that uplanders did not avoid the cash economy. Tobacco was a tradeable commodity, thus uplanders engaged in petty commodity production and had relations with lowlands markets as well as credit providers and sometimes paid taxes. The relations between lowlands and uplands were complex involving varying forms of resistance and collaboration for the purpose of varying political and economic agendas (Hefner 1990; Reid 1988; Li 1999).

While coastal and interior lowlands provided conducive conditions for establishing wet-rice agriculture with more compliant labour forces and achieving varying degrees of local and regional territorial control, the uplands remained regions of relative independence for non-elite actors. These actors generally had secure access to livelihoods on the land and were not prepared to submit to the repressive conditions imposed on labouring people in the city-state regions. From a political and military perspective, the uplands were considered trouble zones providing opportunities for subaltern lower class actors to make

lives independent of kingdom authorities, as smallholder and swidden farmers, as bandits and as small scale petty commodity producers.

3.3 Dutch colonialism

The first regions to be consolidated as Dutch zones of influence were in the Northern coastal regions of West Java. The early period of Dutch penetration in to the East Indies was carried out under the tutelage of the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie – VOC), a company founded through a Dutch Government directed amalgamation of several rival Dutch trading companies in the early 17th Century (Carey 2008). It was a government-backed military commercial enterprise. It based its operation in the Northwest of Java in Jayakarta (which it renamed Batavia) and over the next century established forts in strategic Northern coast port areas through Central and Eastern Java and substantial interior regions of West Java. Part of the Dutch strategy for securing greater control of trade and territory was by taking advantage of internal conflicts within the royal courts in Banten and Mataram (Ricklefs 2008a, 98). From the latter part of the 17th century, its political-strategic approach was to maintain ambassadorial links with the Mataram dynasty[9] who the VOC acknowledged controlled the greater part of territories in Central Java and extensive regions in Eastern Java. Internal rivalries, intrigue and corruption would then plague both the VOC and the Mataram kingdom until these conflicts erupted in the first Javanese war of succession in 1704. The VOC emerged victorious however the commitments made by the Mataram kingdom in Kartasura to the VOC were not fulfilled as the tax burdens on local people led to retreat to upland areas by some and the beginnings of organised rebellion by others (Ricklefs 2008a). By the 1740s, the Mataram (Islam) sultanate retained nominal sovereignty on the greater part of the interior and Southern coastal regions of Central and Eastern Java while the Dutch controlled expanding coastal port regions establishing administrations in Surabaya, Rembang and Jepara. A 1743 treaty gave control to the VOC of all ports on the North coast and the attached interior rice-growing regions (Ricklefs 2008a).

Dutch military historians (Louw and De Klerck 1894-1909 cited in Carey 2008), documented the territories across these sultanates as being classified as royal court,

[9] The Mataram dynasty would become the two kingdoms of Yogyakarta and Surakarta.

apanage (*tanah pelungguh*[10]) and *mancanagara* (external territories)[11]. Royal Court regions were directly administered from the Mataram palace and provided the essential material needs of the royal court and its military and administrative apparatus. The Sultans delegated their authority over large areas of land in Central and Eastern Java (the apanage system) to family members and court officials who became landlords responsible for the collection of taxes[12] and payments.

In Central Java, this authority while sometimes hereditary, was never secure and could be withdrawn at any time by the ruling Sultan. Court appointed landlords had rights to claim produce from those working the land, but they could not acquire secure tenure (Onghokham 1984). Land was allocated not in large tracts, but rather scattered over several small land areas, sometimes across more than a hundred miles. This was a deliberate policy on the part of the Sultans designed to restrict the capacity of family members or court officials to establish competing territorial power bases (Carey 2008, 13; Onghokham 1984). This system was further consolidated in the Giyanti settlement brokered by the Dutch[13] in 1755, which officially divided the Mataram sultanate into two, the Yogyakarta and Surakarta sultanates. The Giyanti agreement brokered by the VOC, strengthened the VOC strategy of fostering collaboration with competing royal factions on the hand, while provoking conflicts between these factions (Ricklefs 2008a) to weaken them, allowing the VOC to secure greater political and territorial control. By the mid 18th Century, the VOC had consolidated territorial control in West Java, in their fort settlements along the expanse of the Northern coastline of Java and in the Northern interior regions of East Java and on Madura Island (see Carey xxv). The Mataram royal courts of Yogyakarta and Surakarta maintained authority in lowland Central and Eastern Java, while many upland regions remained in large part beyond the control of the colonial or royal court authorities[14]. The result of these ongoing elite contestations was significant land insecurity, legal disputes between royal courts and higher

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[10] *Tanah pelungguh* is a term used by Indonesian scholars to refer to what Carey refers to as apanage lands. See Onghokham (1984).
[11] See map in Carey 2008, p xxv.
[12] Taxes were paid in the form of agricultural commodities under the Javanese kingdoms.
[13] The formal division of territories reflected long-standing conflicts between the royal courts that were based in large part on differing attitudes towards collaboration with the VOC authority. Some royal factions did cede territory to the VOC authority during the 18th century only to be contested by other royal figures. This weakened the power of the royal courts within their acknowledged territories.
[14] See Hefner (1990) on the Pasuruan highlands in East Java and Scott (1990) on upland mainland Southeast Asia.

tax burdens on local residents. Ongoing rivalries between the two sultanates, as well as internal kinship struggles within these kingdoms, presented opportunities for non-elite and subaltern actors to play important roles in the shaping of pre-capitalist political economies.

From the mid 1700s, there was a significant expansion in sawah and wet-rice agriculture and tax-paying peasants with dependents[15] became a more significant feature in the apanage regions of South Central Java (Carey 2008). Strong agricultural growth spurred the development of more differentiated peasant classes. Tax-paying peasant farmers were an important social class, holding hereditary rights[16] to land, affirmed in the establishment of villages under the control of the royal court and assigned to designated landlords under the apanage system. During the pre-colonial period new villages were created when court officials (*abdi raja / priyayi*) with apanage rights, assigned a farming coordinator (*demang*) to take followers (*pengikut*) to open up new areas of forest or swamp land for agriculture (Onghokham 1984). These peasant farmers relied on the labour of their dependant followers and landless labourers[17]. There were also opportunities for landless and household peasant laborers to move in to surrounding forest and 'wasteland' areas that could be developed in to productive agricultural land, or to become bandits patrolling the trade and transport routes to city-states and royal courts (Carey 2008, 31).

Carey (1986) points to the advantages for the common people in this situation. Landholders tended to live in the royal courts never visiting their landholdings but rather relying on tax collectors[18] (*bekel*) to collect their incomes. Some tax collectors relied on establishing rapport and good relations with local tax paying peasant farmers and would consult with them about land organisation and irrigation matters (Crawfurd[19] cited in Carey

[15] These dependents could be understood as 'clients' relying on their patron, the tax-paying peasant farmer, for their livelihoods.
[16] These rights also included tax obligations which if not fulfilled could result in the confiscation of land.
[17] Onghokham (1984) describes the shifting allegiances of *demang* and *pengikut* when *priyayi* were replaced by the Sultans, or where competition between *priyayi* over followers (the agricultural labourers) resulted in the significant movement of followers between *priyayi*. Here we might assume that the origins of at least some landless people lies in the switching of subaltern allegiances and lost attachment to 'place' and hence to communal rights (*hak ulayat*) to land that were attached to original members of established villages.
[18] Data on pre-colonial village structures and hereditary rights of peasant farmers is sparse. Onghokham (1984) compares the Bekel of the pre-colonial period as a person holding similar responsibilities to the village head or *lurah* in the colonial system. In Java the village head historically was referred to as *Lurah* while in other regions of Indonesia the village head was be referred to as *Perbekel*, *Wali Negari* and *Kuwu* amongst others.
[19] John Crawfurd was the British Resident who served in the Sultan's capital throughout most of the British interregnum (1811-1816), see Carey 2008, 11.

2008, 15). On the other side there were frequent 'village wars' and conflicts between court appointed landlords, tax collectors and tax-paying peasant farmers, where tax-paying peasant farmers could switch their allegiances to different landlords. For village residents with dwellings and land for gardens their fortunes were often strongly attached to their relations with the tax-paying peasant farmer. For unattached labourers, these arrangements gave them relative flexibility to move and change the household and land areas they worked on in order to get a better deal, or to avoid authoritarian or brutal district administrators or peasant farmers (Onghokham 1984; Carey 2008, 17).

Not all areas of land were under the control of court officials which gave tax paying peasant farmers and landless rural labourers the opportunity to open up new tracts of land in forest and swamp areas including in the lower and middle slopes of upland areas. Sometimes, the Sultan's officials would demand tax payments for these new farmlands, or in other cases would seize the land. At the same time, the registration of new farmlands was not always updated and many smallholders who farmed land were not recorded by the Sultan's administration. Further, the absence of secure territorial control facilitated the emergence of a significant 'bandit class', some of whom were drawn from the landless labouring classes who operated independently, but often these bandits formed alliances with court officials (Carey 2008). Thus, the dynamics of political and economic development during the 18th and early 19th century were the result of multiple contestations between elite and non-elite groups, from factional royal and noble groups and VOC officials, to Chinese merchants and agricultural landholders, to Javanese peasant farmers, bandits and landless people.

In the outlying *Mancanagara* (Eastern and Western) regions of Central and Eastern Java, where the Mataram kingdoms' authority was asserted through more direct military force, Sultans appointed *Bupati* (district head) officials to assert their authority on behalf of the kingdom, bestowing upon them more secure forms of land tenure. The mobilisation of state enforcers was essential for these district officials to ensure a compliant labour force as the Sultan would call on the Bupati to bring a portion of their labour force to the royal court at least once per year (Carey 1986, 71). In Eastern Java this relative security of land tenure and the military force exerted by *district heads* to maintain their control, resulted in patterns of land security and accumulation which benefited the administrative classes under

the Mataram kingdoms. In the Western regions of Central Java, conditions varied widely across districts. In the administrative cores of respective districts, labour conditions were often more repressive and difficult than in the core apanage districts which were in closer proximity to the royal courts (Carey 2008). Beyond these administrative cores lay significant expanses of territory that were rarely under direct control of the district head.

Dutch colonial state 1830 – 1949

The defeat of Javanese oppositionists by Dutch government forces in the Diponegoro war in 1830, marked the beginning of a period of modern capitalist state formation including the project of territorial control. The relative autonomy of the uplands and the real limits of power and geographical control of the Islam Mataram kingdoms, even in lowland areas, had become clearer during the Diponegoro War (Carey, 2008). The Dutch had assumed that the previous native rulers had been in control of all territories including the so-called 'wastelands' of swamps and forests. Instead, European entrepreneurs had to negotiate with local peasant farmers for access to land, often leading to protracted conflicts. After the victory of the Dutch military operation in 1830, the Dutch colonial authority began to administratively map territories and apply labour and land laws across the Island. This process was incremental and ongoing until the early 20th Century.

An early goal of the Dutch state was to increase state control over the largest labour force possible through the territory system of village administration. In the early 19th century the colonial system began to pin people down into households and villages, to survey land and to fix and enforce colonial village (*desa*[20]) boundaries. Breman (1980, 9-14) argues that it was this colonial policy that created the rural 'peasant village' that exists today. Their purpose was to seek revenues and secure the extraction of wealth from the land and the local population (Onghokham 1984). Previous village settlements would be assigned village status or several settlements would be incorporated into a single desa administration (Jay 1956).

[20] The earliest concept of *desa* referred to the oldest form of community known in Java. It was used by Hindu migrants from India to Java to refer to communities of original inhabitants of Java that they met when they migrated (Kano 1984). This concept of *desa* referred to communities formed under the initiative of *abdi raja*, *priyayi and ningrat* when they brought followers (*pengikut*) to open up new tracts of land, or communities that formed themselves on the fringes or beyond the reach of the sultanate authority (Onghokham, 1984).

The forced labour system (*Cultuurstelsel*) policy introduced in the 1830s[21] formalised the relationship of non-elite and subaltern actors to land in Colonial law, replacing prior traditional land access rights (*hak ulayat desa / suku)* (Billah 1984). The policy focussed on drawing as much labour into the workforce as possible by ensuring that each registered adult had a tax obligation and to fulfil this obligation, should have secure access to land. This had the effect of reworking existing relationships to land in lowland Java in particular, extending responsibilities for paying taxes to all subaltern actors who were resident in designated village boundaries. In doing so, land that had been under the control of wealthier tax-paying peasant-farmers in interior lowland areas was broken up and 'redistributed' (Onghokham 1975:185 cited in Carey 2008), by allocating land to each adult resident within a village, in many cases halting, or seriously curtailing, indigenous processes of capital accumulation.

Wiradi (1984) notes that one of the important characteristics of traditional (pre-colonial) land tenure in Java is the great variety in forms of 'ownership' and rights to use land. With the overlay of Colonial agrarian laws this expanded these variations significantly as these were applied in local conditions and processes of contestation would unfold. Under colonial law, land access rights were encoded in a system of communal ownership rights (Billah 1984). There were three main classifications of social status under this system (Wiradi 1984). The highest was village officials who controlled village administrative lands (*tanah bengkok*)[22]. Ownership here is not in the meaning of ownership of land as a commodity[23], rather in the meaning of bestowing hereditary rights while also bestowing obligations to farm the land productively. These rights would disappear if a person left the village, or, if after a certain period it was not farmed productively the land was returned to communal status (Kano 1984). The next group was village members that had rights to farm communal lands and the lowest were those that had no rights to farm communal land (Wiradi 1984). Villagers with communal rights would sometimes forego these rights (and tax obligations) because they wished to work more freely (Kano 1984). They would remain working in the village but work as traders, craftspeople and in other periodic work.

[21] The system applied was *tanam paksa* (forced labour).
[22] The area of *tanah bengkok* in each village varied from around 5-15% of the total village communal lands area (Kano 1984).
[23] In many cases, the sale or transfer of access rights was forbidden (Kano 1984).

In the uplands, territorialisation by the colonial state was initiated as an attempt to expand colonial control over natural resources and facilitate the release of land for large scale agriculture in the form of plantations, as well as a mechanism to secure control over labour (Li 1999, 13). In regions where land control by the state was less secure, a range of pre-capitalist institutional arrangements were established where land rights and tax responsibilities were allocated to smallholding peasant farmers (Carey 2008). Their purpose was to reduce labour obligations on smallholders that might lead to protest and labour conflicts (Hart 1986). Here the principal guarantee of household security in the uplands was not dependence on some form of patronage relationship, rather it lay with the capacity of a family household to work their own piece of land (Hefner 1990, 114). In upland regions such as the Tengger highlands, government policy reinforced a pattern of smallholder farming[24]. The colonial strategy was indeed to induce people to move to these highlands with the promise of smallholdings and then to conscript them into plantation labour and other contract work arrangements. Thus virtually all villagers had rights to land with the potential to expand their landholdings.

Colonial land law from the 1830s established a structure of preferential relations with village heads, positioning village heads as both privileged and dependent (Hart 1986). Wealthier peasant farmers in the lowlands were drawn into the colonial village system of administration as village heads responsible for the management and collection of taxes. It was these administrative positions that would give them privileged access to land and capital resources, not ownership or hereditary rights to land. Colonial policy situated village government officials as central to their political economy while restricting their mechanisms for accumulation ensuring that their political privilege was secured only by their loyalty to the colonial state. In the highlands, shares of communal land were homogenised where they may previously have been inequitable (Hefner 1990, 45). Thus rural elites were stripped of their economic autonomy while at the same time their privileges were greatly expanded through the payment of large cash payments, labour services and access to government lands in return for serving the colonial government.

[24] These lands in local tradition (*adat*) were understood to be 'communal lands', with each resident having rights to continuous access to a specific land area.

The character of rural elites in the colonial period was not simply as a capitalist class that emerged in response to technologically determined commercialisation. Rather, they became a class of favoured clients of the state whose opportunities to accumulate capital were dependent in critical ways on their relationship with the state apparatus (Hart 1986). Their ability to secure tax and other payment services for the colonial state was bound up with their relationships with village residents in given localities which were codified in cultural practices and values systems[25]. For this reason, processes of social differentiation did not develop in linear ways in Java, as previously existing local political economies, or local dynamics of social struggles, varied widely. This is important to note when we consider the way in which 'non-capitalist' social relations of production tend to disappear and reappear at different historical conjunctures and in varied forms across Java.

The cultivation system adopted in 1830 was in many regions a failure. For example, tobacco which had been a highly successful smallholder commercial crop in Central and Eastern Java for more than a century, would fail dismally under the cultivation system. Boomgard (1999, 55-56) notes that the cause of this failure was most likely to have been the unacceptable conditions of compulsory cultivation and low returns for labour that made Javanese tobacco farmers unprepared to comply. By the end of the cultivation system the Colonial government had not yet made significant inroads in to achieving secure control of labour and territory in large areas of the highlands (Li 1999). The new colonial agrarian law introduced in 1870 then restricted customary rights to land in favour of the state and made swidden farming, tree crop groves and long standing patterns of social forest use illegal. This was to facilitate the expansion of Dutch plantation and forestry enterprises across Java in particular in upland regions that were occupied by agricultural petty commodity producers and to force these upland dwellers into commercial plantation work. Rural people living on the fringes of forests were constituted as thieves and poachers on state lands. Their illegal status made them vulnerable to state sanctions, forcing many into labour agreements (Rachman 2011; Hall et al 2011).

Meanwhile the state endorsed position of village head obtained further opportunities for self-enrichment with the passing of the 1870 Agrarian land law. This law

[25] Gunawan Wiradi (1984) argues that social relations within villages are bound by basic moral codes that block the tendency towards social polarisation.

introduced the legal concept of collective ownership (*pemilikan komunal*) and individual ownership (*pemilikan perorangan*) (Gunawan 1984). The law also created the legal opportunity for private plantation operators to take control of land through long term lease arrangements (*Domein Verklaring*). Village heads played key roles in securing land and labour for plantation companies. Village heads with larger landholdings and privileged access to capital through state patronage relations flourished, while smaller landholders became increasingly indebted leading to loss of control of and access to land (Lucas 1991). However, in regions where plantations were newly established, state control of upland areas remained incomplete[26]. Non-elite rural dwellers were able to reform themselves on the fringes of colonial plantations and retain a foothold on the land (Li 1999). There is no universal experience of how these actors living on the fringes were organised although case study data shows that new settlements were made at least until the 1930s[27]. Over time these settlements would be administratively mapped into the colonial village system. Where local smallholders were able to keep hold of their means of production, labour had to be imported. In other regions population pressure as well as colonial commercial enterprises would lead landless people to establish new settlements in more upland mountain regions in Java.

Until the early 20th century, unlike other regions in Southeast Asia, Java had very few large landholders (landlords) and the majority of peasant farmers had smallholdings and lived in the villages (Kano 1984). In the 1890s many lowland Northern coastal areas were still considered 'communal lands' (Lucas 1991). However lowland *sawah* areas and the lower slopes of coastal mountain regions on the North coast from Tegal to Batang and in the Pasuruan highlands – were increasingly encroached upon in the late 19th and early 20th century as Dutch and British companies sought to establish commercial plantations (Lucas 1991; Hefner 1990). In the first three decades of the 20th century, plantation contracts and expanding control of land by moneylenders and village elites in some coastal regions accelerated processes of social differentiation as market forces and village indebtedness became increasingly significant (van der Kroef 1984, 155; Lucas 1991). This process of rising social differentiation and marginalisation of many rural people from the land, led to

[26] Interview with Walijo and Ratno 11 January 2017.
[27] Interview with Sabar 6 January 2017.

increasing impoverishment, escalating social tensions and rising Indonesian nationalism which increasingly challenged the colonial state (Dick 2002, 111).

We see here that secure control of land by kings, elite social classes and the VOC was a secondary consideration to the need for control over labour in city states and inland lowland kingdoms until the end of the 19th Century. Patterns of land tenure have been crucially shaped by social struggles for access to land and political autonomy from repressive elites. Dutch colonial policies implemented from the 1830s altered the course of patterns of previous established capital accumulation by peasant landholders. The control of large tracts of land, by foreign or domestic elite rural actors is a relatively modern phenomenon. Large plantation estates were for the most part established between the 1910s and 1930s and in the period following the military coup led by Suharto in 1965-66. This historical lack of long-standing secure landed classes with consolidated territorial control has been important in the shaping of subaltern actors' relationships to and struggles over land during the 20th and 21st centuries. It goes some way to explaining the ongoing phenomena of land 'insecurity' under the law today while highlighting the significant part played by subaltern and other non-elite actors in shaping the political economy of rural Java.

3.4 Independent Indonesia

Prior to independence, subaltern actors' struggles have in large part focussed on access to and control of land as a means of survival and as a means to resist political domination by state authorities. As foreground to examining subaltern struggles in the post-independence period we should note a general feature of the political economy of rural change in post-colonial states, which highlights the central function of land in the making of rural production politics (Li 2015, 561).

Land in developed countries has long been understood as a market commodity with definitive laws and regulations governing ownership and its transfer. In former colonial states, or the global South, land is not yet a complete commodity, rather it continues to have multiple 'social' functions, in particular, as a source of survival for the poorest. This concept underpins the key features of Indonesia's Basic Agrarian Law (*Undang-Undang*

Pokok Agraria No.5, 1960[28]). Beyond this, social cultural attachments to land as 'place' and the formation of identities in the making of social relations in these places are critical elements in contestations that emerge over rights to access and use land. While technically land can be commodified, the social and cultural functions of land, including as 'place', makes it vulnerable to ongoing contestation by local people (Li 2015). As a result, contestation over land use and land control in the global South remains a significant political dynamic in the 21st century (Peluso and Lund 2011). This feature of post-colonial political economy indeed highlights the significant part that subaltern classes play in the shaping of rural social and political change. The control of land – not only acquiring it but also holding on to it – is an intrinsically social and political process that has important temporal as well as spatial dimensions (Peluso and Lund 2011).

Old Order

The Japanese military occupation of the then Dutch East Indies in 1942-45 presented a significant break with the political rule of the Dutch colonial state. Land control was not a dominant feature of Japanese occupation, instead, the collection of payments in the form of crops and other food goods constituted the main form of Japanese military rule. While the Japanese policy was indeed repressive it created a relative vacuum in attempts to assert direct territorial control presenting new opportunities for subaltern actors to secure access to land. After the withdrawal of the Japanese authority in 1945, attempts by the Dutch to reassert territorial control were strongly resisted by local people, resulting in the 'Dutch aggression' in Java and Sumatera in 1947 and against the independent Sukarno government in Yogyakarta in 1948. By 1949 the Dutch government agreed to a treaty with the newly independent Sukarno led government which would continue to economically favour Dutch and other foreign capital enterprises (White 2017). The Dutch government accepted independence terms that provided security for Dutch investments and a transfer of state debts to the newly independent government. Property rights, land concessions and licences granted under the Netherlands East Indies administration were upheld and could be renewed and extended and even new rights granted. Foreign capital still controlled Indonesia's mines, plantations, factories, land, sea and air facilities. This ongoing economic

[28] The term 'agrarian' in Indonesian law refers to rights over all natural resources not only land. The law states that its intent is to provide protection for the economically weak citizens against those who are strong (Bachriadi and Wiradi 2013, 74).

exploitation by private foreign firms continued to radicalise many social groups including plantation workers, maritime workers and peasant farmers who had fought in the struggles for an independent Indonesia (White 2017).

Some of the processes of social class differentiation that developed during the late colonial period were arrested or in some cases reversed by the impact of the great depression, the Japanese occupation and the struggle for independence (Kahin in Hart 1986, 37; Van der Kolff in Huskens 1979, 142). After the Dutch aggression and the Treaty settlement in 1949, patterns of social differentiation began to recover some of their pre-depression character, particularly in the Northern coastal regions and other areas where Dutch and other foreign capital interests remained significant (Hart 1986). Oral testimonies gathered during this[29] and other studies (Safitri 2010), indicate that contestation over access to land in regions of greater social differentiation, such as the coastal and interior uplands immediately adjacent to the Northern coastline (See Lucas 1990), were significant. In particular, in plantation and forestry areas previously established during the colonial era, where local village governance systems were tied to the benefits that could be gained by village heads in maintaining close relations with state and foreign owned companies.

In the period following the declaration of independence, plantation workers employed multiple strategies, actively campaigning for wage rises, conducting strike actions and in some cases occupying the land and taking control of the plantation operations of foreign enterprises.

> …Employers frequently suspected that wage demands and strikes were directed not at increasing workers' living conditions but towards grinding expatriate enterprise out of the islands… SARBUPRI[30] tended to support illegal occupation of estate lands; opposition to the return of plantations to their legal owners; large-scale thieving of crops; attacks on factories, buildings and trees; as well as ambushes, shootings and the killings of European managers (White 2012, 1286-7).

Many rural and urban workers were disappointed when the Jakarta government failed to challenge the control of foreign enterprises over productive industries on which their exploitation was based (White 2012, 2017).

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[29] See chapter five.

[30] *SARBUPRI* (*Sarekat Buruh Perkebunan Republik Indonesia*) is the The union of Indonesian plantation estate workers.

Factional splits within the Jakarta government became clearer as members of the government chose sides (White 2012, 2017). Parliamentary actors who had no opposition to foreign capital investment became increasingly isolated in central government as rising tensions between Indonesia and the Netherlands over West New Guinea were to trigger the commencement of nationalisation of Dutch enterprises from 1957 (White 2017). The weakness of an Indigenous capitalist class played a significant part in the dynamics that would then unfold in the newly independent Republic. The nationalisation of plantations and forestry enterprises took place under the control and direction of military units in the name of the republic and in some cases by enterprise workers' unions. These would subsequently be subjected to military supervision (White 2017; Fauzi Rachman 2011).

The Basic Agrarian Law (BAL/UUPA 1960) adopted by the Sukarno Government in September 1960 asserted the social function of land and other resources and the state's responsibility for managing these resources in the interests of the people. One of the provisions of the legislation is that lands subject to lease or other forms of contract agreement must be actively in operation and provide economic and other welfare benefits to people living in surrounding areas. Any lands left idle or abandoned (*tanah terlantar*), or not used productively in accordance with the contract agreement, must be returned to the control of the state in order to be of benefit to the people. Yet despite these explicit promises of land to the tiller, or the benefits of the use of resources be shared by the people, the law is shot through with conservative safeguards to restrict land redistribution. These safeguards facilitated the capacity of the military, as representative of the state, to control large productive resources after nationalisation securing their position economically in many regions prior to the events of 1965-66. At the same time the nationalist, socialist and populist commitments of this period embodied in the legislation remain part of the political claims employed by agararian social movements until today (Lucas and Warren 2013, 2).

Away from the Northern wet-rice coastal plains of Java and the adjacent upland areas where colonial plantations were established, patterns of social differentiation remained restricted (Wiradi 1984; Hefner 1990). In interior and upland areas of Central Java, smallholder farmers more often dominated local political economies (Jay 1956) developing mutually dependent relationships with local moneylenders and wealthier peasant farmers

with sufficient capital to facilitate trade and transportation for agricultural commodities, in particular tobacco[31]. The reality of shared risk in production strongly influenced the relationships between moneylenders and smallholder farmers as both parties contributed to the means of production. There were limited spaces that became the subject of contestation between larger landholders and other actors with more limited access to land, thus demands for land reform had limited application in these regions.

> There was one case in the next sub-district where peasants wanted to take the land (*aksi sepihak*) from a large landholder, Mrs someone… but then *Gestok* [happened]… otherwise most people here [in this region] had their own land (Sutardi 5 January 2017).

After independence, village head positions became elected positions replacing the prior system of hereditary appointment applied during the colonial period (Jay 1953). Hamlet heads (*kepala dusun or dukuh*) were also elected thus reducing the patronage available to the village head. Simultaneously there was a proliferation of new popular organisations that, while often originating in urban centres, established connections with rural villagers who might initiate affiliated local groups (Jay 1956). These included political parties, religious and other social organisations which became a source of new ideas and expanded rural-urban connections. Affiliations with these organisations were highly varied across Java reflecting the diverse characters of social relations in respective local and regional political economies and which were reflected in national and regional election voting patterns.

Where landlordism and sharecropping were a significant feature of the regional political economy, such as in East Java, tenant-farmers relied on landlords with larger landholdings in order to obtain access to land (Hart 1986; Fealy and McGregor 2012). This social polarisation would underlie some of the rising tensions and violent confrontations that would emerge after the Basic Agrarian Law was introduced in 1960. Fealy and McGregor (2012) argue that these relations were important in explaining patterns of extreme violence that unfolded in East Java in 1965-66. These patterns also applied to royal apanage and plantation lands around the Surakarta kingdom region including the Boyolali

[31] Interview with Sutardi 5 January 2016 and Daliman 7 January 2017.

district, where claims by landless people and smallholder farmers on plantation and larger landholdings were substantial.

Documented histories that highlight the role of subaltern actors during the first 20 years of independence are limited. In large part this is due to the 'reconstruction' of national history by the Suharto government after 1965 (McGregor 2007; Meckelburg 2013) and the repression of popular versions of this history until after the fall of the New Order regime. Limited literatures that discuss popular politics during this period, focus largely on the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia – PKI*), its mass organisations and the left-wing of the PNI, not on subaltern actors more specifically. Oral testimonies from former political prisoners of the New Order regime indicate that the general atmosphere in many villages until October 1965 was of a politicised population[32], many having been radicalised by the struggles against the Dutch, their interactions with urban actors through participation in organisations and by their immediate needs for food and secure access to land. Local histories indicate that the organisation or mobilisation of rural workers and peasant farmers was not always under the initiation or leadership of party or affiliated organisations, despite being influenced by their ideas. A detailed investigation of this history goes beyond the scope of this project. However, drawing on documented testimonies and fieldwork interviews, factors shaping a growing polarisation of different social interests in the lead up to 1965 should be noted:

Firstly, there was strong social and political awareness amongst members of locally based organisations, both in plantation regions (White 2016; Mahsun 2017) where social differentiation and landlessness were high, as well as in upland areas where smallholder farmers dominated local political economies and social differentiation was less pronounced.

> It was a heady time of political debates. Most people had strong opinions…. Only the PKI organised mass meetings in the mountains and lots of people went… [they] wanted to know what their ideas were. The largest membership of the BTI[33] in Magelang was here in Pakis [sub-district]… there was one place nearby they talked about taking land by force (*aksi sepihak*)… [but] mostly people had their own land and big landholders were rare (Sutardi 5 January 2017).

[32] Interview with Sutardi 5 January 2017, Ahmad 19 August 2016 and Handoko 6 December 2016.
[33] The *BTI* or *Barisan Tani Indonesia* (Indonesian Peasants' Front) was the peasant farmers' organisation affiliated to the PKI.

Secondly, landless actors had aspirations to (re)claim control of land and to improve their livelihoods (Safitri 2010; White 2016; Mahsun 2017). These aspirations were reflected in the adoption of the Basic Agrarian Law in 1960 and rising levels of locally initiated, as well as PKI-BTI (*Partai Komunis Indonesia-Barisan Tani Indonesia*[34]) led land actions.

> At the local level, its implementation unsurprisingly caused major friction between large land owners (landlords) and sharecroppers (tenant farmers). This is because land owners were not willing to have the land they owned taken over by landless peasants, despite being offered compensation by the government (Sawita 2018).

Further, Indonesian society was in the grip of a significant economic and social crisis. More than three centuries of repressive and exploitative labour laws and repatriated profits, the drawn out withdrawal of foreign capital after nationalisation, and the securing of national assets by the military on behalf of the state rather than ordinary people, all contributed to a growing economic and political crisis.

The Indonesian government was a divided national government, reflecting different social class interests, some of whom were overtly hostile to the popular aspirations of rural and urban subaltern classes. Furthermore, a land based army that had significant control over large parts of urban and rural industry after nationalisation, contributed to a growing polarisation between different social actors. The hostility of sections of the government and military elites to the popular aspirations of ordinary people, was not only towards affiliated organisations of the PKI, but to pro-*rakyat* (ordinary people) nationalists who supported a popular program that favoured the interests of lower classes over the social elites (Kammen and McGregor 2012). The mass violence unleashed in 1965 reflected the need for a resolution to the ongoing crisis of state authority (Hadiz 2006; Siregar 2007; Kammen and McGregor 2012), either in favour of the mass of ordinary people, or of a narrow group of privileged social actors drawn from both the bureaucratic or *priyayi* classes and land-owning elites.

New Order

The political economy priorities of the New Order regime required an explicit program to supress the challenge of a politicised and mobilised peasantry demanding land reform, improved wages and conditions for plantation workers and more control over

market conditions for smallholder farmers. New Order policies attempted to turn these politicised subalterns into a de-politicised (floating) mass that would comply with orders and carry out the tasks of national development (Hart 1986; Li 2007). Hart (1986) argues that the stance of the New Order regime towards the rural sector was most significantly a response to the threat posed by the PKI. However, if we consider the scale and variation in patterns of violence employed across the archipelago (Dwyer and Santikarma 2007; Kammen and McGregor 2012; Fealy and McGregor 2012; Melvin 2018; Sawita 2018), coupled with the policy of de-politicisation, monitoring and military interventions by the regime in rural areas, I argue that the threat was not so much from party organisations[35] per se.

> Who says land reform was a creation of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI)? It was [the result of] legislation that was approved by the DPR and central government, this means that all parties agreed with it. (WN, personal interview, June 12 2013. In Sawita 2018, 89)

Rather, in the context of rising social polarisation and political crisis, it was the ongoing mobilisations of poorer peasants and landless workers in pursuit of their interests, with or without the participation of the PKI and other left-wing nationalists, that posed the equally significant threat. The perceived 'necessity' for mass killings and incarcerations by sections of the land based military command led by Suharto was in reaction to the mobilising capacity of hundreds of thousands indeed millions of subaltern actors across the archipelago, many of whom mobilised without initiatives from PKI party organisations.

One of the primary objectives of the New Order state was to suppress the active and mobilised lower class groups in villages, plantations, towns and cities using mass violence, incarceration, intimidation and constant monitoring by village officials and the military (Hart 1986). The majority of the 1.3 million people with *Eks-Tapol* (ex-political prisoner) status[36] after 1965, were never members of the PKI or its affiliated organisations[37] but were accused

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[35] Many ordinary villagers were not members of the PKI itself, but were sympathetic and only sometimes directly affiliated to the mass organisations of the PKI including the *Barisan Tani Indonesia-BTI* (Indonesian Peasants' Front), *Pemuda Rakyat-PR* (People's Youth), *Lembaga Pembudayaan Rakyat-LEKRA* (People's Cultural Organisation) and *Gerakan Wanita-Gerwani* (Women's Movement).
[36] Since 1965-66, anyone declared to be affiliated with the PKI and not killed would carry the stamp of ET (*Eks-TAPOL*) or former political prisoner on their national identity card. *Eks-TAPOL* were people who were imprisoned by the New Order regime on political charges, the great majority without trial (Conroe 2012). This status was withdrawn during Abdurrahman Wahid's presidency in 2001. The figure of 1.3 million people was the official record of people holding ET status in 1995 (Bedner 2015).
[37] See Bedner (2015). 'Citizenship restored'. *Inside Indonesia*. September 30.

of being associated with people who were, or of being part of organisations that promoted the same kinds of ideas as the PKI. These ex-TAPOL needed a residential permit from the district government and required permission if they wished to travel. They were banned from becoming teachers, journalists, lawyers, artists or any other position that may influence public opinion. They had no rights to vote in elections or to stand as a candidate. Villagers often without clear party affiliations but with strong traditions of local organisation in the mountain complexes of Merbabu-Merapi and across the former Kedu residency (Magelang, Temanggung, Wonosobo) were assigned *ex-TAPOL* status on a mass scale affecting, for example, 60-90% of residents in some of the villages examined in this study[38]. Had the popular threat been the structure and organisation of the PKI alone, the ongoing policy of repression and monitoring would seem unnecessary given the assessment that it had been effectively eradicated by 1968 (Hadiz 2006; Hearmann 2012).

The militarisation of the state bureaucracy and village level de-politicisation were necessary to provide conducive conditions for capital, that is a compliant labour force and local order (Hart 1986; Husken 1979). In former strongholds of organised rural activism, non-commissioned military officers were appointed as village heads[39] (Hart 1986). Through the formation of Golkar as a political party which all state officials were required to join, the official doctrine of a 'floating mass[40]' and the direct presence of the Koramil commands right down to the village level, the disbanding and suppression of all forms of independent local organisation, the New Order regime hoped that local opposition would be stamped out.

The New Order regime cultivated rural elites by providing new opportunities for accumulation through the fostering of relationships between official village and district structures. Village officials received preferential access to agricultural inputs and credit and to a range of non-agricultural activities such as rice-hulling, transportation and large-scale trade. These elites became dependent on favoured client relationships with the state apparatus (Hart 1986). In regions where social differentiation was more polarised, the New

[38] Interview with Agung 14 July 2016 and Sutardi 5 January 2017.

[39] This effectively reversed the gains of the revolution which had institutionalised the popular election of these positions.

[40] The 'floating mass' (*massa mengambang*) policy effectively worked to exclude ordinary (poor) people from politics by eradicating any kind of mass or collective organizing at the local level.

Order would attempt to ensure that wealthier individuals were brought into their system of patronage. While village and hamlet heads were nominally elected positions, the barring of candidates accused of affiliations with the PKI ensured a controlled process of screening candidates took place. In some cases, village and hamlet heads were appointed.

> Here [in my hamlet] only 2 people weren't branded as PKI. It seemed the authorities were nervous… In the 1970s they appointed someone not even from our village to be the hamlet head… have you ever heard of a case like that? … It was funny though… [the] hamlet head was quite stupid… he used to consult my dad and other former political prisoners (*eks tapol*) about how to do things. I only found out later that two uncles (*Pakdhe*) disappeared, two cousins from my dad were ex-tapol… my father was detained for a while… my grandfather [from my mum] was removed [as village head]… As far as I know they were members of *Pemuda Rakyat* or *BTI* (Agung 15 July 2016).

Hamlet heads and smaller units of neighbourhood organisation[41] formed part of the official monitoring structures of local hamlets. These structures were designed to ensure compliance with New Order policies, in particular that no organisations independent of state control could be established and that people with former political prisoner status were monitored and their movements restricted.

The village head was made responsible directly to the district head, not to the members of the village thus strengthening the position of village head, while undermining other village institutions (Hart 1986; Bebbington et al 2006). Oil revenues played a critical role in the state's ability to provide financial benefits here. Many village heads would accept privileged access to grants and technologies while at the same time their political and social independence was restricted. To maximise their opportunities, some village heads took benefit from a labour force that could be controlled with the threat of military repression, cementing the collaborator relationship of many elite rural classes with the military state.

Patterns of land ownership and access rights were different across regions and even across more local political economies. Many lowland wet-rice regions had some private landowners with hereditary land rights, village officials had bengkok privileges while they held office, or in some cases became hereditary as they had been during the colonial period, while other villagers had secure access according to communal rights that were in practice

[41] *Rukun Warga-RW* (lit. harmonious citizens) is a greater neighbourhood administrative level below village (*kelurahan* or *desa)* government while *Rukun Tetangga-RT* (lit. harmonious neighbours) is the smallest neighbourhood administrative level below RW.

largely hereditary (Kano 1984). In interior and upland regions in Central Java there were essentially two forms of land access that were dominant, freehold access with rights of disposal and village communal rights with limited rights of disposal. Both types were inheritable (Jay 1956).

It has been argued that elite rural actors came to constitute as a kulak class (Robison 1982, 58 in Hart 1986); however, this pattern could not be generalised across Java, as in many regions landholders were almost all smallholders (Jay 1956)[42]. Jay notes further that in the mid 1950s absentee landlordism was not a serious factor in village power structures and was only observably important economically in regions close to urban centres. Where social class differentiation had not been established, the New Order would cultivate the development of a village elite through village government structures. Local village officials would benefit financially, but did not always produce a 'kulak' class, or class of dominant peasants (Mackie 1983, 27, cited in Hart 1986) as we see in the Magelang case study in chapter four.

During the Sukarno period, the wet-rice lowlands of Java had been regions of notable conflict and struggle (Hefner 1990, 16) as they were the poorest and most economically stratified. New Order green revolution policies, applied principally in these wet-rice lowlands, had the effect of accelerating these processes of social class differentiation and providing greater land security to increasingly wealthy rural elites (Husken 1979; Li 1999). In regions of growing landlessness, such as the northern wet-rice plains (Hart 1986), rural elites cultivated 'favoured status' relationships with land poor or landless peasant farmers with very limited or no access to land. This placed the rural worker in a position of dependency – establishing an interdependent relationship – where previously there may have been none. This had the material effect of dividing rural labour along lines where subaltern actors with 'favoured' status, were dependent on landlords for security and likely to identify with the interest of the landlord in order to protect this status.

[42] Robison (1982) argues that landlord classes were the most important allies of the military in the 1965-66 period and a landlord/kulak class would constitute a strategic base of support for the new Order state. Mackie (1983) presents the contrary argument that the agricultural policy of the New Order state did not produce a kulak class or a distinctive stratum of dominant peasants. Where there is general agreement, is that the state consistently attempted to incorporate rural elites into the state apparatus and where these elites were not present they would actively introduce policies that would begin the process of fostering elites in every village (In Hart 1986, 41).

For large sections of the rural peasant classes who could not achieve this privileged status, they would instead experience growing economic marginalisation which deepened their financial insecurity, in particular for landless workers.

Beyond the coastal plains, the uplands remained regions of incomplete state control. Here the New Order strategy to complete the process of territorialisation had a three-fold approach. Firstly, legislation pertaining to the Department of Agriculture, would strengthen the security of plantation enterprises and extend areas of land made available under lease hold arrangement to state enterprises and local and foreign investors. Secondly, 23% of the land area of Java was designated as national forest and hence off limits to agriculture and other uses. This forestry strategy was designed in the first instance to secure greater control over the population by forcing them off state forest lands, rather than being driven by commercial or state revenue considerations (Li 1999). Many people would lose access to land for swidden and other forms of agriculture forcing them to seek new areas of land or seek employment where they could. During the New Order, power over the forests was controlled by the Department of Forestry (*Departmen Kehutanan*) who would dominate many, but by no means all, upland people's interactions with the state.

The establishment of the National Forestry Commission and new and renewed land lease concessions for state and privately owned plantation companies, effectively reversed the results of many post-independence actions to access and use land by subaltern actors. While key legislation such as the Basic Agrarian Law (BAL) of 1960 were not repealed, other regulations backed up by a violent state apparatus effectively made the legislation unusable by ordinary people (Lucas and Warren 2013). Any attempts to make claims on land was considered a political act. Despite such claims being legally legitimate they were considered to be the ideas of communists and would face immediate repression.

A third element in this approach was the transmigration programs that compelled many Javanese rural lower class actors to be moved to regions of low population in 'outer' Indonesia to support the exploitation and development of 'underutilised resources', to promote capital led economic growth and to bring 'order' to regions that thus far had been considered peripheral (Li 1999). By removing people from their places of origin (Java), the state effectively broke up traditional networks of social organisation making transmigrants dependent on state patronage. What these policy approaches shared in common was the

intent to break down the organised capacity of lower class actors and to enforce the administrative and coercive apparatus of the state.

Subsidised and incentivised 'green revolution' programmes often did not reach smallholder farmers or their village leaderships in the upland regions. Instead some upland smallholders would seek opportunities to introduce some of the techniques themselves (Hefner 1990; Li 1999). The uneven reach of government programs impacted on patterns of accumulation in the highlands. This failure to reach the uplands did not provide the same self-enrichment opportunities for village government leaders, who in most part, were dependent on *tanah bengkok* lands for their relative economic privilege[43]. The lack of subsidised inputs and government credit facilities would bring village leadership interests more in line with other village smallholders.

Agricultural production in the uplands was affected by increased access to markets (roads), chemical inputs, hybrid crop varieties and new technologies, whether state sponsored or individually initiated. New Order development policy in some regions of upland Indonesia encouraged smallholder conversions to cash crop agriculture at the expense of subsistence crops. This led to growing indebtedness for some smallholders while others prospered effectively accelerating processes of social differentiation and resulting landlessness for some smallholders and tenant farmers (Hefner 1990; Li 2014).

Economic growth, industrialisation and urbanisation from the 1980s prompted great transformations in land use from agricultural to other types. At the same time agricultural production and livestock farming continued to expand and intensify across Southeast Asia (Hall, Hirsch and Li 2011) and in the case of Java, significantly increased agricultural production in the upland and highland slopes (Hefner 1990; Li 1999). Economic development in the 1980s and 1990s brought new encroachments on people's land and livelihoods, triggering new social conflicts. These social conflicts over resources – land, forests and jobs - escalated significantly during the last decade of the New Order regime. This process included widespread, albeit fragmented, popular mobilisations for access to land by ordinary people (Lucas and Warren 2003; Hart and Peluso 2005). The popular revival of rural land struggles during the New Order dictatorship was signalled by the heroic

[43] Interview with Daliman 5 January 2017.

struggles of thousands of rural lower class actors and other social allies in opposing the construction of the Kedung Ombo dam in the late 1980s (Stanley 1994).

Crisis of the New Order Regime

The 1997 Asian economic crisis saw many people return to their home villages as factories in urban areas closed down and supporting industries in surrounding urban areas shrank (Fallon and Lucas 2002, Smith 2002). While the crisis had an impact on the rural economy, it was far less dramatic than in urban areas and incomes per capita remained relatively stable. In Indonesia, agricultural employment grew more than 13 percent in 1998, from an already high 40 percent of total employment in 1997 (Fallon and Lucas 2002, 25). The capacity to absorb some of the immediate social and economic shocks, in particular for the poor and precariously employed, was stronger in rural areas. For some returning to rural areas there were still spaces of land that could be encroached upon in the search for some form of livelihood security without resistance from elite actors. In Batang, many rural people without access to land, moved onto abandoned leaseholds granted to companies during the New Order. As noted earlier, under the provisions of the BAL, abandoned lands (*tanah lerlantar*) should have leaseholds immediately cancelled and redistributed to landless rural citizens.

The growing political and economic instability of the Suharto regime in the late 1990s, I argue, was in significant part a result of growing social conflicts between labour and capital, or subaltern and elite actors across rural and urban settings. Some of these conflicts took the form of what Bayat refers to as the

> … 'quiet encroachment of the ordinary'. It describes the silent, protracted, but pervasive advancement of the ordinary people on the propertied and powerful in order to survive and advance their lives by unlawfully acquiring land, building homes… (Bayat 2015, S34).

In one of the case studies examined in chapter five, some land occupations that emerged in 1998 had their roots in local encroachments that began in the 1970s[44]. The political crisis of the New Order regime in 1998 produced a changed terrain that was conducive not only for social movement actors and middle class reformers to organise for

[44] Interviews with Tabah 30 August 2016 and Rohmadi 15 December 2016.

change that was aimed at state level institutions. There were also new 'spaces'[45] for subaltern actors, ordinary people, to take direct action in their own interests, specifically occupying and using lands for their own benefit. Both the actions of subalterns and the social movement actors who made solidarity actions with them, produced new or revitalised challenges to the agrarian production regime established by the New Order.

Case study data shows that local histories of subaltern struggles to secure access to land strongly correlate with the formation of local power relations and have implications for how subaltern actors form solidarities and alliances and how they organise themselves[46]. Given the difficulties in organising openly in mass or nationally coordinated organisations under New Order state repression, lower class initiatives to claim or reclaim land through mobilisation were significantly dependent in the first instance on the capacities of local individuals to begin to organise collectively and collaborate with other pro-democracy actors (Safitri 2010; Rachman 2011). In the Tratak land case, as in many rural areas, these collaborations were part of people's everyday ways of making their lives – working on plantations or farming precariously side-by side with others[47]. The survival of local struggle histories from the 1960s (and prior) within specific communities, sometimes played a part in the formation of local leaderships in these struggles[48]. A further factor was new links being made between subaltern rural actors and students, intellectuals and NGOs from urban regions which extended local communities' knowledge of ways to frame their political demands, often in terms of rights and provisions under the Basic Agrarian Law, or in other cases through environmental claims (Stanley 1994; Peluso, Rachman and Afiff 2008).

The open contestation that rapidly emerged from 1998, tended to be heavily concentrated in upland areas (Hart and Peluso 2005), not in the lowland wet-rice regions. This was in stark contrast to the significant part played by lowland peasant farmers in the 1960s land struggles, prior to the October 1965 military coup. The fieldwork for this study

[45] Following the stepping down of Suharto in 1998, expectations of significant political reform and democratisation were high amongst many social groups within civil society. Aspinall (2005) argues that this reflected the ongoing process of politicisation since the early 1990s of many social layers within society from the middle classes to students, workers and poor farmers and in the events of 1998, a significant section of the urban poor of Jakarta.

[46] See chapters 4, 5 and 6.

[47] Field notes on Tratak land case 7-8 September 2016.

[48] See chapter six.

did not include regions of lowland coastal rice-growing areas, therefore it was not possible to investigate the underlying causes of this, however surveys of literature examining these regions suggest some features that warrant further investigation. Firstly, the securing of land resources and a compliant labour force has been critical to the security of successive state regimes, these coastal lowlands have been targets of economic, political and military strategies to secure compliant labour forces since pre-colonial times. This combined with New Order agrarian and political order policies, backed up my military force, has supported processes of social stratification in lowland wet-rice areas that tends to be far more advanced than in upland rain-fed lands. Further, the relative security of land tenure and lack of conflict in lowland regions could indicate a more complete commodification of land has taken place. Easier access to employment in lowland areas with access to better transport infrastructures and thus urban and peri-urban employment is likely a further factor, however it was not possible to include this for specific examination here.

3.5 Reformasi

Rising land conflicts in urban and rural areas, student and middle class protest against the military and the Suharto dictatorship and the Asian economic crisis all contributed to the political crisis of the New Order regime and forcing Suharto to step down in May 1998. In forestry and plantation regions across Indonesia, land occupations spread rapidly (Lucas and Warren 2003; Hart and Peluso 2005). Many of these land occupations were joined or supported by student and NGO activists who promoted the rights of rural lower class actors (Safitri 2010; Lucas and Warren 2013). In many cases, district as well as local village and hamlet administrations were not sympathetic, often siding with local plantation companies or the forestry commission[49]. People occupying land formed their own locally based organisations (Safitri 2010), often linking campaigns with other farmers' organisations in the same or neighbouring districts, forming provincial farmers' groups[50] and networking with national peak bodies such as the Consortium for Agrarian Renewal (KPA) (Lucas and Warren 2013).

In regions dominated by smallholder agriculture, social class struggles during *reformasi* have resulted in diverse outcomes. In some localities these struggles have

[49] Walijo 11 January 2017 and Ratno 10 January 2017.
[50] Discussion with Agung 27 July 2016 and Handoko 6 December 2016.

resulted in the strengthening of the position of local elites (Breman 2000; Breman and Wiradi 2002), while in other regions, local people claimed spaces for genuine popular organisation to flourish in various forms[51]. In the early years of *reformasi* there were many reports of local village and hamlet heads being forced to resign by local residents (Lucas and Warren 2000, 2013) and being replaced with local leaders that represented the interests and aspirations of their local communities[52]. Revivals of local cultural organisations, while not always overtly 'political', linked the organising of cultural arts performances to the promotion of local agrarian cultures and strengthening the economy of smallholder farmers[53] (Hatley 2008, 2016).

It was in this context that new state policies were shaped in the early period of *reformasi*. Here the main focus in state policy was on the mechanisms necessary to provide labour and land to the owners of capital through programs that further intensified the extension of capitalist social relations of production and reproduction across the archipelago. Land policy, political decentralisation and the localising of power have been dominant influences shaping the Indonesian rural political economy since *reformasi.*

Land Policy

Across Southeast Asia the 'rule of law' in relation to land is often ambiguous, subject to different laws with conflicting statutes, where only state agencies have the capacity to define and enforce the 'rules of the game' (Borras et al. 2013; Li 2015). Large capital interests require national governments capable of, and willing to, impose and enforce the social property relations that make their businesses profitable (Lund and Peluso 2011). The challenge for national governments is that these same capital-supporting relations can undermine the authority of governments, generating social conflict and instability and hence investment risk.

Here we note several contemporary factors compounding the ever present potential for land conflicts. Firstly, the reaching of the physical limits of land with little or no new frontiers into which to expand (Li 2014), intensifies the competition between different actors to secure access to any land they can. Secondly, the long-term structural crisis in the

[51] Fieldwork notes 2016-2017.
[52] This was the case in several hamlets in the case study examined in chapter four.
[53] Discussions with Karmin and Bagas 18 November 2016.

economies of the global South (and global North) has seen the conspicuous rise of precarious labour and an informal sector that has morphed into an informal economy that millions rely on for survival (Bayat 2015; Rigg et al 2016). This has contributed to a rise in the movement between rural and urban spaces where even the ability to secure and retain access to small plots of land provides some form of income security. In the case of the Brazilian Landless People's Movement (MST), many of the 'settlers' making claims on land were former rural subaltern residents who had moved to urban centres to work in factories until economic crisis saw their places of employment downsized or closed. These people had left the countryside due to the extreme exploitation and oppressive conditions they had experienced working on plantations previously. Their return to rural areas with the MST to make claims on land was seen as an opportunity for a more secure livelihood (Caldeira 2008). For millions of subaltern across the global south, these struggles to obtain or maintain secure access to land are increasingly a means to claim some form of autonomy. The stakes are high as these struggles are critical in many people's every day survival strategies (Rigg et al 2016).

Thirdly, the range of stakeholders involved in social struggles over land in particular has expanded significantly. As well as landlords, tenant labourers, moneylenders and tax collectors, smallholders and large estate interests, different central and local government agencies and their officials, NGOs and international donors bring new, often contradictory agendas, regulations and enforcement procedures to the arena of struggle (Hall et al 2011, 5). Polanyi (1957)[54] points to market-based exclusion as the primary threat to land access. Therefore, in the Global South where land remains an imperfect commodity, that is, not yet fully integrated into capitalist social relations of production as a form of inalienable private property, this provides spaces and opportunities, both materially, institutionally and ideologically, for subaltern contestation. Decentralisation of state authority across Southeast Asia has intensified these processes as local power-brokers at district and village level sit between investors on the one hand and the local populations of voters that these local power-brokers rely upon in elections. The result is a massive contradiction for a

[54] In Hall et al 2011, p9.

capitalist state not always able to consistently apply policy and authority in the interests of the capital owning classes (Wood 2006).

The political nature of land administration in Indonesia, has a productive element that is exploited by subaltern actors and their allies and other actors with social interests in claiming land. Inconsistent laws, overlapping regulations, incomplete data and territorial maps provide different actors with legal argument to assert or defend their land claims on moral or ideological grounds and the opportunity to establish their claims within legal jurisdictions[55] (Hall et al 2011). Land titling has been adopted by states across Southeast Asia as a means to create greater legibility[56] within land markets and as a means to manage agrarian unrest. Land titling programs attempt to achieve a finalisation of the process of determining land rights, in the form of individualised inalienable ownership rights, and with it achieving complete commodity status for land. While World Bank programs have funded titling programs in Indonesia, Thailand, Laos and the Philippines, many state and other actors have actively argued to defend significant areas of land from these initiatives (Hall et al 2011).

Aversion to private ownership title stems from several sources. For many subaltern and other non-elite actors land holds social security, environmental management and other non-market functions. These have been established by histories of common practice as well as being legally established in some of the agrarian management systems already in practice (Lucas and Warren 2013). A further factor includes the rise in commercial speculation over land which while increasing the nominal value for those who hold land, places it increasingly out of the reach of many citizens. The Consortium for Agrarian Reform (KPA) argues that private ownership intensifies the loss of access to land for many citizens through indebtedness and sale and disproportionately disadvantages women and less powerful community members (Hall et al. 2011; Lucas and Warren 2013). The result is an ongoing conflict involving different social actors to achieve the goal of a 'free' market in land on the one hand, while others fight to retain and extend other more equitable systems of land management.

[55] Field notes in Batang 2016-2017.
[56] That is, certainty about territorial demarcations and property relations.

Decentralisation

With the decentralisation of certain aspects of state functioning, the state has demonstrated that it does not act as a unitary actor. If we apply the view of the state as a social relation, then we see more clearly the position of different actors engaged in social struggles over power and resources and that these struggles are fought out in different jurisdictions. Migdal (2001) points to the way that state actors make alliances, albeit often temporary, with subaltern groups. The adoption of Indonesia's decentralisation policy since 1999 has provided greater opportunities for many non-elite actors to explore the opportunities for such alliances[57]. Here we witness the multiple and often contradictory actions of the state. While not rejecting the evidence of scholars that examine the continuation of predatory class interests and institutions established during the New Order, the actual class struggle dynamics in different temporal and spatial conditions present a picture not of a consolidated hegemonic power, but of one of ongoing uncertainty, conflict and change. The implementation of regional and village autonomy and the emergence of mid-level provincial capitalist classes, has presented unusual spaces for temporary alliances and opportunities for elite and non-elite actors to test out different strategic and tactical approaches.

Decentralisation of government in Southeast Asian post-authoritarian states has been a generalised strategy employed since the 1990s in response to escalating social conflicts that occur in conditions of regime crisis. In Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand, political decentralisation of government structures was implemented rapidly after rising regional political mobilisations and demands for secession in some parts of Indonesia (Hadiz 2010). Not unlike events preceding the mass violence in 1965, the political stability of Indonesia in the late 1990s was seen as critical in preserving Western security and economic interests. Decentralisation featured prominently in the agendas of aid and development programs sponsored by the World Bank, USAID, Asian Development Bank, German Organisation for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the Ford Foundation (Hadiz 2010). GTZ and USAID provided significant direction in the design of Indonesia's decentralisation

[57] See chapter five.

framework ensuring that revenue sharing between the central government and the regions did not undermine the workings of the central government budget and political security.

Hadiz (2010) provides a compelling critique of the largely depoliticised accounts of the messy and contradictory decentralisation processes presented by neo-institutionalist academic approaches that ignore questions of power and class conflict. He criticizes the failures of decentralisation to produce more democratic outcomes for ordinary people, instead they have provided new opportunities for predatory rent-seeking behaviour at more local levels of government. His analysis of party politics, including the creation of unusual alliances in electoral politics between academic or NGO democratic reformers and more explicitly predatory class interests, are important contributions to our understanding of the dynamics of social and political contestation. However, his analysis fails to pay significant attention to, or to explain, the important oppositional struggles that lower class actors engage in, often independent of the struggles of other pro-democracy actors, and that have brought gains, sometimes significant ones, for many subaltern actors (Lucas and Warren 2003; Peluso, Afiff and Rahman 2008; Aspinall 2013a; Rosser and Sulistyanto 2013). Robison and Hadiz tend to the view that the mass actions and mobilisations of lower class actors since *reformasi* only became possible as a result of the structural crisis of the New Order regime (Robison and Hadiz 2004). Here I argue that systems of control of labour and land developed by the New Order regime were unable to create passive non-resisting lower classes. Rather, the growing social contradictions of exploitation and repression imposed on rural and urban lower classes under the New Order regime led to increasing mobilisations of workers, students and poor peasant farmers which were significant contributing factors to the economic and political crisis that would lead to the downfall of Suharto (Aspinall 2005).

Hadiz acknowledges that the actions of lower class actors, workers, peasant farmers or indigenous peoples at local level have produced often very militant organisations, while criticising their failures to produce national reforms. At the same time, he points to the growing links between large and small scale private investors and local government officials in a decentralised structure that has benefited local elites (Hadiz 2010). What I suggest here is that these dynamics of local elite power and the localised nature of many conflicts, be they industrial strikes or land occupations, indicate that our lens for analysing the dynamics of subaltern politics need to shift away from largely national level approaches, to increased

focus on provincial, district and even more local levels of analysis. While this discussion is articulated more explicitly in the concluding chapter, the salient point to be underlined here is that lower class actors and their allies, in many cases, are cognisant of the most conducive arena of struggle for their political claims and adjust their strategies for securing their interests accordingly.

The decentralisation of certain state functions to provincial and district level government has provided changed opportunities for lower class actors to forge new social relations with new state actors and other regional powerholders. Campaigns for land that have involved direct land occupations target government officials,[58] the National Land Agency (*Badan Pertanahan Nasional – BPN*) and the Forestry department (*Departmen Kehutanan*) at district, provincial and national levels, as well as the courts, when seeking resolution for their claims. For many subaltern actors, direct action in mass mobilisations and organised defensive occupations of land, in the first instance with no reference to the legality or not of their actions but rather relying on their moral rights, provided critical momentum in forcing state and other elite actors to recognise them as a social force. These and other strategic approaches are examined in the Batang case study in chapter five.

In regions of relative land security for smallholders, decentralisation has presented new opportunities for hamlet and village residents to secure greater access to funds and other resources. In regions with limited social differentiation, direct participation in planning and organising social and economic development activities has strengthened the relative autonomy and control of these local communities in the hands of local residents. The Magelang case study examined in chapter four demonstrates that village government is not always dominated by powerful elites with exclusionary agendas. In upland regions where social differentiation is not significant, local leaderships at village level have facilitated processes of planning and disbursement of village funds that are genuinely led by the aspirations of local people.

[58] Here I refer to popularly elected village, district and provincial heads.

Village Law No. 6/2014

The new Village Law No 6/2014 was the first national legislative change dedicated to formalising decentralisation at a village administrative level[59]. The new law was greeted with great enthusiasm by many stakeholders as a progressive compromise between diverse interests, that provided the basis for significant improvement in village based economy and development (Vel, Zakariah and Bedner 2017), in particular with the allocation of funding directly to villages as autonomous governing bodies. However, the opportunities for lower class actors to initiate changes and improvements in their favour will in large part depend on the local power dynamics in respective villages. As we will see in chapters four and five, the beneficiaries of changes in the village law are different across regions. The laws have reinforced and entrenched the power and rent-seeking opportunities for local village elites in some cases, while providing the basis to strengthen popular control of village government in others.

The greater executive power vested in the position of village head, the extension of village head maximum service periods and the weakening of village representative bodies' authority over the village head, have diminished structural accountabilities to village constituents. District regulations that operationalise village law amendments in 2018,[60] directly undermine the structural accountabilities to village members through previous local hamlet structures, reorganising hamlet structures based on the number of village residents rather than historical geographical organisation, with hamlet heads being appointed by the village head[61]. Further amendments adopted in 2018 now make election of village heads open to any Indonesian citizen regardless of their current domicile[62]. In villages with already weak local control over village government officials, this extends the possibility for village

[59] Prior to this, the statutory framework centred on Law no. 22/1999 on Regional Governance and no. 25/1999 on the Financial Balances Between Central and Regional Government, the constitutional amendments made in 2000 and 2001 and the Law on Regional Government no. 32/2004. While formally providing for greater autonomy for villages, the regional governance laws left financial control of village resources in the hands of district governments and the independent finances of village administrations were limited to village based resources. A further Government Regulation no. 72/2005 widened potential access and control of village fund allocations however required village heads to submit proposals and lobby for funding in competition with other villages under the PNPM Community Empowerment program (Vel, Zakariah and Bedner 2017).
[60] Discussion with Bagas 18 November 2018 and Mulyono 11 November 2018.
[61] See chapter four for an explanation of the undemocratic dynamic of these regulation changes.
[62] Discussion with Bagas 18 November 2018 and Mulyono 11 November 2018.

government to be even more removed from the actual needs and aspirations of local residents.

Since 1998, weak agricultural and rural development policies from central government have been overshadowed by neo-liberal driven development projects designed to impose market-led initiatives on rural development (Li 2016). The direction of development projects is to promote 'stability' and ensure rural people's increasing engagement with the market in every aspect of their productive and reproductive existence (Carroll 2010). These programs rest on assumptions that the problems of power and poverty can be overcome by technical fixes that in reality reinforce or further polarise already existing processes of social class differentiation with the main beneficiaries being local and district rural elites[63] (Li 2016). The local governance structures promoted by these technical experts can have the effect of undermining or disrupting pre-existing social structures, replacing them with more rent-seeking opportunities for local elites who seek to control these projects.

Despite the contribution of scholars that explain poverty as a consequence of social and economic relations created and recreated under the institutions of capitalism (Roseberry 2002; Harriss-White 2006; Fauzi Rachman et al 2009; Hall et al 2011), there are few development approaches that consider alternatives to capitalist modes of growth as the engine of development. It is here that the diversity, dynamism and productivity of upland environments and the insights and creativity of upland populations should be acknowledged. Where local social relations of power are more inclusive of the needs and demands of subaltern actors, there are opportunities for subaltern actors to benefit from programs where they have control of them and *if* they choose to participate in them[64].

The Asian economic crisis of the late 1990s signalled increasing and sustained precariousness for labour in both urban and rural areas. Increasingly, people who work away in urban places have not settled there but returned to rural places on a more or less frequent or sporadic basis (Rigg et al 2016; Peluso et al 2012; Nugraha and Herawati 2015).

[63] In contrast, chapter four outlines the experience of a village without great social differentiation where project funds have been rejected by village members where the structures that manage these funds are perceived as corrupt and undermine ('*merusak*') constructive social organisation.

[64] See Chapter four for discussion of how one village community selects programs they are prepared to engage with.

Rural livelihoods today encompass labour activities that are not exclusively engaged in agriculture but are linked to the survival or reproduction of people and their communities. Twenty years after *reformasi* began, systems of production in rural areas today are more often than not mixed. Diversified income sources have been one strategy applied by rural poor people to maintain a foothold on the land (Peluso et al 2012)[65] and the lines between rural and urban employment over time have become increasingly fluid (Bernstein 2000; Rigg et al 2016). Transport infrastructure and access to motorbikes has increased the flexibility of rural people to access employment and income sources (along with state and private household debt). Several decades of movement between rural and urban spaces has allowed some lower class rural actors to accumulate small amounts of capital that are then used to support new livelihood strategies (Rigg et al 2016; Peluso et al 2012; Nugraha and Herawati 2015). As urban conditions become increasingly difficult for people living precarious lives, even small plots of land provide rural people with some form of housing and food security, rural petty commodity opportunities and/or social relationships of mutual support.

> The absence of a social safety net for many of the countries of developing East Asia means that there is a mutuality in the livelihoods of greying farmers and their children; livelihood security is, in other words, co-produced in the factories and the fields of East Asia. Factory work alone would not deliver security; and farming alone would not secure subsistence (Rigg et al 2016, 130).

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the political economy of rural Java in historical perspective, focusing the lens on the dynamics of non-elite and subaltern agency and class struggle politics. By situating subaltern actors' struggles against dispossession and exploitation within their spatial and temporal dimensions we gain a more complex picture of the dynamics of individual and collective subaltern struggles and the formation of subaltern political claims. In pre-colonial Java, struggles over power were often localised and resistance involved anything from village wars to flights to regions beyond the reaches of pre-colonial state power in quasi-settled existences in the uplands where people

[65] There is limited published data (Nugraha and Herawati 2015) and some anecdotal information (fieldwork interviews) on young people whose families have limited or no land resources that have moved to areas where they can obtain work, accumulate savings and return to purchase land in rural places of origin. This temporary migration could be seen as a modern version of the customary practice of *merantau* among several Indonesian cultures.

controlled their own means of production. The struggles of non-elite actors to secure autonomy and resist political and economic control contributed to the ongoing crises of power of the pre-colonial kingdoms.

The Dutch colonial project to establish territorial control in Java from 1830 required engagement in wars and many localised conflicts. Initial land reforms implemented by the colonial state reworked relationships to land in some places in favour of smallholders by breaking up larger landholdings previously controlled by rich peasant farmers and containing conflict in some regions by providing land security for a majority of subalterns. This was a conscious strategy to minimise the risk of social conflict as the Dutch authority attempted to assert more complete control over people and land. After the failure in many regions of the forced labour (*tanam paksa*) regime, the implementation of the Colonial 1870 agrarian law resulted in intensified conflicts between lower class actors and the colonial state, in particular over access to land, leading to a rapid growth in the nationalist, anti-colonial struggle in the early 20th Century. These struggles, including open warfare in 1947-48, would eventually lead to the withdrawal of the colonial administration in 1949. Subaltern struggles however did not abate, rather they continued to escalate, actively opposing the presence of foreign, in particular Dutch capital. Rising differentiation between different social class interests reflected in growing factionalised struggle in the national government and felt most acutely at the grass-roots, would eventually result in the mass violence from October 1965 and the establishment of the New Order repressive state regime.

The systems of control of labour and land developed by the New Order regime were unable to create passive non-resisting lower classes. Sporadic resistance by rural subalterns remained a feature of class relations throughout the New Order dictatorship. By the late 1980s and early 1990s the growing social contradictions of New Order development - experienced as a sharpening in the exploitation and repression imposed on rural and urban lower classes under the New Order regime - led to increasing mobilisations of workers, students and poor peasant farmers. These were significant contributing factors to the economic and political crisis that would lead to the downfall of Suharto (Aspinall 2005).

Across four and more centuries, social class struggles over power and control of resources have produced different patterns of social relations of production and

reproduction across different regions of Java and Indonesia more generally. The outcomes of these social struggles have significant consequences for subaltern actors' capacity to access and secure control over land and in the social relations of power that manifest in village and regional state institutions. Today access to land and local and regional institutions of power play a significant part in social class struggle dynamics to secure livelihoods in rural areas. Subaltern actors without access to land and other resources face rising precariousness. Conversely, in regions where farmers retain smallholdings or have access to land on reasonable terms, expanded rural-urban livelihood options have stimulated changes in the dynamics of local economies providing new petty-commodity production and wage-labour opportunities. This dynamic reality highlights that the making of social and political change for subaltern actors, takes place in the first instance not only through electoral contestation, the courts and other formal institutions of government, but through their everyday struggles, the making of social movements and moments of social crisis and upheaval that present new opportunities to advance the claims of subalterns in the economic, political and cultural spheres.

In examining the social power exercised by rural subaltern actors in local political economies, we need to consider the spatial and temporal dimensions of 'the local' in their interactions with national state policy strategies, international divisions of labour and the implementation of 'global' development agendas. While market relations have played a dominant part in local smallholder and petty commodity political economies for centuries, the penetration of capitalist social relations of production and reproduction until today remains incomplete. The factor of market compulsion, in social reproduction in particular, is still not present in some local political economies. Here it is access to land that often plays a critical role in local actors'/ rural villagers' ability to resist this market compulsion in their everyday struggles for survival.

By highlighting the historical diversity, dynamism and productivity of local and regional political economies we provide insights into the creativity of subalterns in the waging of struggles for greater self-determination and cast light on the complexities of state-local relations and associated class structuring processes. This examination exposes the multiple forms in which subaltern claims are made upon state institutions for access to resources, as well as health, education and other rights and amenities which characterise

the aims of many peasant farmer organisations and indigenous people's movements, as well as their demands and actions that reject and resist state imperatives that are not in their interests.

Chapter 4: Everyday agrarian politics: Magelang case study

4.1 Introduction

Contemporary scholarship on the dynamics of rural popular agency in post-Suharto rural Indonesia has focussed on the emergence of organised political forces demanding access to land and other agrarian resources (Hart and Peluso 2005; Fauzi 2011; Lucas and Warren 2003, 2013), or on patterns of elite contestation in regions with significant agrarian differentiation in landholdings (Breman and Wiradi 2002; Aspinall and Rohman 2017; Mahsun 2017). This chapter widens the analysis of popular agency, examining the struggles of subaltern actors in a village without great agrarian differentiation, with no major state or corporate presence, where the majority of residents are smallholders and a majority remain active as smallholder farmers. It extends on literatures that examine the survival of rural smallholder farmers (Bernstein 2000; Rigg et al 2016), considering some of the structural factors specific to the regional political economy generally, while examining local conditions within one rural village. I demonstrate that a variety of structural and agential factors discussed in chapter three underpin the capacity of smallholders examined in this chapter to retain access to land, including the consolidation of certain spaces for agricultural petty commodity production, the diverse livelihood strategies of smallholders and how land is valued beyond its profit-generating potential alone (Sen 1962; Bernstein 2000, 2010; Peluso and Lund 2011; Rigg et al 2016).

This data for this chapter is drawn from an ethnographic study in Sidomukti[1] Village (*desa*) and a more focussed study in three hamlets[2] (*dusun*) from within this village as the principal units of examination. I explore the changing dynamics in agrarian production and village government politics in this upland village of 6500 residents, comprising 22 distinct geographical hamlets, situated on the western slope of Merbabu Mountain in Central Java. This village provides a snapshot of how everyday life in an upland village articulates a set of possibilities that is shaped by specific local histories and conditions. Here I examine how relationships to land and the social relations of production and reproduction in this local political economy shape and are shaped by the ways that subaltern actors do politics in

[1] This village name is a pseudonym.
[2] These hamlets are Tanirejo, Tanimaju and Tanimantep. All hamlet names are pseudonyms.

‘everyday’ ways. The examination of agency focusses on the creation and reproduction of social relations of solidarity and common interests. The cultural institutions that are drawn upon in people’s social reproductive strategies are examined further in chapter six which makes a comparative examination of the very different social reproductive strategies employed by subaltern actors in different case studies examined in this chapter and chapter five.

This case study demonstrates a significant correlation between subaltern actors’ historical relationships to land (expressed today in their secure access to land) and the social relations of power present within this local and regional political economy. I examine the formation of social solidarities between rural smallholders in the social relations of production and reproduction that contribute to their capacity to keep control of their smallholdings. I consider the strategies of not only smallholders that rely on agricultural production for survival, but the formation of solidarities and collective approaches by locally based groups to support more diverse livelihood strategies, including retaining access to land while relying on other non-agricultural sources of livelihoods.

The case study will show that village government is not always dominated by powerful elites with exclusionary agendas. Here I apply Migdal’s (2001) view that alliances and networks between state and subaltern actors can neutralise the sharp territorial and social boundaries between the state and society with the result of shifting power relations in favour of groups outside the state and in this case study in the favour of the majority poor. I argue that the introduction of the new Village Law No. 6/2014 has presented new opportunities for subaltern actors to access resources mobilised through village state institutions in this case. While the changes in the Village Law have reinforced and entrenched the power and rent-seeking opportunities for local village elites in other cases, this case study demonstrates that there are opportunities to strengthen popular control of village government. This case demonstrates that in this local political economy, the actions of subaltern actors in contemporary conditions have most direct and immediate impacts at local hamlet level, but also at village and sometimes district scales. In this upland region, where social differentiation is less significant, local leaderships at village level have facilitated processes of planning and disbursement of village funds that are genuinely led by the aspirations of local people.

The first section builds on the examination of subaltern histories outlined in chapter three, briefly tracing the historical contours of local political economies in this district. It examines the structural factors that underpin the opportunities and constraints faced by subaltern actors in securing rural livelihoods and the strategies they employ to retain their rural smallholdings. Further it examines the changing expressions of social solidarities as ongoing precariousness in seeking livelihoods demands new and creative strategies for survival.

The second section examines the dynamics of village politics and village government. It shows that legacies of social struggles across generations are reflected in local level social organisations and subaltern actors' relations with state institutions, significantly influencing how ordinary people 'do politics'. I demonstrate that smallholder subaltern actors tend to organise collectively where they have the most significant influence, that is at local hamlet and village level, with village leaders developing new strategic alliances with other state actors and institutions at district levels in particular. In contrast to the pessimistic assessment of the post-*reformasi* possibilities in other parts of Java, where local elites were often reported as being the main beneficiaries of initial democratic reform (Breman and Wiradi 2002; Hart and Peluso 2005, Aspinall and Rahman 2017), the post-dictatorship period in this village has brought new opportunities for self-initiated hamlet[3] and village based organisation and a changing of the political guard in local village government. New rural political forces have emerged with young generations of village residents being elected to important positions in village and district governments. Here I examine the impact of the new Village Law No 6/2014 and how this new leadership is shaping village development within the context of these changes.

4.2 Section One: Land access and social relations of production

Attempts to trace written histories on the upper slopes of Merbabu Mountain and the Eastern region of Magelang district (*kabupaten*) since the colonial period have been difficult[4]. Unlike the Batang district that is examined in chapter five, there is limited

[3] Hamlets here refer to what were administrative *dusun* until changes were made in district regulations in 2018. These hamlets are geographically distinct communities grouped together in close proximity and constitute the basis for historical social organisation in the first instance. Changes to district regulations on hamlet organisation made in 2018 are discussed later in this chapter.

[4] Having no command of the Dutch language my searches were limited to studies written in English and Indonesian. Comprehensive studies of agricultural regions of Java such as *Dua Abad Penguasaan Tanah*

literature that provides descriptions about the character of the agrarian production regime in the sub-district and wider Magelang district in which this village is situated in, or the wider Merbabu-Merapi mountain complex more generally. Oral histories from this village[5] suggests that patterns of crop-planting established during the 19th Century in the Merapi-Merbabu mountain complex and the wider Kedu residency[6] (*karesidenan*), were similar in the Western slopes of Merbabu Mountain in which this village is situated. By the early 1800s, the Kedu residency was famous for smallholder tobacco cultivation, which together with the staple food crop maize (Boomgard 1999), remained the main bases of smallholder production in Sidomukti village until around the year 2000[7]. Similar to the pattern of livelihoods in upland areas we examined in chapter three (Hefner 1990, 114), the primary guarantee of household security in this village has lain principally, but not exclusively, with the capacity of a family household to work their own piece of land. They have not been dependent on sharecropping, privileged access to work, or other patronage arrangements that were dominant in rice-growing coastal and interior lowlands.

Establishment of colonial village structures

Prior to the establishment of the colonial village administration of Sidomukti, local residents worked on lands in areas surrounding their settlements which today are recognised as hamlets (*dusun*) within the greater village of Sidomukti. Hamlet residents had common agreements[8] about which areas of land were worked on by which residents and each hamlet allocated some land to the serving hamlet head. The area of *tanah bengkok* land allocated to each respective hamlet head varies from 0.3ha to half a hectare for the majority of the 22 hamlets, and more than a hectare in two hamlets[9]. Some hamlets have a story of origin about the people who first established their community (*dongeng cikal-bakal*). These stories vary across hamlets[10] often having little relation to the establishment

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(Tjondronegoro, S. and Wiradi, G. (Eds.) 1984) did not include the Kedu residency. It is unclear why this is the case.

[5] Data collected in many discussions indicated that smallholders in this village planted tobacco and corn almost exclusively until 2000. Interviews with Yatman 19 January 2017, Atmo 4 December 2016 and Budi 26 January 2017.

[6] The Kedu residency Included Magelang, Temanggung and Wonosobo districts.

[7] Interview with Yatman 19 January 2017.

[8] A form of *hak ulayat,* that is, traditional communal tenure rights.

[9] According to Soleh, this hamlet allocation has a local logic or historical tradition (*ikut naluri*). Interview 22 August 2019.

[10] This information came from discussions with Sabar 5 January 2017, Yatman 19 January 2019, Atik 26 January 2017, Soleh 22 August 2019 and Marto 18 November 2016.

of other hamlets within this village. Newer hamlets were established by people living in previously established hamlet settlements moving further upland and opening up new areas of forest for agriculture. Some were established in the 19th century and others in the 20th century. The village itself does not have its own *cikal-bakal*. However, when the village was established it situated one hamlet as the centre of its administration and this hamlet and the village hold the same name of Sidomukti.

When these village boundaries were drawn by the colonial administration, some areas were designated as village lands (*tanah bengkok*)[11] for use by village officials and village funds (*kas desa*). These *tanah bengkok* lands are spread across the greater village area that previously had been farmed by residents in their respective hamlets. These *tanah bengkok* lands are reasonably extensive[12] and displaced some residents from the land they had historically farmed. Following the establishment of the village government and village *tanah bengkok* lands, the areas of land available for ongoing use by residents was then redrawn and 'Letter D' (or *Pethuk D*) certificates were given to residents. This became the basis for a common understanding of village members' land rights or secure access to land and are hereditary. Today the majority of residents still hold 'Letter D' as proof of right of use, while some have converted these letters to land ownership certificates (*Surat Hak Milik – SHM*)[13]. There is a strong culture that people will not 'sell' or transfer their rights to land, however, if they do sell it their land it will be to other village members as there is a common understanding that these are village lands that should remain in the hands of village residents.

Because recorded histories are sparse and oral histories are dependent on the memory of people in their 70s, 80s and 90s, the current physical condition of the village and the household conditions of its residents provide some clues as to its history. Sidomukti

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[11] *Tanah Bengkok* lands belong to the village. They are used as a means of salary payments for village officials during the duration of their service and for village income (*tanah kas desa*). The Village head has rights to use seven hectares of land during their period of service. Until the early 1980s there were two village officials and a village secretary who also held rights to use *tanah bengkok* and their incomes were drawn from the productive use of these lands. Today this has expanded to seven village officials. These officials have some rights to *tanah bengkok* and some cash wage income from the village budget.

[12] *Tanah bengkok* belonging to the village is around 13 hectares in area, not including hamlet head allocations which have their own histories of allocation.

[13] Letter D (*Pethuk D*) certificates affirm a resident's right to use communal land and was legally replaced by ownership rights certificates (*Sertifikat hak milik*) after the adoption of the Basic Agrarian Law (UUPA 1960).

village is situated in the middle to upper western slope of Merbabu mountain lying to the South of the main Salatiga – Magelang single lane road that takes you from the East to the West side of the mountain. Located 30-40 minutes by vehicle from the bustling city of Magelang it can no longer be categorised as an 'isolated' village, in particular since the improvement in village roads in the last five years and better access to private transport for a majority of residents[14]. When you first enter Sidomukti village from the most Western end or middle slope access road[15], the most striking feature is the two deep, narrow valleys forested with towering pine trees that dominate the landscape before you enter the village boundaries. At the bottom of the second valley you enter Sidomukti village and as you reach the top of the steep hill coming out of the second valley the landscape changes as you enter a small hamlet settlement surrounded by productive farming land. This landscape pattern of hamlets surrounded by farming land is similar for most of the Sidomukti village area.

In the Eastern highland or upper slope region of Sidomukti, the land is largely planted with vegetables or tobacco crops (dependent on the season) as far as the eye can see. Until road improvements were made in 2018, access to the most Eastern end of the village was treacherous in wet season due to uneven road infrastructure and the topography of the landscape where landslides remain common in the steep valleys in the upper and middle slope regions of the village. If you travel West down the mountain slope the landscape begins to change. Farming land is planted with household food and tobacco crops, broken up with stands of fruit or hardwood trees and there are small shops selling everyday goods and motorbike repair shops on the side of the village roads. As of 2018, seventy per cent of the village roads had been sealed with bitumen[16], one of the outcomes of village development efforts since the election of a new village head in 2013.

Hamlet settlements in general have single level modest dwellings, increasingly made of brick with tiled rooves, while some houses are still constructed from thin timbers (*papan*) with dirt floors. One feature generally absent is large elaborate houses, either new or more longstanding, that might indicate significant wealth of some residents. There are several

[14] The increased access to private motorbikes on a credit scheme basis has significantly increased mobility for the majority of villagers. This rapid rise in private motorbike ownership began in around 2010.
[15] There is a third access road from the Salatiga-Magelang highway that allows access to the highest eastern end of the village.
[16] Interview with Mulyono, the Village head, 13 November 2016.

substantial houses across the 22 hamlets belonging to better off residents, mainly the homes of former or currently serving publics servants such as teachers, some farmers with slightly larger landholdings[17], or residents who are successful livestock and agricultural traders[18].

Land and privilege under the New Order

In regions such as Sidomukti village, where land was not seized for plantations or forestry during the New Order, agrarian policy tended to privilege village officials and their families (Billah 1984) as they became the main entry point for development programs. In Sidomukti, village officials became the main beneficiaries of technical assistance programs aimed at increasing agricultural production. Here however, village officials did not pursue these technologies as an immediate means to expand their rural capital, rather they hoped to facilitate the introduction of new agricultural methods and technologies they thought could be of benefit to other village members[19]. As we shall see later the interest and willingness of residents to engage with programs since this time has been mixed.

The village government encouraged resident smallholders organised in neighbourhood and hamlet based groups to adopt the agrarian modernisation policy, introducing chemical fertilisers and pesticides. While the application of these new methods did increase harvests for a time, it created significant medium to longer term problems for many small farmers. Increasing costs of production were not matched by improved prices for harvests as farmers relied on local middlemen to get their produce to market. Over time, greater quantities of chemical fertilisers were required to maintain production levels, and prices were constantly rising. Reduced seed diversity made crops less resistant to pests over time. Skills in producing local seedling varieties were lost for a time in some hamlets as these programs prioritised new seed varieties which had to be bought. New pests emerged, the costs of pesticides increased and farmers became locked in to a cycle of increasing chemical inputs and pesticides to achieve reasonable crop harvests[20]. The longer term

[17] These are areas of between half a hectare and one and a half hectares.
[18] Interviews with Atmo 4 December 2016, Bagas 5 January 2017 and Yatman 19 January 2019.
[19] Discussions with Daliman and Marto 6 January 2017. Today it is still the family of Daliman, former village financial administrator (KAUR) of 42 years, that facilitate technical assistance programs such as biogas. These programs are now brokered through university projects such as the MercuBuana project in Dayugo hamlet in late 2017 but have not been taken up by local residents (Field journal October 2017).
[20] Interview with Sutardi 25 January 2017, Sabar 5 January 2017 and Marto 18 November 2016.

consequences of the dependence on chemical inputs has been declines in soil fertility, a factor further exacerbated by the character of dryland agriculture. Overall the green revolution policies did not produce significant improvements in prosperity for this village, nor were there opportunities to expand production to new land areas for farming as there had been in earlier periods.

Ideas of progress and development promoted during the New Order period inspired the more privileged members of this village to educate their children, and those of relatives, to become teachers and other types of public servants, as a means to secure better social and economic futures and to provide service to their local communities[21]. They did not aspire to significant accumulation through working the land and further land acquisition. Some of their wealth was used to build houses for other family members and they made loans to neighbouring residents[22], providing some measure of social security to some of the poorer village members[23]. Some of their children became public servants or work actively as farmers and traders without the apparent characteristics of a landlord or lender class that leave others to labour while they use their resources to further accumulation.

Patterns of limited social differentiation and culturally encoded practices that show strong traditions of household autonomy, self-reliance and anti-hierarchical attitudes are present in this village demonstrating strong correlations with literatures examining upland Southeast Asia (Scott 1990) and the Tengger highlands in East Java (Hefner 1990). While these attitudes do not automatically translate into a collective action ethos, in this village it has been the case[24]. Landholdings of village residents holding government positions (village head, deputy village head, hamlet head) have not resulted in patterns of sharp social differentiation[25] that has occurred in lowland *sawah* areas (Hart 1986). While some limited social differentiation has taken place, the everyday social interactions and relationships of

[21] Interviews with Daliman 6 December 2016, Mulyono 7 December 2017 and Yatman 19 January 2017.
[22] These loans were usually made to respond to some crisis that a family was experiencing and would often never be repaid or repaid only in part.
[23] Interview with Daliman 6 December 2016.
[24] The origins of this ethos or value system is not clear, however it has long term roots in local cultures and is referred to consistently by research informants in this chapter and chapter six.
[25] Prior to *reformasi* there were only two or three village officials who had rights to village salary lands (*tanah bengkok*). These rights only apply for the period of service plus another period of five years as a form of pension payment. Since 2014 village officials have rights to some village salary land and a cash wage from the village budget.

mutual inter-dependence that are also influenced by local cultural practices have restricted significant social or class polarisation both materially and culturally[26]. Most village residents still own or have secure access to some farming land, either farming their own land, *tanah bengkok* land, or sometimes renting the land of other residents[27]. This observed picture of limited social and class differentiation was confirmed by informants. Pak Sutardi, an older resident in his 70s,[28] explicitly rejected any suggestion of a landlord class in Sidomukti's local history[29].

Shifts away from the village (and back again)

From the 1980s, schools promoted the idea that young people should aspire to make lives away from the village earning money in factories or other urban employment as a way to improve their prospects because farming was not something that was worthwhile pursuing.

> Lots of people said… don't become a farmer like your parents, get a qualification. I went to school at 6 years [old] so I never knew going to the field after that. People thought it would mean our lives would get better if we left the village [and went to the city] but most people that I know [eventually] came back, not all, but most (Bagas, 28 years old, 18 November 2016).

It was during the 1980s that youth from ordinary families with some school education began to leave the village and pursue work opportunities in the cities or to join transmigration programs because employment prospects, and access to land beyond that owned by their parents were limited. A handful of residents looked for opportunities to work overseas. While some individuals successfully migrated to islands outside of Java or to the cities during this period, the majority would return home after a period of years, often when they planned to marry and start a family[30]. The economic crisis of the late 1990s dampened the enthusiasm of some young people to adventure far from home (*merantau*) and since *reformasi* the majority who have worked for a time away from their village subsequently returned. Moving away did not provide greater financial security in the

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[26] See chapter six as well as Wiradi 1984, p289.
[27] In most cases there is a 50-50 share in harvest between landholder and the farmer with costs also shared on a 50-50 basis.
[28] He was labelled as a communist at the time of the 1965 mass violence and has a good understanding of social stratification, class politics and landlordism.
[29] Interview with Sutardi 25 January 2017.
[30] Interviews with Atik 26 January 2017, Mulyono 11 November 2016, Yahmi 10 November 2016 and Bagas 26 January 2017.

medium to longer term[31]. Some young people were asked to return to help their families or take on leadership roles in the village, others simply preferred village life.

> I finished primary school then I went off to get some work. I did lots of things, learnt a lot about [different kinds of] people… it was different and exciting… then I saw the example of my younger brother who stayed at home and helped my parents... I realised that I should be following his example… I should be contributing [to the community] … I missed the village atmosphere and everyday life in the village. So I went home. (Sabar 5 January 2017).
> I was asked to come back to serve [the community]. After I finished school I worked in Jakarta as a coolie in a textile factory. [The] experience was fine but there [the future] was more of the same [*gitu-gitu saja*] … being here [in my village] was more important… I went home and I was elected as a hamlet head… I was 20 years [old] (Mulyono, current village head 13 November 2016).

Reproductive strategies of smallholders post-reformasi

The Magelang district presents a contemporary example of a regional political economy that has consolidated certain spaces for agricultural petty commodity production. Data for the Magelang district shows that in 2017 this region remains strongly agricultural with a significant portion of the population working in agriculture and agriculture related industries. In part this reflects the topography of the region which is varied, but is dominated by sloping lands as it is surrounded by five mountains of Merapi, Merbabu, Andong, Telomoyo and Menoreh. Flat land covers 8,599 hectares of the district while *very* steep land covers 14,155 hectares of the district. A further 85,821 hectares is recorded as steep or hilly land[32]. The strategic plan for the Magelang district 2018[33] outlines that this topography along with good groundwater supplies, high rainfall and reasonable soil fertility, provide conducive conditions for the development of agriculture, plantations and tourism and these are prioritised in the district's central planning. Statistics on employment by sector show that in 2017 34.52% of the working population are employed in agriculture, 18.12% in industry, 21.34 in trade and accommodation, 12.9% in services and 13.11% in other employment (Diskominfo Kabupaten Magelang 2018). Thus agriculture remains the primary source of livelihood for the largest sector of the population.

In the upper slopes of this village, farming has remained the primary source of income and employment and in some hamlets 99 per cent of families are farming

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[31] Interview with Atik 26 January 2017, Mulyono 11 November 2016 and Sabar 5 January 2017.
[32] Data is taken from the the Office of the Bupati Magelang, Central Java in the report accompanying the release of the Regulations of the Office of the Bupati, "Peraturan Bupati Magelang Nomor 18 Tahun 2017 tentang Rencana Kerja Pemerintah Daerah Kabupaten Magelang Tahun 2018".
[33] See footnote 32.

households[34]. Good soil conditions,[35] access to larger land areas, strong agrarian culture, knowledge and traditions as well as women's active participation in agricultural production have ensured that young people learn farming skills from an early age. In several hamlets in the lower slopes of the village, the impact of children commencing school from an early age has had a significant influence on the decline in agricultural skills for people in their 30s and 40s. Pak Sutardi[36] said that women waiting on children at schools saw many women move away from direct involvement in agriculture and into more household domestic activities related to childrearing. Declining soil fertility, women working principally in the reproductive sphere and rarely in agricultural production, rising urban/material aspirations, the loss of agrarian skills and knowledge combined with circular migration patterns, has resulted in many residents in several of the lower slope hamlets pursuing non-farm employment in addition to farming[37]. In four lower slope hamlets up to 40 per cent of residents rely on non-farm incomes for family incomes while retaining their smallholdings. At the same time, when residents' main source of income is not through farm work, they do not sell their land. Some plant hardwood trees which can be harvested for sale as mature trees while others rent their land to residents who are able to farm more land than they own.

Upper slopes

The majority of upper slope hamlet residents work actively on their smallholdings and farming provides their main source of cash income. Until the year 2000, the majority of smallholders had only two planting seasons during the year, alternately planting corn and tobacco. From the year 2000, some farmers tried chilli plants as the price of tobacco became increasingly unreliable and chilli cultivation programs were promoted by the agricultural department[38]. Simultaneously, some farmers began to use intercropping principles (*tumpang sari*[39]), planting several crops with different harvest times

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[34] Interviews with Sabar 5 January 2017, Yatman 19 January 2017, Atmo 4 December 2016 and Budi 7 January 2017.

[35] All residents with whom I discussed questions of environment and conditions for agriculture with reported that soil fertility is an ever present issue and in some places in crisis.

[36] Interview 25 January 2017.

[37] Discussions with Bagas and Sutardi 18 November, Mulyono 11 November 2016, Sabar 5 January 2017 and Trisno 26 January 2017. Also field journal 2016-17.

[38] Discussion with Yatman 6 January 2017 and Totok 4 December 2016.

[39] *Tumpang sari* here was defined by informants as a system of multiple cropping or polyculture. Here land is planted with two or more varieties of plants simultaneously, usually with one crop having a shorter harvest period than what is referred to as the principal crop. The benefits of this system are financial, subsistence and if applied appropriately can have benefits for maintaining soil fertility. In some academic literatures (Hart

simultaneously, meaning that harvest periods and incomes from the sale of crops became more regular and reliable. In Tanirejo hamlet[40] most farmers have 2-4 blocks (*petak*) of fertile farming land[41] and they farm them on a rotational basis, so there is always work to be done preparing the land, planting crops, controlling pests, weeding and harvesting. Before chilli plants became popular people used to work a half day but now they work full days. Because there is so much work to be done most do not keep livestock such as cows, while raising livestock is very common in other hamlets not engaged in farming as their only source of income[42].

In the upper slopes, women and men are active farmers and the family is the main production unit. Some work only on their own land, while others work their own small plots and as labourers on other people's smallholdings. Where women are directly involved as producers, children experience agrarian life directly in the fields and learn farming skills from the time they are small. In the higher slopes of the village young people are skilled using hand hoes, the main tool used for preparing land. Farming is understood as culturally valued work and many children aspire to become farmers.

In these upper slope hamlets, the structural organisation of agriculture, particularly with respect to how farmers obtain finance and market access is important in farmers' success. Relationships with local agricultural traders (*bakul*) from both inside and outside of this village are now important for sustaining agriculture[43]. These traders lend money to farmers at the beginning of planting season to assist in paying the cost of production. They do not behave like commercial moneylenders, their credit is affordable, the repayment

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1986) the term *tumpang sari* is used to refer to the system of sharecropping where there are agricultural labourers who farm land owned by plantations and are permitted to plant subsistence crops beneath commercial crops for their domestic use.

[40] One hamlet with 60 families. There are oral histories of 'waste land' being opened up for farming here between the 1930s and 1960s.

[41] Blocks of land are measured by how many chilli plants you can grow there. One block of land that could hold 1500 chilli plants is about 600-700m2, therefore 4 blocks is equivalent to nearly 3000m2 or 0.3ha. Sabar (interview 13 January 2017) provided data that 2 blocks of land produce an average income of about Rp10 million per year (approximately US$750). It should be noted here that cash incomes are not an accurate reflection of household prosperity as most households produce a significant proportion of their own food and 'trade' foodstuffs (for example vegetables for tofu or tempeh), some produce including their own eggs and raise goats or cows for food and as additional sources of income. Expenditures do not include water supplies which are organised and maintained by hamlet groups. The main expenditure of individual families are education expenses for their children and transport. Household contributions to local celebrations (*hajatan*) in general in this village are made in the form of agricultural produce not cash. Field notes 2016-2017.

[42] Discussion with Sabar 13 January 2017.

[43] Discussion with Yatman and Sabar 6 January 2017.

schedule is flexible and there is mutual trust. There are two different kinds of agreement that are applied in determining price that will be paid by these *bakul* at harvest time[44]. The first is that a *bakul* will pay 10% below market price per kilo. The second, if the market price is above Rp 10,000 per kilo then the *bakul* will pay Rp 1000 per kilo less than the market price. If the market price is below Rp 10,000 per kilo the bakul will pay Rp 500 below the market price per kilo. This payment to the *bakul* is in addition to the farmer repaying the original sum borrowed. If the harvest fails or the harvest price does not cover the costs of production the *bakul* will usually still loan funds for the following planting season. In general, relations with the *bakul* are good because farmers have a choice of *bakul* that they will sell their produce to and the *bakul* needs guaranteed supply of produce[45].

If the harvest fails or the market price falls and sale price is lower than the cost of production, the debt is sometimes wiped or agreements are made to pay off loans over time. These agreements are not available to everyone but are made between traders and smallholders who are considered reliable and 'good risk'[46]. In other cases, there is cooperation between small farmers and middle farmers who have capital within the village who work on a principle of shared risk, one side providing land and the other labour while production costs are shared.

Hamlet based farmers' groups are active in the upper slopes providing important forums for skill sharing and as a forum for communication of information relevant to their world of agricultural work. A new village resident since 2015 who married a local woman said,

> I'd never farmed before. I had no idea about how [to farm]. My wife's family gave us some land so I had to learn fast. My neighbours have helped (me) a lot… (about) how to grow good seedlings, how to prepare the soil using a hoe…if I have a problem I stop for a chat with my neighbour or hang out at Yatman's house[47]… someone always has some good advice…. Living like this makes me happy (Tarto[48], 28, 19 January 2019.

[44] These agreements are dependent on negotiations between bakul and farmer.
[45] Interview with Soleh 21 August 2019.
[46] Discussion with Sabar 7 January 2017.
[47] Yatman is the hamlet head in Tanirejo.
[48] Tarto was raised in Jakarta, worked as a day labourer after finishing school and is now a resident farmer in Tanirejo after marrying a local woman. Tarto's parents-in-law received support from their hamlet community to renovate their house in 2018. Prior to this their house was made of thin timbers with a dirt floor. Water was

In Tanirejo and Tanimaju hamlets, collective labour teams carry out heavy agricultural work of hoeing and preparing soil for planting on a rotational basis[49]. The work teams from Tanimaju also work as teams in other villages carrying out agricultural labour as a group for wages.

There are sub-district and district farmers' groups that provide opportunities for hamlet based farmers' groups to access funding for various agricultural programs but farmers in Tanirejo and Tanimaju said they were not interested.

> Getting involved in district group projects seeking funding only lead to chaos… it's led by well-known individuals from outside [our village] who want to enrich themselves (*hasil bantuan dimakan sendiri*) (Sabar 6 January 2017*)*.

In Tanimaju, a women's group[50] was formed under an initiative by the district head (*Bupati*[51]) and supported by the village head in 2014. The initial funds of Rp43 million rupiah were used by the group to begin a seedling program and to start farming organic beetroot, to purchase goats for animal husbandry and some funding was allocated to establish a kitchen garden at the local school (in an adjacent hamlet). Since then the women's groups in Tanimaju has become self-sustaining financially, returning capital investment, generating income for the women's group for future investment and some income for individual members who carry out the routine tasks. As of 2019, the animal husbandry enterprise, organic beets and seedling program remain successful. The seedling program has continued to expand providing important horticultural services to other local farmers in the wider village and in the process collectivising the production of a key element in farming.

For farmers in the upper slopes, the shift to planting chillies and the adoption of a *tumpang sari* (intercropping) system of planting has resulted in more regular cash incomes. Greater access to and use of (affordable) small-scale technological advances such as electric pesticide sprayers have assisted productivity. Smallholders work much longer hours than

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available in their house but there is no plumbing and washing is carried out outside or on the dirt floor of a side room of the house where cooking is done.

[49] Where there is mutual cooperation in hoeing land, residents are paid a nominal wage for a half or full day of hoeing. This is done more as a system of accounting to ensure that there is equity in these labour arrangements. In practice not all of these agreements involve the payment of cash wages but are exchanged for labour in return at a future time.

[50] See chapter six for a more detailed examination of this women farmers' group.

[51] The funds to initiate a women's group in this hamlet were offered by the Bupati Zainal Arifin in thanks for the 100% voting record of residents for him in this hamlet.

they did prior to *reformasi* on the same plots of land but with more diverse and overall greater yields and higher cash incomes[52]. At the same time soil fertility continues to decline. This is a long term trend and while not yet at critical levels is something that smallholders are aware needs to be addressed if they are to be able to farm securely in the long term. They are aware that they make trade-offs against their local environment when they use even small amounts of pesticides and chemical inputs. Some continue to try to innovate with new methods that work at reducing dependency on these and working towards organic production.

The other significant challenge for smallholders is the significant market fluctuations for agricultural produce. One planting season they may make a profit and the next planting season they may make a big loss if the market price drops. A number of smallholders in Tanirejo hamlet understand the potential benefits of some form of collectivisation of production, cooperating in decision-making over what crops to plant, and when to plant and harvest in order to overcome the problems of periodic fluctuations in market price. However, there are two main obstacles to achieving this. The first is the problem of risk for smallholders with limited capital who are generally risk averse as they are afraid of incurring debts that come with planting higher-risk crops such as tobacco and chillies. The second is the mindset that some farmers will take advantage of other people's hard work and won't put in a big effort if they collectivise some aspects of production[53].

Lower slopes

In several lower slopes hamlets, young people rarely have the same agricultural skills as their upper slope counterparts and are less optimistic about their farming prospects. According to one youth leader in the lower slopes,

> We were not taken to the fields [as children] … there are neighbours [who] worked in other employment so [we] knew there were other options [to farming] … Our parents had aspirations… we go to school and get a better life through getting [factory] jobs. We thought if we finished school we could work straight away and get money... if we followed our parents we got no money (Bagas 3 June 2016).
>
> …Farmers work involves so much waiting (*Tani = ngenteni*). So after you plant you have to wait. While you are waiting how do you live? … the soil

[52] Yatman 19 January 2017, Budi 7 January 2017 and Sabar 7 January 2017.
[53] Interview with Yatman 7 January 2017.

> quality is so poor now… we are trying to imagine some solutions but it will have to be for the long term (Bagas 6 June 2016).

The main challenges for lower slope residents is poor soil quality and the volatility in crop price. Cycles of debt have led many to cease farming and here raising cows and goats and selling manure from their livestock, or working as building labourers, has provided lifesaving incomes for residents when other work is scarce[54]. Up to 40 per cent of residents in four of the larger lower Western slope hamlets no longer work principally as smallholder farmers while residents in several other hamlets combine farming with non-farming work. They are engaged locally in other work related to agriculture, trading farming supplies, fertilisers and tobacco, producing stakes and harvest baskets made from bamboo, as timber workers, builders or labourers for individual families or on projects, as seedling producers and as farmer-labourers. Some are engaged in raising livestock such as goats or cows or work as as plywood factory workers, village public servants[55] or as teachers[56]. Other residents run small shops from their houses or on the village roadside, some run small mechanic workshops or make steel trelliswork.

Tanimantep hamlet in the lower slopes retains strongly agrarian collectivist traditions, despite not relying only on farming their own smallholdings for their livelihoods. The farmers in this hamlet are considered highly skilled in agricultural[57] and building work. As well as farming their own land, they work as day labourers hoeing land for other farmers or building houses outside their own hamlet which provides their main source of cash income. Being highly skilled in hoeing provides them with higher income rates for daily labouring[58] than other labouring such as building. Like other lower slope villages, soil fertility is a problem in this hamlet. Most farmers here only grow low-risk crops, that is crops with low costs of production, as they are not prepared to risk indebtedness. This approach of minimising risk is the case for many smallholders in the lower slopes.

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[54] Interview with Sutardi 3 June 2016.

[55] Government administrative officers are now selected through an official recruitment process.

[56] Many teachers (with bachelor degrees) work as honorary teachers (*guru honorer*) in local state schools or pre-schools and are paid only a small sum for transport or a small contribution from parents (Discussion with Nur 8 November 2016).

[57] Skilled agrarian labour is increasingly scarce and day rates for their labour can be higher than building worker rates (Totok 4 December 2016 and Bagas 18 November 2016).

[58] In 2016 they might be paid Rp 80,000-90,000 per day for hoeing and Rp 60,000-70,000 per day for building work. In addition, they are provided with meals, drinks and snacks and sometimes agricultural produce.

> I have [a reasonable amount of] land but I grow hardwood trees… I don't farm. I rely on my skills as a builder to get work and support my family… a lot of people ask me to do work for them… it's more secure work, there's no risk… harvesting the trees every few years means we have savings (Trisno 26 January 2016).

When hamlet based farmers' groups obtain small grant funds to provide stimulus to innovate or try new crop types, many smallholders in lower slope hamlets will participate at the outset as a group activity, but after project funds are exhausted will return to their previous low-risk approaches. Some middle income farmers explain this saying that these farmers are not prepared to work hard or lack initiative or creativity. Other middle income farmers from the upper slopes explain this in terms similar to Scott's (1976)[59] safety first principle, where "Farmers who never have much (land or capital) won't take risks with new crops or ways they aren't familiar with" (Yatman 7 January 2017). A successful subsistence (vegetable) crop more or less guarantees their family's food supply and some small but certain cash incomes, while cash crops with higher costs of production such as chillies do not. This doesn't imply conservative social attitudes but a real consideration of the risks and opportunities of planting different crops. Many of these smallholders believe they have limited employment alternatives so there are no backup plans if speculative calculations do not pay off. Where smallholders continue to plant subsistence rather than commercial crops they prioritise meeting basic needs and customary obligations. While they have smaller cash incomes they feel they have a more secure existence. Their bottom line is that they do not engage in risk activities that could lead to the loss of their land.

Gotong-royong or collective labour arrangements are still a strong part of most hamlets' social existence, however how these gotong-royong arrangements are made concrete in each hamlet is different. A recent government grant to improve housing for 13 residents[60] in Tanimantep hamlet involved all 38 hamlet families in providing social labour to carry out the renovations. The hamlet residents' meeting made this decision in collaboration with the village head[61]. The voluntary collective labour made the renovations

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[59] "In the choice of seeds and techniques, the cultivator prefers to minimise the probability of having a disaster rather than maximising his average return (Scott 1976, 17-18)".

[60] This grant was approved directly by the District head (Bupati) after being lobbied by the village head. 100% of residents voted for the Bupati and this was in part recognition of their support and part acknowledgement of their genuine need for improved housing.

[61] The decision about how to allocate and expend funds is made by the hamlet residents' meeting but must be approved by the village head to ensure financial accountability and reporting to government meet approved standards. District regulations are not always applied if the hamlet residents and village head agree that they

funds available for materials stretch significantly further while also making a contribution to hamlet cash funds for future collective social benefit. Residents voluntarily worked on this renovation work for several months without cash payment, something that residents in other hamlets would be unwilling to commit to.

Smallholders' cash incomes are greater than 20 years ago but their 'needs' are also greater. Transport infrastructure, access to private motorbikes and for a few people cars, has improved people's access to markets as well as the ability to communicate with people outside of their villages in varied social forums. At the same time, the purchase of private vehicles has increased debt and other routine expenditures required to service their improved mobility[62]. For some residents their desire to demonstrate their prestige or rising social mobility has also influenced people's spending, while others retain very modest lifestyles.

Perceptions of whether life has improved for many residents appear strongly related to what they value[63]. Many residents are pleased that food and nutritional variety are better than twenty years ago. In the upper and lower slopes, residents with families say that they need to work longer hours than before and there is less time for sport and cultural activities. They do not feel that life is better but they are still surviving[64]. Some say they have more money than they had before but it's not worth as much, or that it's easier to earn money but their family needs are greater than they ever were before[65]. Some say that their incomes and consumption choices have increased (relatively) but they are not sure that their lives are greatly better than in the past[66]. In the past people said that their 'needs' were more limited. For example they 'didn't have any idea about owning a motorbike[67]'.

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can meet their financial accountabilities but hamlet residents want to decide themselves how the money is best spent.

[62] For example, ten years ago at *lebaran* celebrations only one dish in a household may have meat – now this has increased to almost all dishes having meat. Field diary notes 27 June 2017.

[63] Field notes 2016-2017.

[64] Discussion with Trisno (26 January 2017), a lower slopes resident who works as a skilled builder or a labourer when there is no other work.

[65] Discussion with Budi (7 January 2017), a smallholder farmer and hamlet head in a majority farmer hamlet in the upper slopes.

[66] Discussion with Budi 7 January 2017.

[67] Discussion Yatman 19 January 2017.

Summary profile of Sidomukti village

The local political economy that developed in this region during the colonial period resulted in secure land access for smallholders. While the colonial state was able to secure some tax revenues in these more peripheral regions of the state, access to land by all residents and the making of social relations by these local actors has had the effect of constraining processes of social and class differentiation. Their peripheral status viz a viz the state however, did not significantly inhibit their access to markets and for many smallholders, the production and trade of tobacco as a commodity crop ensured they participated in some part in the capitalist economy, while they continued to produce for subsistence needs through planting maize crops.

The modernisation programs of the New Order period had various effects. The expansion of schools and the adoption of new educational curriculums promoted non-smallholder farming futures for young rural people encouraging them to migrate to other islands to work on plantations, or to the cities where industrial work opportunities were expanding in the 1980s and 1990s. Meanwhile, the agricultural modernisation plans of the New Order state left ecological systems on many rain fed farming lands greatly depleted. For residents with greater access to land and more secure cash incomes, employment as village officers, teachers or bank officers has been the principal strategy for achieving greater social security not land accumulation. In the lower slopes, Family Prosperity and Empowerment (*Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga*) programs that encouraged women to work in the domestic sphere often at the expense of agricultural production, influenced some residents' choices over whether to continue to farm or seek other sources of livelihoods. Children were encouraged to seek alternative employment options and were discouraged from participating in agriculture from an early age.

After the 1997 economic crisis, fewer young people have left their village permanently. However, the loss of agricultural skills, and uncertainty in secure incomes for agriculture for younger generations has forced many to diversify livelihood strategies while maintaining their position of land ownership as a form of social security in the first instance. Examination of village residents' relationships to land and their social relations of production, shows that smallholders working as farmers and other petty commodity producers are dependent on markets in significant ways in their social relations of

production. In upper and some mid slope hamlets where agriculture remains the principal source of livelihoods for residents, particular cultural strategies of mutual cooperation have been important for residents that have been able to continue to make successful livelihoods in agriculture.

4.3 Section two: Village politics and popular organisation

Impacts of the 1965-66 mass violence and the centralised New Order state

The dynamics of the exercise of power by successive state regimes, the social relations that underpin them and the conflicts that are present at the time of regime change, all contribute to shifts and changes in local constellations of power. The mass violence of 1965-66 'resolved' conflicts that had been intensifying since independence in favour of elite social groups that could be accommodated within the newly emerging power block, largely at the expense of subaltern groups (Hadiz 2006; (on upland East Java) Hefner 1990, 208-9). In regions where mass killings physically annihilated leadership groups of the PKI and broader institutions of popular social organisation, this led decisively to significant ruptures in constellations of social power. However, in some regional political economies, where party allegiances did not reflect deep structural inequalities and conflicts over land and power, differences were rather in generational ideas and approaches to organisation of social and political life and patterns of violence appear differently.

Voting patterns in the uplands of Central Java in the 1950s indicate that the region was strongly *abangan*[68], largely voting for the Indonesia Nationalist Party (*Partai Nasional Indonesia – PNI*) and the PKI in the 1955 national and 1957 provincial and district elections[69]. Sidomukti village residents' demonstrated these same voting patterns[70], with older residents tending to vote PNI while younger residents were more interested in the PKI and its affiliated organisations *Pemuda Rakyat* and *Barisan Tani* Nasional[71]. The PKI was the

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[68] See Ricklefs 2012, p235. In the 1980s, the establishment of a *pesantren* in the next sub-district down the mountain slope from the village built strong cultural links with the abangan-kejawen majority. This is affirmed by resident accounts. Interview with Atmo and Parto 4 December 2016.
[69] For results of the 1957 provincial elections in Central Java see Wertheim 1969, p135.
[70] Discussions with Daliman 7 January 2017 and Sutardi 25 January 2017.
[71] Based on discussions with Sidomukti residents, in particular with Sutardi, Daliman and Atmo. Patterns of party allegiances documented in the Tengger highland areas of East Java during the 1950s are similar in the highland regions of Merbabu mountain.

most active political party in this rural region and their mass meeting events were popularly attended[72]. Prior to 1965 many young people were active in attending political party meetings especially those organised by the PKI or their affiliated groups.

In the mass violence that followed the 1st October 1965, sixty per cent of Sidomukti village residents were formally branded (*dicap*) as communists and assigned political prisoner (Ex-TAPOL) status. In reality only a handful of residents held official membership. There was pressure to identify the leaders of local groups with political affiliations, but bonds of kinship and extended family relations allowed residents declared 'clean' to protect their family members labelled communists, and only two people in this village were killed[73].

> Sixty per cent of the villagers were labelled as communists after Gestok[74]... The village head was the only village official to keep his public position after 1965… the others[75] were labelled as communists and banned from holding public office. I was asked if I was communist too … I said I was nationalist… I wasn't really political… then I was asked to be one of two deputy village heads… I refused but they insisted I must. I tried many times to step down from this position but every time I was told I couldn't do that… In the end I held that position for 39 years… if it [Gestok] didn't happen I wouldn't have had a life like this" (gesturing to his simple yet comfortable home and modest chattels) (Daliman 5 January 2017).

The sub-district in which Sidomukti is situated was a strong base of *PKI* affiliated groups, in particular *Barisan Tani Indonesia (BTI),* but the majority of those accused of being communists became 'non-political' post-1965. While the majority of village members branded as communist chose consciously to 'not be political' (*tidak berpolitik*) after 1965, this reflected their lack of partisan commitment to the PKI as a party rather than any change in their fundamental ideas. By the early 1970s, some were willing to step forward and participate formally in village organisations again. Pak Sutardi, a local left wing leader who had been an active member of People's Youth (*Pemuda Rakyat)* in 1965 was encouraged by village officials and extended family members to join Golkar in the early 1970s so that they could involve him as a greater neighbourhood (*rukun warga*) head and participate in village government. Actions of this type were sanctioned by the village head and his PKI status essentially became a non-issue from thereon. While most accused communists consciously

[72] Discussion with Sutardi 25 January 2017. See chapter six for more discussion of this.
[73] Discussion with Sutardi 25 January 2017.
[74] The events of the 1 October 1965.
[75] Other village officials and hamlet heads.

chose to leave their 'party politics' behind, they retained their political ideas, developing strong and comprehensive criticisms of the New Order regime which many would pass on to their children[76].

Pak Gatot served as Sidomukti village head from 1940 to the mid-1970s holding the position from the final period of Dutch colonial rule, through Japanese occupation, the Dutch aggression of the mid to late 1940s, independence, 1965 and the first nearly ten years of the New Order. The subsequent village head Sutoto, 'elected' in 1975, was highly unpopular but according to village members, the structures of village organisation developed by village and hamlet leaders during the Gatot period were well established and there were no significant changes or negative impacts from this period[77].

From the mid 1970s, village governments generally were increasingly brought under the strict direction of the highly centralised New Order state (Bebbington et al 2004; Hefner 1990). The 1979 Village Law No. 5 implemented by the New Order, legislated for the formal repression of local forms of organisation, a process that had begun in the mid to late 1960s. Here the village government became responsible for the administration of top-down national development programs.

In contrast to village administrative boundaries drawn and redrawn by successive government regimes, rural hamlets (*dusun*) more often represent organically formed settlements, separated geographically from other hamlets by fields, rivers, forests or land cleavages (Bebbington et al. 2006). The historical formation of these settlements and the social dynamics that have developed within respective hamlets have different local characteristics. Under the New Order, these hamlets were brought more strictly under the control of the central village administration but with great variation in how local hamlet leaders would exercise their authority during that period. According to local residents, hamlet and smaller and greater neighbourhood organisations (RT/RW), as well as the position of hamlet head were in practice the most important units of social organisation in people's everyday lives. Meanwhile, village-wide institutions such as the village women's or

[76] Interviews with Pak Sutardi 25 January 2017, Budi 26 January 2016 and Atmo 4 December 2016.
[77] Discussion with Pak Sutardi 25 January 2017.

youth groups, instituted under the direction of centralised government were not popularly supported.

During the New Order period residents would formally vote for Golkar in national elections. However, by the late 1990s, residents found it easier to openly articulate political views that ran counter to official government views. In contrast to rural villages where campaigns for regime change in the late 1990s were led by local elites (Breman and Wiradi 2002; Hart and Peluso 2005), some young people in the upper slope hamlets would follow their families' strong nationalist pro-*rakyat* traditions by joining the Mega-Bintang[78] opposition PDI in 1997. They were subsequently questioned by the village head, other village officials and a district Golkar leader about their involvement. A village elder was summoned to the sub-district police command to be questioned about his involvement in the PDI-Mega group but the matter was taken no further. In the 1999 national elections, the first open elections since 1955, almost all Sidomukti residents voted for the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P)[79]. They thought the campaign by the PDI-P, led by Megawati, presented a pro-rakyat political platform similar to the ideas of Sukarno's Marhaenist program and they had expectations that the PDI-P would would carry through on those programs.

Village Politics since Reformasi

After the dictatorship fell, the 1979 village law was revoked and hastily replaced with new legislation (Law no. 22 of 1999). The law was introduced as a result of widespread pressure for reform and an end to authoritarian centralised control (Bebbington et al 2006)[80]. While the law focussed on provincial and district level governments, the relaxation of central control was felt most strongly at the local level here. Village head elections in Sidomukti held in 2000, resulted in the election of a young man, 25 years of age, who was an Indonesian Democratic Party – Struggle (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Perjuangan* PDI-P) activist. This was a break from the conservative Golkar affiliated candidates that had been allowed to stand during the New Order period[81].

[78] In Yogyakarta and Central Java this opposition was led by elements from the banned People's Democratic Party (*Partai Rakyat Demokratik*). Interview with Arga in Yogyakarta 3 January 2017.
[79] Interview with Atmo and Parto 4 December 2016 and Suyatmin 18 January 2017.
[80] See chapter three for analysis of structural changes.
[81] Interviews with Bagas 5 January 2017, Sutardi 25 January 2017 and Mulyono 13 November 2016.

In the early 2000s there were moves organised by groups in some hamlets to replace their hamlet heads from the New Order period who were seen as corrupt or not representative of hamlet residents' interests. In Tanirejo, in 2004, a young man of 25 years was called upon by other hamlet members to step forward and stand for the hamlet head position and to replace the incumbent who had been appointed in 1975. The young man was promoted by 90% of the hamlet members.

> They said I had a fearless character and I was strong in my mind… they said I knew how to be fair… how to include people… After I became the head we started to improve [conditions] here… In 2004 we organised water supply to people's homes… I called a traditional water diviner to find the water… we started renovating people's houses… using our own skills [and knowledge] … [residents] gathered any materials we could, bamboo, iron, some residents donated what they had. We've renovated 70% of our houses [since 2005] and we should have renovated them all in the next five years (Yatman, hamlet head in Tanirejo, 19 January 2017).

Village Leadership

National policies that promoted moves away from rural areas in Java during the New Order, whether transmigration to islands outside of Java in the 1980s, or the economic boom of the early 1990s that saw many migrate to urban centres, brought several generations in to contact with a broader world. Village members' stories indicate that since *reformasi* the patterns of village migration have often been circular. Some of the people leading hamlets today left their villages after completing school, but returned after several years away. This process expanded what Gramsci highlighted as the geographies of knowledge that are generated and exchanged between subaltern groups moving between urban and rural contexts. This has had a lasting impact on many of the people, men and women who returned to lead groups and activities in their hamlets or in the village administration[82].

> At 14 I left school, I worked for seven years…it was really hard physical work… I worked in Semarang as a babysitter for five years…then went to Kalimantan to work in a restaurant… it was good if I wanted to get some experiences… I thought it was a chance to know responsibility [before I got married] … If we are single, we have the chance to look for opportunities … After those experiences we are ready to get married… we are not young anymore and we have already learnt many life skills… (Atik 33, farmer, labourer and head of the women's group in one hamlet, 1 February 2016).

[82] Field notes 2016-2017.

Most local hamlet leaders have very modest incomes made through agriculture[83]. These hamlet leaders completed primary school and then began to farm. Many gained their first experiences in community organisation in their local performing arts groups, learning about organisation and cooperation from the time they were children. Since the election of a new village head in 2013, these young leaders have taught themselves to use computers, prepare grant applications for funding from district government, taken on leadership responsibility within their hamlet in their farmers' or performing arts groups, or taken up roles leading the establishment of a village wide youth organisation.

> I left after primary school… I learnt new things moving away. I got on well with all sorts of people… lots of new friends in the performing arts world, agriculture, people from street gangs. A friend showed me how to use computers… now I get to prepare a lot of the grant applications for the village (Sabar, 33. Deputy head of village youth group and head of Tanirejo farmers group, 5 January 2017).

Some villagers are highly engaged with political developments at the national level with detailed knowledge of government policy, from the economy to protection of the environment and its effects on village life. Local leaders and ordinary residents actively discuss local, district and national politics, national government policies for rural development and the dynamics of community change in formal and informal settings[84]. For young people, activities in the form of cultural events, are a forum for discussing political issues. Independence Day activities involve large numbers of youth each year and each hamlet brings a story or issue to the Independence Day activities. In 2016, the issues represented by different hamlets included the need for government policy that takes the side of small farmers, diversity and social inclusion (*bhinneka tunggal ika*), anti-corruption and promoting hard work and cooperation for achieving a good and rewarding life.

Residents said that their participation in politics only has significant impact up to the district level and that the outcomes of political competition at provincial or national levels make little difference to people's everyday lives. They have not witnessed any notable changes after each national election (since the New Order)[85]. Some people had hopes or

[83] Prior to 2018, hamlet heads have had access to between 0.3-0.5 ha of village lands as a form of salary payment.
[84] Field notes 2016-2017.
[85] Discussions with Mulyono 26 January 2017, Bagas 26 January 2016, Yatman 19 January 2016, Atmo and Parto 4 December 2016 and Budi 26 January 2017.

expectations that the PDI-P at a national and provincial level would be a more genuinely popular party with programs[86] that would respond to smallholder farmers' genuine needs, but this has not been the case. Pak Sutardi said that "If PDI-P is not careful in how they organise their party their votes could drop [significantly] in future [elections] (3 June 2016)."

There has been strong mobilisation of support for PDI-P candidates at all levels of government since 1999 and hamlets that achieved 100% voter support for the current Bupati have received direct funding through the Bupati's office. The current Bupati is from a neighbouring village in Pakis sub-district. He has promoted Mulyono, the village head, as the head of the sub-district village heads forum and despite Sidomukti's status as a poor village it is consistently promoted by district officials as providing an example of self-sustaining, locally led rural development in a range of district forums[87].

The dynamics and character of village leadership has changed since the beginning of *reformasi*. Informants explained that the first village head elected after the fall of the New Order, was a young 25-year-old PDI-P activist who had run (unsuccessfully) as a candidate for district government representative council in 1999. However after two terms of service residents were disappointed that he had achieved little for village residents[88]. Some residents made reference to possible misuse of funds or of having a different style of village leadership compared to Mulyono but were unwilling to openly speak ill of this previous village head. Instead, residents contrast Mulyono's leadership style with the previous head. They explain that Mulyono is very close to the people and always out meeting them, that he motivates people to lead and serve the community and that he leads by example. Discussions with ordinary residents from across eight different hamlets, as well as with hamlet and other village leaders, referred to the kind of leadership that village members expected.

> Actually the village government is steered from below not by the village head (Sutik 22 August 2018).
> Leaders should serve the community. [What that] means [is] I should fill in the paperwork so that the decisions the citizens (*warga*) make themselves get carried out smoothly… It's not quite like that yet but we should aim for that (Mulyono 25 August 2018).

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[86] Interview with Sutardi 3 June 2016, Atmo and Parto 4 December 2016 and Budi 26 January 2017.
[87] Discussions with Mulyono 26 January 2017, Bagas 26 January 2016, Yatman 19 January 2016.
[88] Interview with Joyo 5 January 2017.

> The previous village head was fine… I respect him in a lot of ways. But people expected more of him… [in contrast] this village head is more [of a leader] … he knows the people and what they need because he meets them directly… the previous one never went far from his own hamlet… a lot of people weren't happy with that (Bagas 18 November 2016).

The Village head

The village head elected in 2013 and re-elected in 2018, Mulyono, has led many new initiatives that have responded to the aspirations and wishes of members of each respective hamlet. These include road infrastructure, housing improvements, water supplies and improved support for accessing health services. Leadership in local hamlets and at village level combined with community self-organising capacities have been critical in bringing about significant improvements in local livelihoods and social welfare. This has included mobilising resources and services beyond central government programs such as the Healthy Indonesia Card (*Kartu Indonesia Sehat*[89] – KIS). Welfare programs like the national health care cards (KIS) create significant challenges for villages with largely poor residents as the number of the KIS cards allocated to the village is not adequate for those who meet the criteria. The current village government has established a village health fund to provide emergency funds for residents without coverage and developed partnerships with religious (Christian) charities to provide additional medical care for village members with serious or life-threatening illnesses[90].

Since the changes in the village law in 2014, in particular where development funds are now transferred directly to villages, the budget planning process is considered thorough and transparent by residents across the hamlets[91]. Fifty per cent of the village budget is for routine expenditures including wages and administration. The remaining funds are allocated for village development[92]. The bulk of funds are used to purchase materials with labour being coordinated through voluntary working bees (*kerja bakti*), with a local program

[89] A form of health insurance available to poor citizens who are not able to make financial contributions to the National Health Insurance Scheme (*BPJS - Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Sosial*).
[90] Interview with Yahmi, village staff responsible for social welfare programs, 26 January 2017.
[91] Discussions with Bagas 18 November 2016 and Sabar 6 January 2017.
[92] Each year a large banner is hung outside the village office with a detailed breakdown of village incomes and expenditures for all residents to inspect.

designer or supervisor being paid a wage in recognition of their skilled contribution[93]. Village funds are notoriously late in arriving in village bank accounts. As a result the village head has secured a deal with a local building supplies shop to take materials on credit early in the year to ensure that village funds will be expended before the end of the financial year.[94] When the funds arrive the building supplies shop is paid. The village head never has direct contact with village funds and relies on village staff to administer funds, reconcile budgets and report outcomes as programs are executed[95].

The village head himself is renowned for leading a simple life, not even using village funds for legitimate things like fuel for transport when he is on village business.

> The village head is popular. He comes to most hamlets several times in a month. He knows everyone and they know him. When someone dies he comes and carries them to their last resting place. His house is open to anyone any time of day if they have a problem or need some advice… I'm not sure when he [has time to] sleep (Bagas 18 November 2016).

The village head has been successful in lobbying for funds for infrastructure beyond the centrally guaranteed village funds (*dana desa*). This success in part is a result of village leadership strategies to build relationships with the district head and to support a single legislative candidate at provincial level, both of which are PDI-P members[96]. Funds successfully secured include provincial program funds to build agricultural road infrastructure (*jalan agropolitan*) in one hamlet, to fund the construction of a village policlinic and to purchase a complete gamelan set. Funds secured from the district government or the district head[97] directly include road infrastructure, water supply infrastructure, bridges which secure access for the village to outside, special road

[93] Interview with Yahmi, village staff responsible for social welfare programs, 26 January 2017. Interview with Soleh, village staff responsible for development, 22 August 2019.
[94] Any unexpended funds at the end of financial year must be returned to the central government.
[95] In the three hamlets examined more specifically, the hamlet head relies on a hamlet committee to administer and report on funds expended and does not ever handle hamlet funds directly. Interview with Yatman 5 January 2017.
[96] Interview with Soleh 22 August 2019.
[97] The district head, Zainal Arifin, is from an adjacent village and has strong local connections with many members of this village. The Magelang PDI-P branch in 2018 was engaged in a factional split and the district head was not supported by the majority of district parliament representatives. However, he was able to achieve re-election in 2018 based on mobilised support of local residents at village level across the district. Popular perceptions in this village are that the Bupati is close to the common person, understands their struggles, is not corrupt and has actively provided support to their communities.

construction for Tanimaju[98], irrigation, rehabilitation of homes and initial funding for the women farmer's group[99].

Since Mulyono was elected there has been significant improvement in the condition of road infrastructure and clean water access in hamlets that had not previously been capable of organising it themselves without external financial support. Where there has been special project financial assistance for infrastructure or housing projects the village head has encouraged voluntary cooperative labour (*gotong-royong*) to ensure the projects are realised[100]. These initiatives have been successful where hamlet leadership groups have consulted and made decisions about how they will administer funding according to their local capacities and values of mutual support. The village head's attitude is that while external financial assistance makes it easier to realise projects, the commitment and will of local residents to achieve this development is critical. It allows the resources to go further, to be available to more residents and puts management and control of the projects in residents' hands[101]. It also builds a culture of responsibility to maintain what has been built as it was produced from residents' own labour.

> If village members have already worked hard, really sweated, to build something together they appreciate it and are enthusiastic to care and maintain it… our culture has to be protected… with every right that village members have there should also be the responsibility (Mulyono 5 January 2019).

Village law No. 6/2014 and Otonomi Desa[102]

The structural changes required by the 2014 village law and subsequent national and district regulations and amendments have been implemented in Sidomukti with some local variations particularly at hamlet level. The new structure according to local village officials is three village bodies that report to the village head, being the secretariat, the hamlet representatives' forum and the technical implementers/executors body. The secretariat is comprised of the village secretary, and a financial and general administrative officer and is

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[98] This hamlet is built on a very steep incline thus standard road infrastructure is not adequate. In wet season standard road construction would literally just wash away.
[99] Data from interview with Soleh, village staff responsible for development, 22 August 2019.
[100] The current hamlet head explained that in Tanimantep the cash funds allocated per dwelling would not result in significant improvements if funds were expended on paying people to do the work (18 January 2017). The decision about how to allocate and expend funds is made by the hamlet residents' meeting.
[101] Interview with Mulyono 5 January 2019.
[102] The literal translation is village autonomy.

responsible for everyday administration. The technical implementers/executors body consists of the Village head and three section heads responsible for government administration, development and community prosperity. The village consultative council (*Badan Permusyawaratan Desa – BPD*) plays an advisory or collaborative role rather than a scrutinising role as it had done previously[103]. Some residents see this as a positive thing as it doesn't allow factional differences in village politics to block the initiatives of popularly elected village heads[104]. They acknowledge that whether this is positive or not would be dependent on the character of broader village leadership and on the capacities, ideas, priorities and leadership style of the village head and other village leaders. The number of members of the BPD is determined by district regulations based on number of village residents[105] so in this village there are 12 members of the BPD.

The Village Community Empowerment Institution (*Lembaga Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Desa – LPMD*), has responsibility for managing village development and in district regulations is positioned as a partner to the village government in carrying out its function. The LPMD propose the details of planning programs which shape budget allocations. Each hamlet makes proposals to the LPMD via the hamlet representatives' forum about their hamlet priorities. The members of the LPMD then survey and assess the proposal in each respective hamlet to assess the relative need in order to prioritise annual budget allocations and make recommendations to the full village meeting who make the final decision on the budget proposal.

The number of village officials has expanded since the period of the New Order. Today there are village officials responsible for financial administration, government administration, health and welfare, planning and general works. There are selection procedures for all of these positions, including examinations and anyone from inside or outside of the village can apply for these positions. In this village, all positions are held by

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[103] Regional autonomy laws adopted in 1999 created the framework for a village representative council (*Badan Perwakilan Desa*) to be elected by general election in each village and positioned this body as holding equal authority to the Village Head. Regulations for this process were adopted by Magelang district government in 2000. In 2004 revisions to the law changed the name of the body to the village consultative council, the members of which would be appointed after a consultative process at neighbourhood (*Rukun Warga – RW*) and hamlet level. From these consultations recommendations are made to a village level meeting where neighbourhood, hamlet and village representatives select the members of the BPD at a village wide meeting.
[104] Discussions with Bagas 18 November 2016 and Sabar 6 January 2017.
[105] 10 members per 5000 residents.

village residents. These officials have rights to benefit from the proceeds of *tanah bengkok* and have some salary paid from the annual government budget. In addition, there is a village secretary position which is a national public service appointed position. Prior to 2014, this position was filled by a public servant from outside of the village and then left vacant for a period of nearly three years. However, since 2018 this position has been filled by a Sidomukti village resident.

There are weekly meetings of all hamlet heads, the village head, village secretary, secretariat administrative staff (*Kepala urusan - KAUR*) who support the village secretary and three sections heads (*Kepala seksi – KASI*)[106] who are the operational staff responsible directly to the Village head. These meetings are forums for socialisation and management of village programs including a mechanism to discuss the issues that emerge in each respective hamlet. When the village plans its annual budget there are hamlet level planning meetings to discuss what they need and to prioritise what they need funding for.

Each hamlet has their own forum or mechanism for presenting proposals. One hamlet has a leaders' forum that includes formal hamlet representatives[107] and hamlet elders or community leaders. They hold a discussion and make proposals to a residents' meeting. These hamlet proposals are then brought to the village government meetings that involve all hamlet heads, KAUR and KASI and representatives from the women's and youth groups. Each hamlet head explains the proposals from their hamlets and how the hamlet budget planning proposals have been prioritised. The LPMD then surveys directly to each hamlet location to assess the requests and budget needs. A proposal is made by the LPMD to the full village meeting for the annual plan[108].

The current village leadership promotes the value of voluntary social service, of making a social contribution, without the expectation of individual payment[109]. The village head has promoted local leaders for hamlet heads and village structural positions (KASI and KAUR) who have previously demonstrated commitment to serve their communities without

[106] Only two village officials are women.
[107] Such as the heads of the RT (local neighbourhood) and RW (greater neighbourhood) and religious leader (Pak Kaum).
[108] This proposal is referred to as a Village development work plan (*Rencana Kerja Pembangungan Desa*) facilitated through a development plan deliberative process (*Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan*).
[109] Discussion with Sabar 5 January 2016, Bagas 18 November 2016 and Mulyono 6 January 2017.

the immediate motivation of financial reward. The values of popular participation without individual material reward reflects not only commitment to 'tradition' or local cultural values but also come from an assessment of the consequences of the previous village government. Mulyono and Bagas[110] expressed the concern that village programs should be prioritised and driven by the interests of the majority of (poor) residents and that commitment to social service is critical in achieving this[111]. If financial incentives become a motivation for better off residents to participate in village government this could shift the current dynamics of village government and divert the focus from the interests of the majority of poorer residents[112].

In 2018 and 2019[113], some hamlet leaders have undertaken studies for high school certificates so that they are able to apply for village administrative roles in the future as the new village laws requires applicants to hold proof of educational attainment. This is an initiative supported by the village government, in part a response to legislative amendments that allow non-residents to apply for village staff positions and stand as candidates for village head[114]. Residents and leaders alike are aware that these changes could potentially take control of their village out of village residents' hands, thus they are serious about securing their ongoing autonomy.

Changes in district regulations (*Peraturan Daerah – Perda*) in 2018, required the village to merge the 22 hamlets that have formed the most local social organising units of the village since they were first established, into 10 large hamlets[115]. According to residents, these amendments to the village law in 2018[116] undermine the more direct representation of village members through their geographically based hamlet structures, reorganising hamlet structures based on the number of village residents rather than historical social organisation. This was assessed as being a retrograde step in community organising and

[110] Head of the village youth group in 2016-2018, a member of the village representative council and the village company (*Badan Usaha Milik Desa - BUMDes*).
[111] Informal discussion with Mulyono and Bagas on 18 November 2016.
[112] See chapter six for further discussion of these issues.
[113] Field notes from discussions at a national independence day celebration on 22 August 2019.
[114] Discussion with Mulyono December 6 2018.
[115] The rationalisation for this from central government directives to district level government has been the pressures of budget constraints and there have been cuts to village salary budgets. Discussions with Mulyono 6 December 2018.
[116] Discussions with Mulyono 6 December 2018, Bagas 5 December 2018 and Yatman 12 January 2019.

direct representation. Therefore the village government, led decisively by the village head, decided to retain all 22 hamlet head positions and found the mechanisms to ensure that the 12 now 'unofficial' hamlet heads remain active in their previous (socially required) roles[117] and remain compensated for the work that they do in leading their hamlet communities. While the ten positions in the new legal structure are appointed by the village head, the individual hamlet heads remain elected[118]. The village head, hamlet leaders and hamlet residents argue that the hamlet head role is critical in ensuring that the interests of members of each respective hamlet (geographically distinct areas and physical communities) remain represented as well as effectively sharing the administrative burden of managing village programs and organisation.

Development in cultural perspective

Mulyono explained his ideas about development and the village's relationship with regional and national government saying,

> When the government introduces a new policy or regulation [that has big implications for our village] we don't need to resist it [in a frontal way] … but…we take care to implement these changes in ways that benefit our people and communities… [I think] we can follow and even participate in changes but [we should] not be swept away by it, we have to consider what is of benefit to us and we must have control of it…
> … this is the modern era… we can watch what others do [that we've never seen before] but don't just blindly follow… (Mulyono 11 November 2016).

What this means in practice became evident when talking to residents and local village and hamlet leaders about how they are implementing development programs and changes in the village law that impact on local administration and leadership roles. While this village is the recipient of several national programs targeted to poor residents[119], each with specific guidelines on their implementation, in practice these programs are facilitated at a local level in ways that consciously do not undermine pre-existing relations of social

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[117] Traditional roles here do not refer to a concept of a universal 'village' or 'Javanese' tradition but to the local forms of community organisation that have developed historically at local hamlet level and are considered vital in this current period of significant economic and political change.
[118] The ten large hamlet heads are included in the 22 hamlet heads.
[119] These programs are *Raskin (Beras Miskin*) a rice allocation program for poor families; *Program Keluarga Harapan* a direct cash subsidy program for very poor families targeted to support children's participation in health and education programs; *Kartu Indonesia Sehat* for poor families who cannot make their own contributions (*iuran*) in the national health insurance (*Jaminan Kesehatan Nasional*) program; and *Bantuan Langsung Tunai* a direct cash subsidy paid to very poor families in 2005, 2007 and 2013.

solidarity and local collective practices, thus they sometimes involve 'breaking' official rules or regulations[120]. Under the current village head the implementation of programs or activities is increasingly determined by hamlets themselves in collaboration with the village head.

Sidomukti residents and village officials do not make the same assumptions and categorisations of poverty (*kemiskinan*) or marginality (*kurang atau tidak mampu*) that central government initiated programs use. Principles of fair and equal support for all community members are applied, rather than government criteria that often appears arbitrary about who is 'more poor' and thus 'deserving' of financial assistance. This can in part be explained by the relative lack of difference in the economic capacity of individual households where the majority of residents have limited cash incomes.

Local hamlet leaders consider that responsibility for their own citizens is more important and of greater social value than risking the potential divisions created by differential treatment of residents that would be required in order to comply with government financial assistance programs. The most explicit example of this is the direct cash transfers (*Bantuan Langsung Tunai – BLT*) program but is also evident in the liveable housing *(rumah layak*) program and in how health care is provided. These programs allocate specific funds for a stipulated number of recipients. In the case of *BLT* program, the number allocated was not enough to cover the number of households that explicitly met government stipulated criteria, nor did the program consider the hardship experienced by all low income citizens when fuel prices rose by in 2005 and 2008. In this situation, hamlet leadership groups made the decision to distribute the funds equally for all citizens with the rationale that to do otherwise would lead to conflict within local communities.

Average cash incomes are significantly lower than the government approved minimum wages in Central Java and which were increased significantly in 2016[121]. On the

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[120] Interviews with Totok 18 January 2017, Yatman 19 January 2017, Suyatmin 4 December 2016, Budi 26 January 2017 and Yahmi 26 January 2016.

[121] The approved Minimum wage for Magelang district in 2016 was Rp 1.453.000 per month and for 2018 it is Rp1.742.00 per month. See http://disnakertrans.jatengprov.go.id/umk/daftar. Anecdotal evidence indicates that incomes in the informal sector and wages in small to medium enterprise fall far short of this new minimum wage level often below Rp 1.000.000 per month. A modest income for a smallholder farmer in Tanirejo who feels economically secure is estimated to be a minimum of Rp10 million rupiah per year. Actual incomes can vary significantly if there is a good harvest with an above average price at the time of harvest.

other hand, the values that drive the principles of hamlet based organisation have long been ones of mutual cooperation and support without discrimination and some predominantly agricultural hamlets have their own forms of positive discrimination for supporting more land poor households. In Tanirejo residents with limited land (2 *petak* or less) are given exclusive priority to work *tanah bengkok* land within their hamlet on a 50-50 crop share basis with 50% going to the resident farming the land. In Tanimaju where access to land is more evenly spread, residents take turns (*bergiliran*) to farm[122], having rights to farm for two years before another resident will take their turn.

Several village leaders criticised the outcomes of a development project funded by central government in 2015-16 to facilitate clean drinking water directly to people's houses and to conduct replanting of trees in lower slope hamlets[123]. These programs were managed by district facilitators and positioned local residents as the labour to carry out projects, not the designers, managers and facilitators. Further, there is a routine charge applied to residents who are the water recipients. The criticisms relate to the inconsistent motivation of beneficiaries to maintain the facilities and complaints by many residents that the charge did not reflect their household usage.

> If water supply initiatives are made by [central or district] government, these projects emphasise that citizens are involved in a government development program as participants not as the initiators. Sometimes people resent this… it works better (when) we manage the programs ourselves (Bagas 5 November 2017).

This is in contrast to other hamlets such as Tanirejo where efforts to secure water supply to all residents homes were initiated by local residents themselves in 2004 and then designed, managed and facilitated by the groups formed to organise the program[124]. In another case in Tanimantep, while housing improvement programs were from district government, the hamlet spent extensive time negotiating the terms of project management and expenditure of funds in collaboration with the village head[125].

Interview with Sabar 13 January 2017. It should be noted that many aspects of village members' household 'expenditures' are fulfilled with 'in kind' payments of agricultural products (Field notes 2016-2017).

[122] The practice of use of *tanah bengkok* varies across hamlets and whether the bengkok land is from the hamlet head or village bengkok lands, but generally will be 2-3 blocks where one block is 600-700m2.

[123] Field notes 2015-2106.

[124] Interview with Yatman 19 January 2017.

[125] Interview with Mulyono 5 January 2017 and Totok 18 January 2017.

4.4 Conclusion

Successive agrarian production regimes since the colonial period have underpinned the development of local political economies with regions that remain dominated by smallholder agricultural production. This case study examines the structural context in which rural smallholders have developed strategies to keep control of their smallholdings. I consider the strategies of not only smallholders that rely on agricultural production for survival, but the formation of solidarities and collective approaches by locally based village groups which support diverse livelihood strategies, including retaining access to land while relying on other non-agricultural sources of livelihoods. The evidence confirms that the constitution of social groups and the formation of social relations and solidarities here, are not based in the first instance on issues of 'class' identity (peasant, worker, trader), rather they reflect the making of lives and social relations based on place, drawing on established cultural practices of collective organisation to support their productive and reproductive strategies.

This case study demonstrates a significant correlation between subaltern actors' historical relationships to land and the social relations of power present within this local and regional political economy. The continuation of patterns of limited social differentiation in this upland smallholder region, where historically a majority of residents hold secure access to land, has had direct implications for the making of social relations in the post-New Order period. This study demonstrates that the demarcations or social boundaries between the state and society can sometimes blur, with the result of shifting power relations in favour of groups outside the state and in this case, in the favour of the majority poor.

While the mass violence of the 1965-66 period brought about the annihilation of the PKI and its affiliate organisations, the survivors of the violence were in some places reintegrated in to local village structures with their political ideas and social values intact. While these ideas were then articulated in non-partisan ways they have provided social and political legacies that inform the ideas and strategies of new younger generations of village leaders[126]. Some village residents have been successful in building branch structures of the PDI-P down to the hamlet level, indicating aspirations for political representation from local

[126] These ideas are examined in more detail in chapter six.

to national level of politics, while practical and concrete outcomes of engagement in 'party politics' for most residents have the most direct meaning or outcomes as far as the district level. While other literatures provide evidence that *Reformasi* has led to patterns of local elite domination at village level, this study reveals a number of factors that have led to quite different outcomes in this case. The dynamics of village politics here indicates that residents have popular aspirations for village leaders to initiate pro-poor social and economic development, while a new younger generation of leaders rely on traditions of collective social organisation and solidarity to strengthen the opportunities for making more socially inclusive and secure lives in their village society. In addition, this generation of young leaders has been influenced by their life experience across urban and rural places, informing how they know and understand the world and how they choose to make their lives and social relations with those around them.

The implementation of Village law no. 6/2014, has had mixed results across Indonesia. In this village, histories of local social organisation, social values and cultural practices in hamlets and villages have been drawn upon in order to take maximum advantage of the material resources now directly transferred to villages. While there are always opportunities for village leaderships to gain material benefits from these changes, there are villages where more open and accountable political cultures provide real checks and balances. While changing laws and regulations since 2004 have reduced the formal political accountabilities of the village government head in particular, there remain opportunities to strengthen popular control of village government, albeit dependent on local conditions. This case demonstrates that for subaltern actors in this local political economy, their political demands have most direct and immediate impacts at local hamlet and village and sometimes district scales. The challenge in the future is to consider how to assess the impacts of a cumulative process of many local village dynamics play out in wider regional political economies and the impacts they make at provincial and national levels. A future study that examines the wider dynamics of district politics and that captures their engagement with several villages across the district would extend our ability to respond to these questions.

Chapter 5: Agrarian movement politics from below: Batang Case Study

> … the legitimacy of who controls land can be scrutinized anew as economic and political conditions change…. land control – not just acquiring access to land but holding on to it – is an intrinsically social (and hence political) process (Li 2015, 561).

5.1 Introduction

The fall of the Suharto dictatorship in 1998, coincided with a dramatic rise in the incidence of land conflicts in Indonesia (Lucas and Warren 2003) bringing hundreds of thousands of rural subaltern actors into direct confrontation with the state and private companies over who should have access to and control over land. This chapter builds on recent scholarship that examines the development of agrarian social movements since 1998 (Lucas and Warren 2003, 2013; Peluso, Afiff and Rachman 2008; Rachman 2011) focussing specifically on the agency of landless and land poor subaltern actors[1], the subjects of these movements themselves, in their struggles to secure access to land. Unlike previous periods of mass land struggles in Indonesia, more specifically those that took place in the 1960s after the adoption of the Basic Agrarian Law 1960 (BAL), the struggles of the 21st Century take place on terrain where land's frontiers, or land's end, have been reached (Peluso and Lund 2011; Li 2014). Here, struggles to obtain access to land increasingly play out as struggles for everyday survival for subaltern actors.

Social relations of production in plantation regions, reflected in the power dynamics of village and district state institutions, have historically favoured rural elites and companies investing in rural production. In Batang district, the state at district and national levels contends with opposition groupings which at times are quietly or indirectly subversive, and at others openly confrontational. In the case study examined here, landless actors and their pro-democracy allies developed strategies aimed at shifting long established social relations of power in their local political economies, adopting cohesive strategies that relied on the

[1] The research design as explained in chapter one applied the approach of drawing directly on the experience of the principal subjects in these struggles, the landless and land poor actors themselves. This includes local land claim group leaders who Fauzi Rahman refers to as 'organic intellectuals' (2011, 10) and the members of the local groups. This approach differs somewhat from many studies of agrarian movements where the data collected for these studies has been drawn principally from activist intellectuals, NGOs and sometimes local leaders. I examine not only the courses of action taken by subaltern actors in making claims on the state, but on the broader array of actions taken by subaltern actors within their local groups.

formation of new relations of social solidarity, mass mobilisation, lobbying and legal approaches. In this study we will see that since *reformasi,* state actors and fragments of the state ally with groups outside the state, to further various agendas, sometimes with unanticipated consequences in the shape of shifting power relations in favour of groups outside the state. This chapter will show that where shifts in control over land were possible, this relied on the organised actions of landless actors and that it was not state officials nor their institutional reforms that were decisive in achieving pro-poor outcomes. While not all land case struggles in this district have secured access for actors making claims on land, several land claims representing more than one thousand families have achieved greater land security in the form of individual land title and MOU agreements with the national Forestry Department.

Geographies of knowledge and how they are generated and exchanged between subaltern and other groups moving between urban and rural contexts deserve attention here. Specifically, when we examine the conditions that precipitated the emergence of a district wide farmers' union, effectively linking locally based activists across the district with each other as well as with pro-democracy activists from the cities in the early period of *reformasi*. The uneven development of local political economies across different rural spatial contexts has influenced the formation of identities and social solidarities of subaltern actors and their interactions with multiple pro-democracy actors engaged in supporting agrarian reform since 1998. The development of social solidarities is examined here in the context of building social movement organisations of struggle, while the character of these social solidarities is examined further in chapter six.

This chapter pays close attention to the social relations of reproduction that landless actors engage in. I examine not only the phenomena of wide-spread, often fragmented, struggles of landless and land poor workers for access to land as a means of survival, but *also* their capacity to retain their access to and control over land, that is to reproduce themselves as smallholders, after they are successful in their claims. As in chapter four, the ways in which social relations of power within local political economies fragment the circumstances and experiences of the oppressed is considered more specifically in relation to subaltern actors' social reproductive strategies, which may be collective, individual or both.

Batang district, situated on the Northern coast of Central Java, was chosen as a fieldwork location as it was the site of multiple mass land struggles of landless and land poor actors in the immediate period following the fall of the dictatorship. These mass struggles led to the formation of a district-wide representative union for 14 land case groups (*Organisasi Tani Lokal – OTL*)[2] and 13,000 households were registered with this union, Omah Tani, as of 2010 (Safitri 2010; ELSAM 2012). Research participants involved in this case study are members of two local land case groups (*OTL*). They are organised in the first instance around their separate land cases, the Tratak company land case and the Pagilaran company land case, which at the time of their formation represented approximately 1700 families. These two local land case farmers' groups were two of three local groups that were founding member organisations of the Batang Peasant Farmers' Struggle Forum (FPPB / Omah Tani)[3] formed in 1999 and formally declared in 2000.

The chapter is divided into two principal sections. The first examines the dynamics of both regional and local political economies in which the case studies are situated. Focussing on the period since the early twentieth century, it presents a historical account of subaltern actors' struggles for land access in this Central Northern Coast region, and where data was available, from the specific case studies examined in this chapter. This foregrounds the examination of the social relations of production across this region by the late 20th Century, which show a critical lack of access to land for many subaltern actors in the context of the more general economic crisis being experienced at that time. It then outlines the factors that precipitated the mass land occupations that emerged across the Batang and neighbouring Pekalongan district in 1998-99 which resulted in the formation of many local land claim groups.

The second section investigates the more local specific conditions that gave rise to the emergence of two local land claim groups in this district and the formation of the Batang Peasant Farmers' Struggle Forum (FPPB / Omah Tani) as an umbrella farmers' union organisation. It examines the factors underlying actors' decisions to form new collective organisations, independent of local state institutions and the allies they collaborated with to

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[2] Each land case can have several local sub-groups within one land claim group, usually representing more geographically based communities, often residents of different hamlets or villages that are adjacent to or part of the land claim areas.

[3] The FPPB changed its name to Omah Tani (Farmers' Home) in 2009.

form the district wide farmers' union in order to pursue their access to land. It examines the strategies and tactics employed in the first ten years of the district wide organisation and the reasons for a significant shift in strategic approach from 2008. It makes specific study of local actors' relations with state institutions specifically, at village and district level, considering the reasons for their changing strategic and tactical approaches to state actors in their struggles. A final postscript reflects on the situation of the union and the two local land claim farmers group as of 2017.

5.2 Section One: Agrarian production politics under Dutch colonialism

Conflict and contestation over access to and control of land in Batang district is not a uniquely post-New Order experience. Since the early 20th century, this region has been home to significant conflicts and struggles by plantation workers and peasant farmers to retain and secure access to land (Lucas 1991). Periods of social and regime instability since the colonial period have presented opportunities for subaltern actors to openly challenge existing power relations in their local political economies in order to secure access to land. In examining the origins of specific local land conflicts, historical relationships of local communities to land are highlighted here. These relationships are examined further in chapter six regarding how they influence the dynamics of local subaltern cultures and political ideas.

Until 1890, the lowlands of Batang district were considered part of a wider administrative region (*karesidenan*) that included Tegal, Pekalongan and Semarang (Lucas 1991). They were referred to as coastal lands (*pesisir)* and considered to be communally owned (Boomgaard 1989, 16). Despite the attempts by the Dutch colonial administration to force local smallholders into more plantation style production under the forced labour laws of 1830, smallholders largely retained control of production on their land. Poorer soil fertility in the southern upland regions of Batang district saw these regions largely planted with teak trees, with small local populations living in and around forest areas until the early 20th century. By the 1920s, Batang was acknowledged as a region of small agricultural petty commodity producers, who produced commodities for export such as sugar, tea, coffee, quinine and the region accounted for 30% of Java's total cocoa production (Lucas 1991).

In the early twentieth century, trade in primary commodities such as sugar, tea, coffee and quinine became increasingly dominated by wealthy rural social classes who used their economic power to gain greater control of land and other agrarian resources in the region (Lucas 1991). In many cases in this area, village administrative lands (*tanah bengkok*) became the 'private property' of administratively appointed village heads[4]. These village heads used their control over village lands to increase their own wealth by renting out lands to sugar factory owners for high returns, rather than allowing them to be farmed by local residents. Foreign traders[5] dominated agricultural trade in the region, while local religious leaders were often moneylenders. Small farmers who were unable to compete with larger capital investors in agriculture and trade, borrowed money from these moneylenders leading to indebtedness and in many cases a transfer of rights to access land from small commodity producers to moneylenders (Lucas 1991). In upland regions, the colonial authority forcibly evicted local smallholder farmers from lands within and adjacent to forests to expand territories for the establishment of new plantations[6].

This period marked a significant change in the organisation of agriculture (Lucas 1991). The Pagilaran company case study demonstrates some of these changes from as early as the late 19th century. The history of subaltern struggles in this Pagilaran case has been documented in part by Omah Tani through oral histories recorded in organisational documents and by an Akatiga[7] researcher (Safitri 2010). These documents provide data dating back to the 1870s. This data shows that small farmers began to clear land for farming and building dwellings in the region of the Pagilaran tea plantation from at least 1878. In 1880 the Dutch colonial authorities began to clear land for a plantation here and in 1919 they made claims to rent or buy the land that had been cleared and was being worked on by local residents in surrounding areas. Land was then forcibly acquired by the colonial state in the early 1920s for the Pagilaran plantation. This land area lies within the administrative

[4] Documented case studies of rights to use *tanah bengkok* lands show different rights attached to use across different regions (See Lucas 1991; Rahman 2011). Some village heads asserted private ownership and hereditary rights in regions such as Batang, while in other regions, *tanah bengkok* referred to village lands, some of which were used as 'salary lands' for a number of village government officials (see chapter four).
[5] Arab, Chinese and European traders with capital (Lucas 1991).
[6] See chapter three on the 1870 Agrarian Law.
[7] Akatiga is an independent organisation established in 1991 by a group of researchers from Bogor Agricultural University (IPB), the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) in Indonesia and the Institute of Social Studies (IIS) in the Netherlands.

boundaries of five villages of Keteleng, Kalisari, Bismo, Gondang and Bawang[8]. While not encompassing the entire land area within each village, there are four hamlets within two of these villages that lie within the leasehold land area.

The colonial authority used violence and intimidation to force local people to rent their land to the company. If they refused their houses were burnt[9]. The establishment of the Pagilaran plantation by the P&T Lands Company resulted in farmers being dispossessed of their farming land and being forced out of their homes which were then destroyed. Local residents who had been small farmers with control of their own means of production including access to land, became agricultural workers working for a plantation company. In the Pagilaran tea plantation, houses in four hamlets in Bismo, Gondang and Bawang villages were razed to the ground (Safitri 2010). These hamlets are Pagilaran, Kayulandak, Pagargunung and Andongsili hamlets and residents today live in the emplacement dwellings built by the company in the 1920s.

> ... People's homes were burnt. Those who lost their homes had to move in (*numpang*) with family nearby or go anywhere they could make some kind of hut (*gubug*). Later the company asked the people who lost their homes if they wanted new houses to live in… but they had to agree to become [plantation] workers if they wanted to live there… Those who didn't want to [become plantation workers] got no compensation (Walijo[10] 11 January 2016).

Wages and conditions were poor, however without access to land or homes to live in, many had little choice but to become plantation workers (Safitri 2010).

Agrarian production politics during Independence

During the Japanese occupation in 1942-1945, European foreigners were expelled from Java and Dutch and other foreign owned plantation operations were suspended. Local people returned to work the land independently, paying tax in the form of food crops to the Japanese administration. In the Pagilaran case, residents' stories about this time were "that

[8] Omah Tani archive documents.

[9] Data from Omah Tani Document "Data Perkembangan Kasus OTL Paguyuban Masyarakat Gunung Kamulyan (PMGK)" by Forum Perjuangan Petani Batang (FPPB).

[10] Walijo is a resident in the emplacement built in Keteleng village, immediately adjacent to the tea factory and company offices.

the arrival of the Japanese military gave new breath for the sources of livelihoods for the Pagilaran people" (Safitri 2010, 59).

> The Japanese [authority] ordered us [our parents] to plant corn and cassava… [we] had to open up new land for farming next to the areas already planted with tea. More [than that] they made letters saying they rented the land [from us]. Imagine the feeling… we had proof it was our land. Mbah Salman was the one who knew... the Japanese trusted him to manage it (Walijo 10 January 2017).

The land that locals began farming during the Japanese occupation period was situated adjacent to the tea plantation and covered an area of approximately 450 hectares (Safitri 2010). It was this land that would become the object of local residents' claims in the late 1990s[11]. The original plantation land area planted with tea was not used by local residents.

When the Japanese authority surrendered at the end of the Second World War in 1945, the Dutch colonial administration could not immediately reassert their authority in Java. Only after the Dutch aggression in 1947 did the Dutch military begin to resecure many plantation areas, with the plantation in Pagilaran being an important target (Safitri 2010, 60). However, several years of being abandoned and neglected had left the plantation trees in poor condition. In Pagilaran only around 400 hectares was returned to active operation by the P&T Lands company until the leasehold expired in 1963[12] (Safitri 2010).

The Dutch authority tried to force local residents to leave the new land they had been farming since 1942 but this was met with resistance. Local residents protested the attempts to force them off their land by burning down tea manufacturing buildings on the plantation. Unfortunately, the land documents issued by the Japanese authority, that had been in the care of a village head, Kromodiwiryo[13], were accidentally destroyed.

> Our families resisted… it was their land, they had the letters. But [they] didn't know the letters were being stored at the plantation warehouse…they were burnt [as well] … that was the greatest disaster for us until now… no proof anymore (Painah, 10 January 2017).

After ongoing confrontation from the late 1940s, local people continued to farm an area of 450 hectares adjacent to the Pagilaran plantation until 1965.

[11] Discussion with Ratno, Walijo and Painah 10 January 2017.
[12] Discussion with Ratno, Walijo and Walinah 10 January 2017.
[13] Data from Omah Tani Document "Data Perkembangan Kasus OTL Paguyuban Masyarakat Gunung Kamulyan (PMGK) by Forum Perjuangan Petani Batang (FPPB)".

1965 and the military coup

With a long history of peasant farmer organisation and periodic rebellion in the Batang and Pekalongan districts (Lucas 1991), the Indonesian Peasants' Front (BTI) and the PKI developed strong bases in Batang plantation areas[14] (Mahsun 2017). Land struggles intensified in the 1960s across Indonesia and the Batang district was no exception. Some of these conflicts occurred under the initiatives of plantation workers and local peasant farmers themselves,[15] while others were led and coordinated by the (*Barisan Tani Indonesia - BTI*), People's Youth (*Pemuda Rakyat*) and the Indonesian Communist Party[16] (Mahsun 2017).

In Batang district, the main targets of calls for land redistribution in the 1960s were the former colonial plantations. Small farmer claims on these plantations or adjacent lands and calls for the eviction of foreign companies intensified in Batang district in 1963 during widespread land reform campaigns. For residents living on or adjacent to the Pagilaran plantation lands, conflicts were more focussed on working conditions and wages in the plantation. This was in large part because residents still had access to and actively farmed the nearly 450 hectares adjacent to the plantation until the English P&T Lands company leasehold expired in 1963. A new leasehold agreement was then made in 1964 recognising the state as the owner. The leasehold was registered to the Pagilaran State Company (*Perusahan Negara (PN) Pagilaran*) which belonged to the Agricultural Faculty of Gadjah Mada University (Fakultas Pertanian UGM)[17] (Safitri 2010, 61).

The situation for residents living on and adjacent to the Pagilaran tea plantation changed dramatically after the events of 1 October 1965. The new state company PN Pagilaran, managed by the Agricultural Faculty UGM, used the opportunity to force residents off the more than 400 hectares of land that fell outside of the previous foreign owned leasehold agreement[18] (Safitri 2010; Herwati 2013). This was a military coordinated campaign that was similarly applied in Bandungan, Semarang district and other regions in

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[14] This is based on oral testimonies by Handoko Wibowo and some peasant farmer activists who were directly involved or had parents who were involved. Many people however are still afraid to talk about and admit to their knowledge of or involvement in radical farmer organisations.
[15] Interview with Ratno 11 January 2017.
[16] Interview with Handoko 30 August 2016.
[17] Interview with Walijo 10 January 2017.
[18] Data taken from document "Perkembangan Kasus OTL Paguyuban Masyarakat Gunung Kamulyan (PMGK)" by Forum Perjuangan Petani Batang (FPPB) and discussions with Ratno, Walijo, Walinah on 11 January 2017.

Central Java (Herwati 2013). The company accused residents farming this land of being PKI members, and on 26 April 1966, the Pagilaran Plantation Alert Commando (*Task Force Siaga Komando Kebun Pagilaran*) was ordered to take control of this land by any means necessary[19]. The land was referred to as "the former lands being farmed by Gestapu members (Herwati 2013, 148)". The seizure was enforced by the military state and local residents were forced off the land they had been farming since 1942 with implicit and explicit threats of detention, torture and death[20] (Safitri 2010). In the Pagilaran company case, more than 400 hectares of land that had not been included in the previous leasehold agreement with the P&T Lands company, was now incorporated into the new leasehold agreement managed by UGM[21]. Local people lost direct access to and control over farming land and had little option than to continue as, or to become, waged plantation workers or to move to other areas[22].

In Batang district after 1966, there was a significant shift in the control of agrarian resources, specifically land, out of the hands of ordinary people. Plantation lands that had previously been operated by eight colonial plantation companies in the Batang district were secured by the state for the benefit of state or private companies (Safitri 2010), if they had not been already. Agrarian policy during the New Order supported the expansion of new plantations and four new plantation leaseholds were granted in the Batang district. According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) published in 1999, these 12 plantations covered a land area of 8,781 hectares[23] in 1998 or 11% of the total district land area. While plantation lands covered 11% of the total land area in Batang district in 1998, lands allocated to forestry under the new forestry law no.41/1967 covered a further 23% of

[19] Data taken from the document "Perkembangan Kasus OTL Paguyuban Masyarakat Gunung Kamulyan (PMGK)" by Forum Perjuangan Petani Batang (FPPB) and discussions with Ratno, Walijo, Walinah on 11 January 2017.
[20] Discussion with Ratno, Walijo and Walinah 10 January 2017.
[21] Discussion with Ratno and Walinah 11 January 2017
[22] In the mid 1960s people's mobility was restricted by limited transport options. Added to this was the economic and political monitoring of local residents which made mobility even more difficult.
[23] According to Safitri (2010, p16), the record of plantation land data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) and the National Land Agency (BPN) in 2006 show a discrepancy of more than 1600 hectares in the recorded land area subject to plantation leasehold (HGU). BPN records land area data according to the leasehold documents registered with the BPN. Meanwhile the land area recorded by the BPS is drawn from Government Plantation Department records which are based on operational records submitted by plantation companies on a routine basis.

the total land area in 1998[24]. At the same time the average land area being worked was around 0.36 hectares per family and in 2003, 50% of families in Batang relied on agriculture for their livelihoods (BPS 2003[25]). Hence the total land area controlled by private and state owned plantations and *Perhutani* (Indonesian State Forestry Company) in Batang district was one of the regional factors contributing to multiple land conflicts that arose shortly after the fall of the dictatorship in 1998.

Context for the rise in land conflicts in the late New Order

Batang district became a site of mass land conflicts in 1998 (Lucas and Warren 2003; Mahsun 2017). The common factors underlying these conflicts included the economic, social and political crisis of the late period of the New Order regime, the limits of new land areas that could be made farmland for landless people and local grievances that had accumulated throughout the Suharto period. Some of these conflicts originated in or re-emerged during the New Order period (1966–98), where land was secured by plantations or other business interests by the state, often by force, contravening what local farmers believed were their long-established rights to access and use (Safitri 2010; Mahsun 2017). Prior to 1998, working as plantation workers, or working in a harvest sharing arrangement with plantation managers, was a common experience for poor and landless farmers living adjacent to or within plantations lands. Injustice in labor relations on plantations, the enforced seizure of people's lands to expand plantations areas, and exploitative harvest sharing arrangements were all reasons for why people began land occupations in the 1990s (Safitri 2010)[26]. The Asian economic crisis of the mid to late 1990s led to rising inflation, job losses and food shortages which increased the pressures on rural citizens without access to land.

> We had no food; we had to eat. My husband lost his job in Jakarta in 1996… he didn't get work again [in the city] ... We had nowhere to go. There was no work; we had to do what we could. We planted cassava, corn and leafy vegetable on the Tratak [company] land (Rumini 31 August 2016).

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[24] From "Jawa Tengah dalam Angka 1999", Central Java Provincial Development Planning Agency (Bappeda Provinsi Jateng) and Central Bureau of Statistics (Biro Pusat Statistik – BPS) Central Java Province, reproduced in Safitri 2010, p14, Table 1.2.1.

[25] From BPS "Sensus Pertanian 2003: Hasil Pendaftaran Rumah Tangga Provinsi Jawa Tengah", BPS Jakarta in Safitri 2010, p18.

[26] Interviews with Tabah 30 August 2016 and Rohmadi 15 December 2016.

In the 1980s and 1990s, some plantation companies with land contracts did not put their leasehold lands into productive use, effectively limiting employment and livelihood options in many local areas. In the Tratak company case, the company broke the law by allowing company supervisors to extort payments from local people by granting them access to company leasehold land if they agreed to a 1:3 sharecropping deal after paying an initial fee of Rp.100.000 – Rp.300.000[27] to secure access. Leasehold contracts (*Hak Guna Usaha*) were used as a means of extracting material benefit from the sweat of small farmers who would pay up to half of the results of their labour to a company supervisor, while the company itself made no investment in agricultural activities being conducted on the leasehold land (Safitri 2010, 23)[28]. This was a common practice despite such arrangements being illegal.

> The law doesn't apply to the well off, those who commit serious corruption never face the consequences… but [the law] is applied to the little people… the little person (*wong cilik*) takes a chicken because they are starving and the state hits them hard (*dipukul keras*) … so before [1998] we [were] crippled (Rohmadi 15 December 2016).

Local people working on plantations were paid very low wages and there was no social security. In 1998-99 plantation workers began to organise demonstrations to demand better wages and working conditions.

> Since 1966, [plantation] workers had no social security. In the past, before [the plantation was] handed over to UGM, plantation workers still received rice and basic groceries every month (Walijo 28 June 2016).
>
> … [at the beginning of *reformasi*] daily wages were Rp 950[29]. We went [en masse] to the [provincial and national offices of the] department of labour many times from 1998… finally… in 2000 our wages were raised to Rp3,500 per day. After that there was the fixing of the minimum wage… but the company delays paying any increases when it can…Imagine if there is no struggle, no organisation… the wages waahhhh... [we'd have] nothing would be the result… Before *reformasi* if we went to hospital the company would make deductions from our wage to pay for the hospital… there was no health insurance… Because there is *reformasi* there [has been] change… a vast change... but still far [from enough] (Walinah 11 January 2017).

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[27] Data taken from FPPB Document "Perkembangan Kasus OTL Paseduluran Petani Penggarap PT Tratak (P4T)".

[28] Discussion with farmer activists Tabah 30 August 2016 and Rohmadi 15 December 2016.

[29] Rp 950 in 1998 is estimated to be worth approximately Rp 6000 in 2019 (using inflation tool.com). Rp6000 is equivalent to US$ 0.42 today.

Alternative job opportunities for young people outside of the plantation were very limited[30]. These combined pressures made the idea to occupy and claim land more serious for many local people living in the Pagilaran plantation region.

The Association of Farmer Victims of the Pagilaran Plantation (*Paguyuban Petani Korban Perkebunan Pagilaran - P2KPP*[31]) was formed in January 1999 after 500 workers in the Pagilaran plantation were sacked with no severance compensation (Herwati 2013). Prior to this, plantation workers had begun to organise to demand improvements in wages and conditions. At that time, indeed until today, the majority of workers are employed on a daily basis with no guarantee of work security. They are employed on an hourly basis of 5 or 7 hours per day, or on a kilogram quota basis for those picking tea leaves. Until the early 2000s, these insecure workers were paid below the minimum wage, had limited or no pension rights, no health insurance, no accident insurance and no paid maternity or menstruation leave (Nugroho 2007), putting the company in violation of most labour laws. The sacking of 500 workers in January 1999 was seen as a response by management to claims for improved wages and conditions (Herwati 2013). The workers demanded compensation for their sackings and then moved to include demands for the restoration of lands that had been seized illegally in 1966.

In the Tratak Land case, the land being claimed from 1998 was subject to a leasehold agreement held by the Tratak company since prior to nationalisation in 1957, but had been used for agriculture by local residents since the 1930s[32]. Local residents also planted rubber and hardwood trees, harvesting foods from the forest close to their homes and by some families for growing food crops (Safitri 2010). In 1980 nearly 50% of the leasehold area was not being utilised[33] by the company and local residents began to enter larger areas on the leasehold to grow food crops after agreeing to pay company supervisors one third of their crop. In 1988, the Tratak company conducted large scale tree felling and subsequently left this land area idle. Local population growth and more cleared land available after the tree harvest resulted in more residents using an expanded land area within the leasehold,

[30] Discussion with Ratno 11 August 2016.
[31] The *Paseduluran Petani Korban Perkebunan Pagilaran* organisation changed its name to The Kamulyan Mountain Communities Association (Paguyuban Masyarakat Gunung Kamulyan – PMGK) in 2002.
[32] Interviews with Mbah Pam 15 December 2016 and Tabah 11 August 2016.
[33] The company had planted hardwood trees on the lands they were using which was in contravention of their leasehold agreement.

despite being forced to pay a one third share of their crop (Safitri 2010). Local residents planted hardwood trees and food crops. In 1988 the government renewed the leasehold agreement with the Tratak company[34].

Despite the sharecropping arrangement being an illegal use of the company's leasehold contract, local residents had few forums in which to protest and thugs were deployed to intimidate any residents who attempted to protest to the supervisor[35] (Safitri 2010). Some local residents using the land were aware that the Basic agrarian law gave them rights to the land, however village authorities and district government institutions were largely hostile to their claims[36]. There were very limited employment options in the surrounding areas and local residents felt they had little option but to agree to the arrangement. Over the next ten years the entire leasehold area was put in to productive use by residents from surrounding villages[37], all making contributions to a company supervisor[38].

In the early 1990s, the Tratak company office and company sign were removed from the leasehold area and supervisor wages were no longer paid. However, a single remaining Tratak company supervisor proposed deals with local farmers under a harvest share agreement, demanding a one third share of their harvests in return for the use of company land. By 1998, people were fed up with paying money to the supervisor and began to protest this supervisor. Simultaneously, the Tratak company agreed to rent the entire leasehold area to a sugar company for two years, which was also illegal. This would have resulted in the effective eviction of local residents farming the land if the sugar company became operational (Safitri 2010). This action by the Tratak company provoked locals who had been farming the land for between 10 and 50 years to organise a formal occupation in

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[34] Data taken from Omah Tani document "Perkembangan Kasus OTL Paseduluran Petani Penggarap PT. Tratak (P4T)".

[35] Discussion with Tabah 11 August 2016.

[36] Interview with Tabah 30 August 2017.

[37] Residents using land on the leasehold were from the three villages of Tumbrep, Kambangan and Wonomerto.

[38] Data collated by the district office of the National Lands Agency in 1999 showed that almost 90% of the leasehold area was being farmed productively by local residents. This had been the case for nearly a decade as the lands had largely been abandoned by the company since the early 1980s. However, it was only with *reformasi* that local residents made contact with the Semarang legal aid NGO and Handoko Wibowo who lives adjacent to this area.

support of an official land claim to keep control of it. Women, men and children all joined the occupations.

> Darsian was a company supervisor but at that time he was no longer paid a wage by the company. So Darsian used the farmers working on the land [to get income] by extorting [payments from] them. Sometimes he demanded more than a third share of the harvest. He would use violence… so we got angry, stormed his house and destroyed his house in protest… that was in 1998…In Muharrom month that year we formed our organisation. We called it *Paseduluran Petani Penggarap PT Tratak*[39] (*P4T*) (Tabah 30 August 2017).

Background case summary

The dynamics of local and regional political economies in Batang district have long favoured the interests of large agrarian capital. Successive political regimes have applied legislative as well as administrative strategies alongside direct repressive measures, to secure access to land for agrarian capital investors. The early 1920s marked the expansion of Dutch and other European plantation enterprises in many cases using force to evict local peasant farmers. During the Japanese occupation period, subaltern actors took advantage of a changed agrarian regime to (re)secure access to land, which in many cases they successfully maintained until the mass violence and repression by the military in 1965-66. The New Order government oversaw significant transfers of land resources in Batang district from the hands of subaltern and other non-elite actors to plantation companies and the Indonesian State Forestry Company. The grinding exploitation of plantation workers, the threat of further loss of access to land for subaltern actors, the economic crisis of the late 1990s and the mass anti-dictatorship protests in 1997-98, provided the setting for many poor rural actors to take actions to claim land from 1998.

The emergence of these two local land claim groups show that local political economies present different characteristics and histories of subaltern struggles to secure or return access to lands. New Order agrarian policy and the availability (albeit limited) of unused lands until the latter part of the 20th Century played some part in defining the different characters of these more local struggles as they emerged in 1998-99. We should note here that the formation of local farmers' groups in both land cases examined in this chapter, was not based on the demarcations of village or hamlet residency. None of the conflicts

[39] Tratak Plantation Farmer Cultivators' Fraternity.

involved all residents from all hamlets in the villages affected by these claims. Thus in every land case there were different individuals and groups of subaltern actors within hamlets with potentially different claims, creating the potential for the provocation of horizontal conflicts amongst subaltern actors themselves, as we shall see later. The critical factor in the organisation of these land claims was the forming of new relations of social solidarity between people voluntarily joining in forming new organisations on the basis of a common claim for access to land. In the coming months, these new groups would reach out to other local groups and pro-democracy actors, students, intellectuals and NGOs, providing the initial momentum that would lead to the formation of the FPPB.

5.3 Section Two: Subaltern struggles for land: the making of new social solidarities

In the early period of *reformasi,* the military state was forced into retreat as it faced a crisis of legitimacy in general and popular rejection of the use of force in social conflict situations more specifically (Mietzner 2009). The political and economic instability of the Suharto regime in the late 1990s in Indonesia produced a changed terrain that was conducive not only for social movement actors and urban middle class reformers to organise for change that was aimed at state level institutions. There were new 'spaces'[40] for ordinary people to take direct action in their own interests, specifically occupying and using plantation lands for for subsistence production. The actions of subaltern and other social movement actors who collaborated in solidarity actions with them, resulted in new and revitalised challenges to the agrarian production regime established by the New Order.

When Suharto stepped down in May 1998, many local land poor actors in Batang district moved to make land claims through presenting written claims to district government offices and taking direct actions to secure their access to land (Safitri 2010). Farmer and

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[40] Following the stepping down of Suharto in 1998, expectations of significant political reform and democratisation were high amongst many social groups within civil society. Aspinall (2005) argues that this reflected the ongoing process of politicisation since the early 1990s of many social layers within society from the middle classes to students, workers and poor farmers and in the events of 1998, a significant section of the urban poor of Jakarta. Aspinall also refers to the 'political space' where reform elements were able to openly and directly organize to challenge the New Order institutions of state power and their officials with a greatly reduced threat and fear of repression.

plantation worker activists[41] said that when they saw significant unrest unfolding in urban centres, and when Suharto stepped down as president, it gave them confidence to take action. They said that the atmosphere in their local communities was more relaxed and "we were no longer afraid to stand up to people [that threaten us] (Rumini 11 August 2016)". They began to meet, discuss and form local groups[42].

The land claim groups examined in this case study began to organise in 1998. The initial response from state actors and institutions at local, district and provincial level to local land claims was hostile. In the Pagilaran case, village government bodies had supported the company leasehold agreements since the colonial period. At village level, social relations between local actors reflected power relations that overwhelmingly favoured the company and more privileged actors, in the first instance company managers, plantation supervisors and small numbers of permanent administrative staff and plantation workers. Further, not all hamlet and village residents participated in the land occupations. Those who did not participate did so for several reasons, including fear of reprisals in the form of violence, loss of employment and loss of housing or simply because they were not interested[43]. Some local residents living in emplacement housing within the plantation lands sided with the company from the outset, supporting the company when it accused the farmers' groups of theft, stating that they were criminals who should be locked up. These workers were largely permanent staff of the company working in administration, as supervisors and security staff[44].

Similarly, in the Tratak case not all village and hamlet residents living adjacent to the Tratak leasehold were involved in making land claims, rather residents who had been using the land prior to 1998 were the initial residents involved in forming the new farmers' groups. Some residents living adjacent to the land claim areas were not involved in making claims and were hostile to the land actions, accusing families of being thieves taking land that didn't belong to them[45]. It is in this context that land claimants involved in these two

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[41] Meeting with Pagilaran OTL members 11 January 2016 and Tratak OTL members 23 August 2016. Interview with Tabah 30 August 2016.
[42] Group discussion with Tratak farmer leaders meeting 7 September 2016, Meeting with Pagilaran OTL members 11 January 2017.
[43] Interview with Lantip 10 January 2017, Ratno 28 June 2016 and Walinah 28 June 2016.
[44] Interview with Lantip 10 January 2017, Ratno 28 June 2016 and Walinah 28 June 2016. Meeting with Pagilaran OTL members 11 January 2017.
[45] Interviews with Pam 15 December 2016 and Tabah 11 August 2016.

land cases did not seek support for their land claims from village state institutions or individual village officials.

Plantation company leaseholds include land areas within several different village boundaries, therefore within each land claim organisation, there were several more locally based groups that represented land claim actors from different village or hamlet areas[46]. Local land claim groups discussed their common problems and issues and exchanged experiences. These interactions became increasingly intensive and they began to make contact with other farmers' groups making land claims in the Batang district (Safitri 2010, 46).

Two of the three local groups that formed the FPPB are examined in this study, the Tratak Plantation Farmer Cultivators' Fraternity (Paseduluran Petani Penggarap Perkebunan Tratak - P4T) based in Bandar sub-district (*kecamatan*) and the Pagilaran Plantation Peasant Victims' Association (P2KPP) in Blado sub-district. A third group, the Kembang Tani, who challenged the private leasehold of the Ambarawa Maju company[47] is not included in this study[48]. These three local farmer groups in Batang district, representing three separate land cases, began communicating more intensively with each other in early 1999. They began to collaborate with other organisations, specifically students and pro-democracy activists, who were initiating links and forming alliances with farmer activist groups. As their plans were made to prepare land claims and land occupations, these local claimants were working in collaboration with new allies, in particular Legal Aid organisations (LBH) in Semarang and Yogyakarta, NGO workers and pro-democracy students, activists and intellectuals. This took place in a political climate where many urban pro-democracy actors were drawn to organising actions to support and provide solidarity with subaltern actors who they recognised had suffered disproportionately during the New Order regime. These three local land claim groups would later join with pro-democracy actors from NGOs and activist groups to form the umbrella group, Batang Peasant Farmers' Struggle Forum in June 1999 (Safitri 2010). The students, predominantly from Yogyakarta would organise themselves in a

[46] Discussions with Tabah 5 September 2016 and Rohmadi 19 July 2016,

[47] Approximately 400 families (members of Kembang Tani) were successful in achieving land redistribution in 2002, in the form of land ownership title on the land formerly held under leasehold by the Advanced Ambarawa Plantation Company (PT Perkebunan Ambarawa Maju).

[48] The intention was to include this third group in the study, however logistical constraints made this unrealistic.

solidarity organisation, the Fraternity of Peasants' Community (*Persaudaraan Warga Tani*), or were from the Indonesian Youth Struggle Front (*Front Perjuangan Pemuda Indonesia*).

In all three cases, those participating in land occupations had some legitimate claim in law to back up their land claims. However, in a political situation very much in flux, where state actors and institutions from the village level up to national ministries in most cases still took sides with the plantation companies, farmer activists realised that claims based on law and regulations were not enough to give them secure access to land. Building solidarity between land claim groups, initiating land occupations and collective mass actions became central in their initial campaign strategy.

> We had to be close to everyone, we had to build the idea of being compact, solid… Almost every night we [local organisers] went to members' houses. To build the awareness that we have the same fortune [*senasib*] whether we are from Cepoko, Subah or Simpang Jati[49]… but the conditions for each local [land case] group is different... Like in Tulis the case was finished in 2004… in Tratak we were fighting until 2016, some still have no resolution. In the beginning we tried to meet together as often as possible… district-wide mass meetings, demonstrations… we used paper letter invitations… we had to go to every land claim location and meet with members in several villages in each claim… [I would] get home at 1 or 2am… almost every month we would have an audience with a government official or agency so we were going out every night to reach everyone (Tabah[50] 30 August 2016).

In 1999, these three local land claim groups began to coordinate more formally and declared the formation of the Batang Peasant Farmers' Struggle Forum (*Forum Perjuangan Petani Kabupaten Batang - FPPB*) on 4 June 2000 (Safitri 2010). The principal goal of the FPPB was to secure their members' immediate access to land.[51] As the FPPB organisation became more consolidated attracting many solidarity activists from students, academics and legal aid and other NGOs, local members began to discuss strategies to gain permanent and secure rights to use land. Individual strategies for each respective land claim were discussed and agreed to within local groups.

Between 2000 and 2002, farmers actively occupying land in several land claims in Batang began to experience intimidation, threats of violence, direct repression by police and

[49] These are the names of different geographical locations of separate land claim struggles that joined the FPPB.
[50] Tabah is a leading peasant farmer activist in the Tratak land claim and a member of the Omah Tani secretariat.
[51] In the Pagilaran case they supported residents to return to their homes after they had been terrorised and had fled to safety. Interview with Ratno 28 June 2016.

paid thugs, as well as criminalisation[52] (Safitri 2010). In this situation, initiating and maintaining land occupations required more systematic organisation and support from external actors when repression against those occupying land began. These experiences of violence were part of the impetus for initiating more systematic coordination and organisation across different land claims, in particular mass actions. In the first two years of actions, meetings and lobbying, the local groups and the FPPB were met with cynicism by district and provincial authorities and the police[53].

> The police would say to us when we held actions, "this will only last a few months, at most one or two years, we don't need to take them seriously". Imagine… we were very angry. They thought that by insulting us we would lose our enthusiasm. Wrong. On the contrary it motivated us to fight even harder, to hold more mass actions, we wanted to prove them wrong (Rohmadi 15 December 2016).

Direct acts of solidarity from NGOs and student groups, lawyers and academics were important in this early period of repression. While the organisation of local peasant farmer groups was the foundation point of land occupations[54], the formation of a district representative union was in part possible due to the participation of non-farmer activists which had some influence on the organising capacity of the district wide group, its overall campaign strategy as well as the tactics of local groups.

The formation of the FPPB took place in the context of a nationally mobilised pro-democracy movement where student, NGO workers and intellectual activists participated in building mass organisations providing resources, networks and sometimes providing leadership in coordinating struggles across district, provincial and national scales (Lucas and Warren 2003; Safitri 2010; Herwita 2013). Activists from pro-democracy groups that took solidarity action with farmers, had ideological or programmatic approaches to claims for just redistribution of land coming from sectors such as students, agrarian activists, NGO workers, legal advocates and progressive intellectuals[55]. These activists participated in regional and national agrarian movement forums aimed at strengthening the claims of landless peasant farmers through legal and state policy reform strategies.

[52] Discussion with Ratno 28 June 2016, one of 21 Pagilaran activists jailed in 1999 for six months after being falsely accused and charged with destroying plantation plants.
[53] Discussion with Rohmadi 15 December 2016.
[54] Discussions with Handoko 29 June & 5 September 2016, Tabah 12 May 2016, Rumini 19 July 2016, Rohmadi 15 December 2016.
[55] Interview with Handoko 29 June 2016.

Strategies and tactics designed to strengthen the position of farmer activists in relation to land claims were discussed and debated in the FPPB and in the local farmers' groups (*Organisasi Tani Lokal - OTL*). In the first few years, the strategy of mass mobilisation was considered critical in forcing government and other stakeholders to recognise their claims and in cementing peasant activists' commitment to struggle until they were successful[56]. The FPPB grew rapidly, attracting more newly formed farmers' groups from Batang and neighbouring Pekalongan districts, representing principally farmers but also some local fisher-peoples[57] working in the coastal regions of Batang district. People's confidence in the union group grew rapidly with local group members gaining new experiences from their involvement. Organising collectively and working together strengthened their capacity for combative and defensive actions. Coordination and solidarity actions developed leadership capacity and team building skills of individuals as well as local group organising capacity[58]. By 2004, the FPPB membership included 14 separate land claim groups representing around 13,000 families in Batang district (Safitri 2010; ELSAM 2012).

Political education of members became a regular activity early on focussing on issues of legal advocacy in rights to use land, human rights, political economy of small farming as well as skills training in organising and leading mass actions[59]. The Omah Tani formed a women's group, Voice of Women Farmers (*Suara Ibu Tani*) which had a conscious strategy of encouraging women to lead in the organisation through leading demonstrations, as public orators and providing front line self-defence against physical attack. The *Suara Ibu Tani* was initiated to encourage the active participation of women as equal stakeholders in the struggles as well as the outcomes of the land occupations. Women members were actively involved in leading and participating in training and often led the mass actions speaking in front of thousands of members and government officials at their mass actions[60].

[56] Discussions with Handoko 5 September 2016, Tabah 30 August 2016 and Rohmadi 15 December 2016.
[57] An FPPB forum in 2003 decided to expand their representation of local groups to fisher people and to groups based in Pekalongan, renaming their group the Batang and Pekalongan Farmer and Fisherpeoples' Association (Forum Perjuangan Petani dan Nelayan Batang dan Pekalongan) until a forum decision in 2007 to return their focus to farmers' land claims in the Batang district specifically.
[58] Discussions with Handoko 29 June and 5 September 2016, Tabah 30 August 2016, Rumini 19 July 2016 and Rohmadi 15 December 2016.
[59] Discussions with Handoko 5 September 2016, Tabah 30 August 2016 and Rohmadi 15 December 2016.
[60] Discussion with Rumini 19 July 2016.

Women farmers activists routinely provided training to social movement activists including student and worker activists from Jakarta and other regions at the Omah Tani headquarters[61].

The *Suara Ibu Tani* was an initiative led by Handoko Wibowo as a means to promote the idea that farmers' struggles required the full participation of all family members involved in the claims, men, women and children. Indeed, all mass mobilisations involved the men, women and children of the families involved in the OTLs.

> Mas Han sat with the women and said we should start being the orators at the demo actions. We all laughed…seriously (*tenane*)? But then we started seriously… standing up here in front of the other women… making a speech…we didn't believe we could do it [at the action] but then when we started the action (*aksi*) we had to step forward to the front. My heart was pounding the first time. After that it became normal… I was more scared of losing the land than speaking up (Rumini 30 August 2016).

Farmers' union organising 2000 – 2007

Strategic approaches adopted by the FPPB combined local claim organising and collective union based organising. With a rapidly growing membership, the FPPB agreed upon a three pronged strategy at district level. These three prongs were mass mobilisation in support of each other's land claims, legal advocacy and lobbying of state officials in the ministries and national lands and forestry departments[62]. The purpose of their lobbying was to push for changes in legislation and regulations at district, provincial and national levels in favour of small farmer land claims. At a local land claim group level three different methods of struggle were applied across these different land claim groups. The first was a demand to reclaim land, where OTL groups were not yet able to secure land to farm but the subject of their claim was clearly established[63]. The second was where members were already farming land and needed to organise to stop other parties from expelling them from that land[64]. The third was where members were farming land and pursuing formal (legal) avenues to secure their rights legally.

[61] Discussions with Handoko 29 June and 5 September 2016 and Rumini 19 July 2016.
[62] Discussions with Handoko 29 June and Ratno 23 August 2016.
[63] This applied in the Pagilaran case.
[64] Both the second and third strategy were applied by the Tratak local farmers' group at different points until their decisive victory in 2015.

Mass mobilisation

Mass actions formed a crucial part of the coordinated strategy of the FPPB to demand acknowledgement as the representative voice of thousands of peasant farmers in Batang district. Local land claims required mobilisation of local resources and solidarity from other local groups in centrally coordinated actions, either in support of individual specific claims or general actions demanding support from District and Provincial officials, from the parliament and from the National Lands Agency[65]. The union's ability to mobilise thousands of members from Batang district was dependent on participation by local group leaders, movement activists and the mobilisation of financial support from sympathisers and supporters. Some of the mobilisations included staging actions in Jakarta including meetings with the President's wife and at the National Human Rights Commission as part of the strategy to secure the release of the 21 Pagilaran activists jailed in July 2000[66] (Safitri 2010). Others included mobilisations to the District and Provincial parliament offices or the offices and homes of the District head and Provincial governor. The largest FPPB action in 2003, mobilised thousands of members travelling in 260 trucks over a distance of 150km for 5 hours overnight to stage a demonstration at the head office of the Pagilaran company located at the Gadjah Mada University (UGM) in Yogyakarta[67].

These mass actions, often involving upward of 5000 and 10000 farmer activists in each action, presented demands relating to their different land claims to officials in government agencies at district and provincial levels[68]. As a union strategy, mass mobilisation was very popular amongst members. It gave them confidence that they had power in their organisation as state officials began to acknowledge them and take decisions in their favour particularly at district and provincial level[69] (Safitri 2010). The actions often resulted in promises of immediate action by government or company officials, which would then become the basis for future mobilisations if these officers did not fulfil their promises. These mass actions demonstrated actual collective social power not only to their adversaries, but also to the peasant farmers involved in the mass actions themselves. Without coordination of the multiple cases in a single district-wide organisation, the level of

[65] Discussions with Handoko 29 June, Ratno and Rohmadi 23 August 2016 and Tabah 30 August 2016.
[66] Discussion with Walinah 12 January 2017.
[67] Discussion with Rohmadi 15 December 2016.
[68] Discussions with Handoko 29 June, Ratno and Rohmadi 23 August 2016 and Tabah 30 August 2016.
[69] Interview with Tabah 30 August 2016 and Rohmadi 15 December 2016.

cross case solidarity and mobilisation would not have been achieved[70]. Their collective actions in a common organisation to obtain land gave them the capacity to achieve things, that as individual local groups they could not. This sentiment was important in building social solidarity, members' confidence to take action (bravery), as well as strongly influencing how government agencies and officials have responded to local people's rights claims on a range of issues[71].

Beyond their land claims, the FPPB have actively organised advocacy for members on a range of democratic and social rights issues, in particular for health and education rights (ELSAM 2012). Prior to advocacy by the FPPB, union members had difficulty accessing health services at hospitals and community health centres. They would often not be seen by doctors if they were recipients of poor citizens' health insurance programs, that is, they did not pay their own health insurance. FPPB leaders would come to the hospital and advocate directly to hospital administrators, and where necessary mobilising large numbers of members to attend the hospital demanding that people requiring medical treatment be given it. The union continues to advocate for social service rights, in particular health and education access for union members and their children. One of the most important outcomes in health care according to men and women members is the ability of women members to access better quality reproductive health services in particular for birthing and ante and post-natal care.

> Mothers go to the hospital… they have the Healthcare card [*Jaminan Kesehatan Nasional or Kartu Indonesia Sehat*[72]] but the hospital says they can't see them. We know it's a trick, they want paying customers… sadly it happens too often… So I would go the hospital and call mas Yoyok (*Bupati*). "Mas Yoyok, this mother needs help but the hospital says there is no doctor". He tells me wait while he calls the hospital director. Then in a little while the nurse would come and say sorry for the delay please come now you can be examined (Rohmadi 6 September 2016).

Union advocacy for guaranteed free education for the children of union members until year 9 schooling[73] has been an important part of the routine activities of the union,

[70] Discussions with Handoko 29 June, Ratno and Rohmadi 23 August 2016 and Tabah 30 August 2016.
[71] Discussions with Ratno and Rohmadi 23 August 2016 and Tabah 30 August 2016.
[72] These are two versions of the national government's poor people's health insurance program.
[73] National government policy is to provide free education to all children enrolled in state schools until year 9. Since *reformasi* there have been multiple strategies employed by state schools to raise revenue from parents, despite their obligation to provide free education. Schools often demand payment for an end of year school

responding in many cases to support members when schools ask for fee payments to release school reports. Despite these fee payments being illegal many families routinely faced this situation[74].

Tratak land case

The legal claim presented by members of the local land claim group PT4 in the Tratak case, was that the leasehold owned by the Tratak company should be void as the lands were abandoned lands (*tanah terlantarkan*). When residents discovered that the lands were to be rented out to the Sugar company Sragi in early 1998, around 430 families from Tumbrep, Wonomerto and Kambangan villages who were farming on the land[75] made protests against this plan. They argued that the company had abandoned the lands, did not operate them in accordance with their leasehold agreement and therefore they demanded that the leasehold agreement be cancelled and the land redistributed to local residents[76].

After they began their occupation in 1998, they combined their strategy of farming their occupied lands with mass mobilisations to district and provincial leaders and government agency offices, as well as lobbying and negotiations with district and provincial government officials and the National lands agency at district and provincial levels. These mobilisations involved families from this Tratak land case but also members of FPPB from the Pagilaran and Ambarawa Maju land claims. They demanded redistribution of the Tratak leasehold lands directly to the families represented in the land claim[77].

In 1999, a special team was appointed by the provincial office of the National Lands Agency to investigate the claim being made by the 430 families represented by P4T (Safitri 2010). The Batang district head asked that while the team conducted these investigations that families not carry out any farming activities on the land. The process of discussion and negotiation was conducted between 2001-2002 and in April 2002, the Governor for Central

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report otherwise their children will not be allowed to graduate at the end of a school year and move up to the next grade.

[74] Discussions with Rumini 11 August 2016 and Rohmadi 15 December 2016 and field notes 2016. Also see Rosser and Sulistiyanto (2013) "The politics of universal free basic education in decentralized Indonesia: Insights from Yogyakarta".

[75] As mentioned previously they were paying a third of their harvest to a former company supervisor.

[76] Discussions with Rumini 11 August 2016, Rohmadi 23 August 2016 and Tabah 30 August 2016 and field notes 2016.

[77] Discussions with Rumini 11 August 2016, Rohmadi 23 August 2016 and Tabah 30 August 2016 and field notes 2016.

Java Province made the formal recommendation to the national office of the National Lands Agency (BPN) to cancel the leasehold agreement. The legal basis for the cancellation was that the company had lost their rights to operate due to failure to comply with their operational responsibilities under the lease agreement, therefore the land must be redistributed to local residents represented by the P4T. After this recommendation was made, members of the P4T returned to the land and resumed farming while they waited on the formal arrangements to be carried out by the National Lands Agency[78].

From 1999, P4T members farmed the Tratak company lands in a situation of legal uncertainty, while periodically being subjected to a campaign of terror and intimidation by a group of thugs called *Roban Silaman*. Local peasant farmer activists were aware that this group had a history of working with the incumbent district head[79]. P4T members established security posts along several points of the boundaries of their claim in order to protect their homes, their farming activities and as points for meeting and coordination. They formed a roster to guard these posts where every active member took their turn. Their occupation called for solidarity and support from farmers' and other activist groups and individuals. The supportive responses from other land claim groups strengthened their confidence and resolve to continue their occupation for the next five years[80].

In 2007, a vigilante group organised by the Tratak company came to the land with the purpose of putting up a sign declaring the Tratak company had rights to the land. Local union members raised the alarm and gathered quickly to block their entry, women armed with sticks and axes taking the front line in the road blockade.

> If the women take the front line to block the road the thugs just stop and look at us. [You can] see it from their faces… they are doubtful, some like fearful… they shouldn't hit a woman… so they just stood around… eventually they left (Rumini 11 August 2016).

In response to ongoing intimidation and terror, the P4T local groups began a 40-day program of consolidation and prayer to strengthen their resolve to continue their struggle

[78] Discussions with Rumini 11 August 2016, Rohmadi 23 August 2016 and Tabah 30 August 2016 and field notes 2016.
[79] Data taken from Omah Tani document "Perkembangan Kasus OTL Pasuduluran Petani Penggarap PT Tratak (P4T)".
[80] Discussions with Rumini 11 August 2016, Rohmadi 23 August 2016 and Tabah 30 August 2016 and field notes 2016.

for formal recognition of land rights[81]. Most families remained active and involved in the union and did not back down in the face of intimidation.

By 2008 still no formal action had been taken to redistribute the land. The P4T farmers group continued farming their land and making representations to provincial and national officials. By 2011 the tenacity of union members had brought the national lands agency (BPN) national office to the point of agreeing to a cancellation of the leasehold agreement. The Tratak company then lodged a claim to repeal any cancellation of their leasehold in the national court. The local group responded by preparing themselves to present their case in court. Handoko Wibowo secured the assistance of a respected land case lawyer from Surabaya to work pro bono on their behalf. During 2015, a brave group of local PT4 farmers union members[82] went by bus to Jakarta every week for the national court hearings, armed with their documents, letters and complete case files of their legal campaign efforts to present at the hearings. These documents and file records had been diligently collected and organised by local members and stored safely and securely. Expert lawyers for the union, all working pro-bono, presented a clear case in law that the land had been abandoned by the company and with the evidence gathered over 16 years by the local union group, the Tratak company case was defeated before the hearings were over. The company brought no documents and records and their lawyers failed to appear after the third day of hearings in the court[83].

Despite harassment and intimidation of farmer families in their homes and on the land, and being attacked and beaten up by thugs when attending court hearings, these local union members did not give in. According to local members they won their land case ultimately because they refused to give up, not because some benevolent government officials or court judges had decided to help them[84].

[81] See chapter six for further discussion on this.
[82] Many members were afraid to go as they knew the stories of intimidation and physical violence that other members had experienced when attending court hearings at district level (Interview with Tabah 30 August 2016).
[83] Discussions with Rumini 11 August 2016, Rohmadi 23 August and 15 December 2016, and field notes 2016.
[84] Interview with Tabah 30 August 2016.

Pagilaran land case

The Association of Farmer Victims of the Pagilaran Plantation[85] was formed in January 1999 after 500 workers in the Pagilaran plantation were sacked with no severance compensation (Herwati 2013). The workers demanded compensation for their sackings and then moved to include demands for the restoration of lands that had been seized illegally in 1966 (Herwati 2013). In early 2000, 1200 residents[86] from two villages made claims on Pagilaran company plantation lands of a little over 200 hectares[87] that were located across four different village boundaries of Keteleng (Pagilaran), Kalisari, Bismo and Gondang villages. The initial actions included marking off lands and occupying them, but not yet farming. They were supported directly by Semarang Legal Aid (*Lembaga Bantuan Hukum*) and two independent legal advocates representing their case. As well as occupying land, they reported their land claim to the District People's Representative Council (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah – DPRD*) and the head of the Batang district National Lands Agency (BPN), as well as organising a meeting with the Pagilaran company management[88]. The district level police were involved in facilitating meetings that would agree to organise a formal check of company leasehold boundaries.

The deputy head of the National Lands Agency in Batang district said that the Pagilaran land case would come under provisions of Presidential Decree No.32 2000, that states that, where lands have been occupied by local residents, new ownership rights have to be given to the residents that are occupying that land. This agreement was then processed by a district staff member of the BPN between May and June 2000 (Safitri 2010). However, the agreements to process their claim by district and national authorities were not carried out in agreed timeframes. Local group members involved in the land claim became impatient and began to actively farm the land in July 2000. These direct actions led to almost immediate acts of repression and intimidation by police authorities and thugs (*preman*), not only on the occupied land, but also on the homes of people considered to be

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[85] This name was changed to the Kamulyan Mountain Communities Association in 2002.
[86] The residents making these claims were largely Pagilaran tea plantation workers.
[87] Later their claim would be expanded to include all lands that had been forcibly taken in 1966.
[88] Data from Omah Tani Document "Data Perkembangan Kasus OTL Paguyuban Masyarakat Gunung Kamulyan (PMGK) by Forum Perjuangan Petani Batang (FPPB)".

the local leaders of the claim. Within days, 21 local activists had been arrested either while they were farming or in their homes.

> We heard that Yosi had been taken. We could have run, but it was better [if we stayed together] so we didn't run. We had rights… we only wanted a chance for our families but we would have to fight (Ratno, 28 May 2016).

Those arrested were considered to be the most prominent leaders of the enclosures and farming actions.

At this point it became increasingly clear to union members that there were significant divisions amongst plantation staff and local residents that lived in the emplacement housing situated on plantation lands and in other villages adjacent to the plantation[89]. In the first instance staff with job security did not support the land claim[90]. These divisions amongst local residents were an obstacle to securing solid opposition to the company as local actors who supported the company, initially supervisors, administrative staff, security officers, local police and thugs, joined in harassing and intimidating farmers' group members and accusing them of being thieves[91]. A black propaganda campaign was made against the 21 jailed activists and they remained imprisoned for six months.

Other residents active in the union were terrorised for the 6 months that 21 activists were imprisoned and many had to flee their homes. They took refuge for several months in surrounding villages, including in the home of Handoko Wibowo in the adjacent sub-district who was actively supportive of their claims.

> … I shiver when I remember them arriving … it still leaves its mark [on me]. They had fled their homes, terrified, and come down the mountain, across fields, in the dark, to safety [in my home]. That's 15km at night carrying their children… They were very afraid... In my heart I knew I had to help them. That was the critical time, I should devote myself [to them] [92] (Handoko 19 July 2016).

FPPB members from the secretariat and other local land claim groups helped to coordinate their flight from their homes and find them places of refuge. A mass mobilisation and direct lobbying of district officials was initiated by the FPPB and the Semarang legal aid organisation to free the farmer activists and press for Pagilaran members' claims for land.

[89] Discussion with Ratno and Walijo 28 May 2016.
[90] In 2000 only 13% staff had any form of job security (LBH Semarang cited in Nugroho 2007).
[91] Discussion with Ratno 28 May 2016.
[92] Shortly after this event Handoko would officially close his private legal offices and become a full time advocate for Omah Tani members.

Women members from the Pagilaran claim, many of them the wives, sisters and daughters of those arrested, left for Jakarta to meet with the President's wife, Sinta Nuriyah, at the national palace and the National Human Rights Commission[93] (Safitri 2010). In Batang, local demonstrations were staged at the Batang district head's office demanding their release. After six months of tireless campaigning they successfully secured the release of these 21 local activists. The aftermath of this experience of criminalisation and terror would see most members in the local group become inactive for nearly two years, after which some would slowly regroup and join in Omah Tani activities again[94].

Decentralisation and State oriented strategies

Early after its declaration the FPPB /Omah Tani, adopted a strategic approach to working with state actors and institutions. Political decentralisation after 1999 presented new opportunities for local and district wide farmers' groups, working in collaboration with other social actors, to explore new relations with state actors and institutions in particular at district, as well as provincial and national levels. The union's state oriented strategies included land case advocacy to the officials and agencies with powers to execute reforms, process claims and to lobby for reforms to state legislation and regulations. They lobbied for reform that would simplify procedures and give district and provincial level authorities the capacity to directly make decisions on land claims. The FPPB affiliated early on to the Consortium for Agrarian Reform, (*Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria - KPA*[95]) a national peak body established to struggle for a fair agrarian system that ensures access to agrarian resources for all people[96].

The *Omah Tani* has consistently had the approach of working with elite state officials who are prepared to respond to the demands of local people and specifically to champion the rights of small farmers. From the outset, the FPPB directly targeted state officials in the National Lands Agency (*Badan Pertanahan Nasional*) and the Forestry Department, in the first instance at district and provincial levels and later at a national level, as well as the national minister for lands, the Batang district head and the provincial governor. Where

[93] Interview with Walinah 11 January 2016.
[94] Discussion with Ratno and Walijo 28 May 2016.
[95] http://www.kpa.or.id/news/profile/
[96] There is now little contact between the FPPB and the KPA. Handoko said that this was because they have very different views on strategy and tactics for the movement, in particular KPA lack concrete ideas about how to deal with practical situations of farmers on the ground (11 August 2016).

state actors ignored or belittled them, they responded with mass actions to demand audience with officials in order to present their land claims, justice for small farmers and for changes to state regulations that would make it easier for land to be redistributed to small farmers. Until 2008 the union consistently used mass mobilisation strategies to the offices of government officials and company headquarters[97].

From 2007 the union developed a program for farmers to 'Go Politic'. This 'Go Politic' strategy had several elements including participating in elections that had strategic importance for the signing of leasehold contracts, while continuing their legal approaches for individual land claims. They continued their approach of lobbying state actors and institutions directly, holding political education classes for members and they began to make strategic links with worker, students and other social movement activists from Jakarta who would visit them to participate in activist training and discussion.

One of the key actors in this decision to 'Go Politic' was the lawyer advocate and FPPB activist, Handoko Wibowo. Handoko has been a leading figure in the Omah Tani since its formation in 1999. Handoko became involved in student politics at Satya Wacana Christian University in Salatiga, Central Java in the 1980s. While studying law he combined his advocacy skills and social justice pro-democracy politics as an advocate for sex workers and homosexual and transsexual people, in a nearby red light district. After graduating he opened an office in Batang as a legal advocate representing many wealthy clients, in particular ethnic Chinese business people. Different events in his life had influenced his consciousness for social justice and human rights. However, it was the actions of farmers in his local district of Batang in the late 1990s that led him to make the significant life choice to throw in his lot with the struggle of the local people in the villages surrounding his home. From here on word spread that he was an excellent legal advocate and could be trusted when people were in crisis. In 2001, he officially closed his advocate office and dedicated his time, personal resources, contacts and extensive social movement and political party networks to supporting the struggle of small farmers in Batang.

[97] Group discussion with Tratak farmer leaders meeting 7 September 2016, Meeting with Pagilaran OTL members 11 January 2017. Discussions with Handoko 29 June, Ratno and Rohmadi 23 August 2016 and Tabah 30 August 2016.

Handoko provided not only essential legal and other advocacy advice for all local groups, he drew on extensive political and financial contacts that he is personally involved with to support the struggle of the FPPB. He remains living in Batang district, staying close to members and active principally as an advocate for Omah Tani, rejecting all approaches to stand as a legislative candidate and other political party offers. As well as being the principal long term legal advocate for the FPPB / Omah Tani he provides his home as a centre for organising. Handoko has extensive links with political actors at national and provincial levels, in particular the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan - PDI-P*) and the *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) and connections with wealthy patrons, all of which he has drawn on extensively since 1999 in the interests of supporting local people to secure access to land. Many political figures have visited the Omah Tani secretariat and met with hundreds and sometimes thousands of members in Omah Tani meetings, including Budiman Sudjatmiko and Megawati Soekarnoputri who attended a meeting at the secretariat in 2007 (Safitri 2010).

In 2008 the FPPB began to change their strategic approach. Mass mobilisations had been critical in the first ten years of the organisation but after a time there was mobilisation fatigue amongst some non-farmer activists, a decline in financial resources from external supporters and a significant decline in support from solidarity actors beyond the farmers themselves. At a more local level, members said that they were always ready to mobilise if they could find the necessary financial resources to support their mobilisation[98]. For some members mobilisation was the preferred option when the initial successes that they had achieved for local land claims in the first few years of struggle was overturned by higher level state authorities or newly elected officials, or when the decisions were overridden or simply not acted upon by government agency bureaucrats at a national level[99]. In contrast, leading non-farmer members in the secretariat argued they no longer needed to maintain a high level of ongoing mass mobilisations, as they had secured their reputation as a significant force that was recognised and acknowledged by important state actors. They argued they needed to position themselves politically, directly within positions of the state

[98] Group discussion with Tratak farmer leaders meeting 7 September 2016 and meeting with Pagilaran OTL members 11 January 2017. Discussions with Handoko 29 June 2016, Ratno and Rohmadi 23 August 2016 and Tabah 30 August 2016.
[99] Discussion with Handoko, Tabah and Rohmadi 19 July 2016.

at village, district and national levels in government positions that had direct authority in relation to land claims.

In 2008, a conflict emerged in the leadership of the FPPB that led to a formal split in 2009. Ratno argues that in part, the origins of this split lay in the loss of funding to activist NGOs[100] that were supporting these farmer activists.

> From 1998 many NGOs promoted local and regional leaders [to support farmers' campaigns] because they were receiving large sources of funding from overseas. When the funding stopped suddenly [*mandek*]… if they wanted to attend meetings with us they had to pay their own transport… so we met [them] less and less often (Ratno 23 August 2016).

The majority of non-farmer activists left the organisation after secretly putting themselves forward as candidates in the 2009 national elections running with the Reform Star Party (*Partai Bintang Reformasi*). They did this without consultation with union members from the local farmers' groups or the union secretariat as a formal body (Mahsun 2017). This contravened union rules and when they were confronted about their actions, they had no choice but to resign[101]. This event left only a handful of non-farmer activists remaining as members of the union and the union formally changed its name to the Omah Tani in 2009. After this split, the 'Go Politic' strategy was pursued by local groups running local farmers' group members as candidates for village head in the villages affected by the land claims. The union's strategy was to field local union members as candidates in village head elections from 2007 and they would later support a candidate in the District head elections in February 2012.

Local village head elections

Participation in village elections was made a major part of Omah Tani's 'Go Politic' platform and formed part of their strategy to obtain rights to land. Village heads have responsibilities for recommending or opposing, as well as signing off on, the cancellation or extension of private or state contracts on lands that are being claimed by local farmers. Further they believed this strategy would help them to strengthen the position of their

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[100] According to Ratno many international donors that had funded pro-democracy groups since *reformasi* either reduced their funding significantly, or changed their funding targets to groups that were not involved in direct advocacy with grass roots campaign groups after 2005-2006 (Discussion with Ratno 23 August 2016).
[101] The outcome of the election results for these former union leaders were very poor (Mahsun 2017).

members in their villages[102]. Omah Tani's stated platform was to bring about a local government that is democratic, accountable, corruption-free, and which fosters popular participation in policy making and development. They hoped that this platform would draw support from residents not directly involved in land claims.

Omah Tani stood candidates in village head elections in ten villages and were successful in seven of these (Safitri 2010). Omah Tani provided extensive support to their members who became village heads providing training on village functioning and monthly forums to share problems and experiences. However, despite these efforts to prepare their members to carry out these roles, there were several unexpected challenges to follow. Firstly, the union underestimated the preparation that candidates required to know to fulfil their responsibilities as village head after they were elected. Secondly, the challenges in each village situation were different and members on the ground had no experience in how to provide support to their village head member. While some successful candidates made attempts improve conditions for poor residents, to develop programs to support small farmers and to take steps to secure the land claims for members, they were sometimes actively blocked by village officials holding the position of village secretary (*Sekretaris Desa*), a public service appointed position. In one village which elected an Omah Tani member, the village secretary had been the right-hand man of the previous village head and actively blocked initiatives by the new village head (Safitri 2010).

Thirdly, previously existing power relations at village level made it difficult to secure majority support for in the Village Consultative Council (BPD) for their stated platform[103]. Many members expected that after they elected a union member as village head that things would change straight away. What they had not anticipated was the struggle that would be needed to shift the social relations of power still evident in these institutions that historically had always supported companies and wealthier peasant farmers. To further complicate matters, some villages that were affected by the land claim had very few residents who were union members and they were unable mobilise support for a union

[102] Group discussion with Tratak farmer leaders meeting 7 September 2016 and meeting with Pagilaran OTL members 11 January 2017. Discussions with Handoko 29 June, Ratno and Rohmadi 23 August 2016 and Tabah 30 August 2016. Field notes 2016-2017.
[103] Discussion with Tabah, Rohmadi and Ratno 28 September 2016.

candidate for village head[104]. Without 100% support from village heads that would make recommendations[105] on the renewal or cancellation of leasehold agreements, these leasehold agreements could not be successfully blocked at the village level.

In one case, a farmer activist in the Pagilaran case was elected village head through the mobilisation of FPPB member support. After being elected as village head, he failed to take any direct action in the interests of the local farmers' group. Members recognise that there are a combination of factors that influenced this situation, but one factor is the situation of members living in the emplacement areas which included this elected village head[106]. Four emplacement areas are themselves administrative hamlets situated within two separate village governments, all lying within the land area of the leasehold agreement. As a result, people's housing security and rights to access housing rehabilitation funding from government is a point of dispute between the local government and the Pagilaran plantation company. These emplacement houses were built in the 1920s after residents' houses were burnt and their rights to occupy in the 1920s became linked to agreeing to work as plantation workers. At the same time these houses have been passed down through several generations of residents since the 1920s. During the violence and terror over several months in 2000, several activists who were jailed were evicted permanently from their houses. Actions like this have made it difficult to maintain consistent participation from many members located in these emplacement hamlets as they fear the loss of their homes. One Omah Tani activist from the Tratak case, who is also active in the Omah Tani secretariat, said that,

> … it is tragic… If the village head[107] was still one of us and he stepped forward with Omah Tani and the Bupati, Waaahhh we could [do it]. The ones in the emplacement are not all members… even a majority of residents say they aren't members [anymore] but we know… if the village government took a stand for the hamlets in the emplacement to be taken out of the HGU [leasehold agreement], then more people would join the union…. They wouldn't be afraid of losing their homes (Tabah 30 August 2016).

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[104] Discussions with Handoko and Ratno 6 September 2106.

[105] It should be remembered that a single land claim might fall within the geographic area of between three and five separate villages requiring support from all village heads from these villages.

[106] Discussion with Ratno and Walijo 28 May 2016, Ratno and Rohmadi 23 August 2016, Tabah 30 August 2016 and Ratno, Walijo and Ina 10 January 2017.

[107] This village head was supported as a FPPB member and won his first term based on the campaign organised by local group members.

Members believe that the village head was both threatened by the company that his family will lose their housing and employment and bribed by the company at the same time. While this village head retains his activist credentials in a provincial wide farmers organisation[108], he no longer relates to or acts as a member of the Omah Tani and has actively discriminated against active Omah Tani members when carrying out of his village head duties. He has not directed national funding earmarked for housing rehabilitation or clean water schemes towards residents in his village nor has he ensured that village members can access health and education programs[109] through national programs such as Healthy Indonesian Families (*Keluarga Indonesia Sehat*) or the family Hope Program (*Program Keluarga Harapan*). After his first term as village head, the company provided him with funds to support his re-election campaign and he was successful[110]. During both terms as village head, rather than promoting the interests of union members and their land claim, he has been active working with the company to promote local eco-tourism as an alternative industry and source of income for local residents.

Members reported there were some positive experiences with Omah Tani members elected as village head between 2007 and 2010, but none that had any impact on the status of their land claims. The positive benefits were the delivery of programs to village members who had always had rights to them but had not been implemented by previous village administrations. After the initial experience with these elections, the union decided not to field further candidates as the resources used would be more effective in developing economic programs for members.

The new village laws were not considered important to members when they were discussed in informal and formal meetings. Based on the experience with members elected as village heads they did not see that the village laws would produce significant changes for landless members.

[108] Including being profiled as a farmer rights activist in KPA's journal in 2013.
[109] These program services are provided to village members in other hamlets who do not live in the emplacement hamlets thus village statistics show delivery of services to residents.
[110] Discussion with Walijo, Walinah and Ratno 10 January 2017.

> The Village Law no.6 won't bring any change for the poorest members, that is the landless residents. If the government has been corrupt in the past they will continue to be corrupt. If they ignored our need for rice or healthcare before then a new law won't change anything (Ratno 23 September 2016).

Decentralisation and district opportunities for strategic alliances

Bambang Bintoro was elected as a PDI-P candidate for Batang District head[111] in 2002. Despite gaining support from the PDI-P as a pro-democracy activist in the early period of *Reformasi,* as District head he proved himself to be corrupt and in direct ways abandoned peasant farmer activists by supporting companies that were in conflict with FPPB members (Safitri 2010; Mahsun 2017). This included signing the extension of leasehold agreements for companies like PT Pagilaran in 2008. In 2009, Yoyok Riyo Sudibyo, a former military officer in the National Intelligence Agency (*Badan Intelijen Negara - BIN*) met with Handoko Wibowo from the Omah Tani union and asked for support in the 2012 Batang district head elections. Handoko proposed that Yoyok spend two years living and working with Omah Tani and then in return for supporting his election campaign he should make a social contract committing himself to concrete actions to improve the conditions for landless people and small farmers of Batang[112]. This contract included specific agreements to support the resolution of pending land cases in Batang in favour of union members and to increase and target district funds to programs for small farmers. A contract with clear agreements was drawn up. The strategic goals of the agreement were to resolves or strengthen the position of local people in relation to specific land claims and to provide technical support such as irrigation infrastructure and new water supplies to local farmers to improve their capacity to farm successfully. Omah Tani campaigned for and promoted Yoyok as a candidate who supported and backed *rakyat* (ordinary people). When Yoyok held mass campaign meetings, the Omah Tani mobilised thousands of members to participate[113].

[111] The Batang district was formerly a stronghold of the PKI and PNI before the New Order and the PDI-P was the dominant force in the early period of *reformasi.* Discussions with Handoko, Ratno and Tabah 19 July 2016.
[112] Group discussion with Tratak farmer leaders meeting 7 September 2016 and meeting with Pagilaran OTL members 11 January 2017. Discussions with Handoko 29 June, Ratno and Rohmadi 23 August 2016 and Tabah 30 August 2016.
[113] Group discussion with Tratak farmer leaders meeting 7 September 2016 and meeting with Pagilaran OTL members 11 January 2017. Discussions with Handoko 29 June, Ratno and Rohmadi 23 August 2016 and Tabah 30 August 2016.

Yoyok attended scores of local farmers' groups meetings at local gatherings (Mahsun 2017, 479). Not only did Omah Tani members support Yoyok, they campaigned for two years against Bintoro and his wife who was contesting the 2012 election. They actively used local members' meetings, radio and print media to mobilise support for Yoyok and to delegitimize Bintoro and what they called his corrupt regime.

After Yoyok was elected, Omah Tani advised him to hold routine public meetings every 35 days (*malem jumat kliwon*[114]), where any Batang district resident could come seek support or make complaints about problems with government services or corruption. These meetings were well attended with hundreds of local residents attending these meetings (ELSAM 2012). All government department heads had to be present and when issues or problems were raised, the department head would have to respond to the problem and propose solutions (ELSAM 20012). When officials did not then respond adequately or implement a direction from Yoyok to resolve the issue, Yoyok would remove the person from their position[115]. As a result, Yoyok was highly unpopular with many public servant officials within district government agencies.

There were mixed results from the strategy to train and back their own candidate for the position of Bupati. Yoyok did support union members to effectively access government facilities, funding and programs, including funding resources for union projects (water supplies for household consumption and agriculture, some costs of administration of land claims) and for small business initiatives for individual members. Yoyok also demonstrated a 'clean' government program, being awarded the Bung Hatta anti-corruption award in 2015 in acknowledgement of his record in fighting corruption[116]. With Yoyok as a partner in situ at district level from 2012-2017, their contract assisted Omah Tani to achieve some concrete benefits for members. At the initiative of Handoko and Burhan, an NU activist, Yoyok established collaboration with organizations such as the well-known NGOs Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) and Transparency International Indonesia (TII). Yoyok was diligent in removing public servants who did not deliver services to local residents and the union

[114] The Javanese calendar has a 35 day 'monthly' cycle. The evening (*malem*) before *Jumat* (Friday) *Kliwon* is of particular spiritual/cultural significance to Javanese rural cultural practices. It is considered to be a powerful moment to be engaged in spiritual and other activities.
[115] Discussion with Rohmadi 23 August 2016.
[116] https://jateng.tribunnews.com/2018/11/13/hampir-menangis-yoyok-riyo-sudibyo-cobaan-hidup-terberat-saya-ketika-jadi-bupati

would ask him to intervene directly when their members were not respected and supported by government officials. Yoyok provided original government documents from government archives to support the legal case for the Tratak land case and fulfilled promises to provide irrigation infrastructure to this land. At the same time, Omah Tani members involved in the Tratak case, hold the view that their success was 'in spite of' rather the because of the role of government officials including Yoyok[117].

> For the farmers, Yoyok [Bupati] didn't really help… In [the case of] Pagilaran the Bupati has the authority to [take the steps to] resolve this case. He can make a meeting between the local members and the company to find a solution… housing security [for those] in the emplacement and some land for each member… but so far nothing… In Tratak [land case] Yoyok didn't do more than provide a copy of a government document from the Bintoro [previous Bupati] period that we needed [to complete our legal evidence]. In Tratak we won our claim because of the painstaking [*susah payah*] struggle of hundreds of families over 17 years… we didn't give up (Tabah 30 August 2016).

> Yoyok can do something [in our case] but… he's very busy… some say he is avoiding... He should stand again [as Bupati] because he made that promise he would help us... he hasn't finished what he already committed to do… I saw him the other day, he said sorry, but he still wants to help us. I'm hopeful but some have given up [on him] (Walijo 11 January 2017).

After only one term in office Yoyok declined to stand again despite having not fulfilled several contract promises, most importantly those relating to the resolution of land claims. While there were some concrete outcomes of the alliance with Yoyok, there have not been any long term improvements in district institutional policy or culture and to date there is no evidence of long-term structural changes in favour of the rights of poor farmers. In the months leading up to the end of his period as district head, Yoyok expressed his private opinion (and frustration) that farmers did not need to know about politics.

> Omah Tani is too concerned with politics… Farmers don't need politics… Omah Tani should be organising them in farmers' cooperatives, teaching them how to grow produce successfully[118] (Yoyok 6 September 2016).

Omah Tani members said that Yoyok modelled himself on a populist Jokowi style trajectory and that he had aspirations for higher office. Yoyok built a significant profile as a clean government official during his one term and was promised political opportunities by

[117] Discussion with Tabah and Ratno 14 December 2016.
[118] This attitude strongly mirrors New Order ideas about the role of rural peasant farmers after 1965.

different parties, none of which have come to fruition as of 2018. Yoyok reportedly spent his last year in office trying to lobby deals to be appointed running mate in the Jakarta gubertanorial elections[119].

The Omah Tani did not support any candidate in the 2017 district election, in part due to lack of time to prepare support for another candidate and partly because many members were disappointed with the lack of progress on their claims during Yoyok's term. At this stage there are no plans to field candidates for any positions in the foreseeable future. The assessment of the results of these election campaigns revealed some weaknesses in the capacity of the local farmers' groups (OTLs) and in the overall Omah Tani strategy. One of the conclusions of the union from their 'Go Politic' campaign is that they need to organise to support their members to achieve greater economic independence and security. While legal advocacy remains part of the Omah Tani strategy there is now a serious focus on building stronger, more economically secure local farmers' groups (OTL). They see that this will strengthen members' capacity to successfully farm land, in particular for the Tratak local union members who won their legal land claim in 2016. This is reflected in a new campaign 'Go Economy'.

> We realise without our own economic security we are disabled (*cacat*)... we are held back in how we can struggle… But to achieve it we need a collective approach. Some members agree, but for some they think the challenges are too big… some want to sell their land and start a small business... they think it will be safer, more secure for them. On one side I don't accept that… but I can understand them (Handoko 31 January 2017).

Without improved economic security for union members, they risk a loss of member confidence including the possibility for farmers to lose the land they have fought for if they fall into debt. Much of the energy and resources of members directed towards their 'Go Politic' campaign reduced the capacity of the union to support their members' most pressing need to produce food and draw income from their farming activities. Over time, this has resulted in members having less need for and sometimes no direct individual benefit in remaining active in the union.

[119] Discussions with Handoko 16 December 2016, Ratno and Rohmadi 23 August 2016 and Tabah 30 August 2016.

5.4 Post- Script: Omah Tani and the land cases as of 2017

Since the first occupations in 1998 and the formation of the FPPB in 1999, the movement for land justice for small farmers expanded to include many different actors not only the farmers themselves. Over time, however, as the national *reformasi* movement declined and struggles for individual land cases became protracted, there was a growing difference in opinion on strategic approaches leading to a breakdown in solidarities between local farmer groups and most non-farmer activists. The split in early 2009 left the organisation almost totally comprised of local farmer activists with only Handoko Wibowo and one other local Batang resident as non-farmers remaining active in the organisation.

Omah Tani retains a small collective secretariat group of five people with four of them drawn from the local Tratak and Pagilaran land claim groups. Handoko's home continues to remain open and available to any farmers that need support and the secretariat provide support, advocacy and advice to local groups as they are able. Until 2017 there have been four successful resolutions of land conflicts in favour of nearly 1500 peasant farmer families, in the form of private land certificates for small farmers in two cases and two agreements to institutionalise the joint use of land with the Indonesian State Forestry Company. These joint use agreements remain valid in to the future with rights to be extended to the children and grandchildren of the claimants already granted rights.

Local farmer group committee leaders have been the critical factor in the survival and development of the Omah Tani union. These leaders are local group members themselves committed to the long term success of their campaign to secure access to land. They have been actively involved in the wider political campaigns of the union, at times more focussed on implementing election strategies than on developing programs for their members to farm successfully. While there has been no formal assessment by the union as a whole of the balance in their union strategies and how they are implemented, several leaders identified three important lessons from their experiences to date. Firstly, that local leaders and group members should be engaged in the first instance to ensure their members can secure access to land. Secondly, that while alliances with movement activists and strategies to lobby state actors for agreements with state institutions are important, they were not always the critical components in their successful strategies to acquire and successfully farm it. The third lesson was that the experience of building solidarity through

collective action both within and across land cases had been a significant factor in the survival of the Omah Tani and the success of the four land claims.

Tratak land case

Alongside the victory of their land case in late 2015, local P4T group members have developed their political knowledge and skills and their networks have expanded greatly. This has impacted on the way that they engage in social relations in their villages. In 2015 a local farmers' group elder, Pam, successfully initiated community opposition to his village government's decision to sell the water rights of a village natural spring to a private water company.

> I didn't know [before] that we could have a real say about what is done in the village… the village government always seemed far [beyond us] … I'm not educated how could I tell the village head what to do? Since *OmahTani* I [have] changed. I have learnt so much… I became confident to speak up. When it was proposed to sell our [village] water to the company… I knew it was wrong and I said so… the people need to manage the water, not a company… other [village] residents agreed with me. We stopped it (Pam, 72, 15 December 2016).

Other farmer group leaders said that they know more about their rights and that they can change some things if they work together. At the same time, they said that not everyone is so fearless and strong to keep up the struggle[120]. With the decline and eventually stopping of mass actions many members have become less active in day to day activities.

> We miss the big actions… my neighbour just said to me yesterday… [we] miss getting together meeting with everyone from the other groups… standing together. There is no word to describe how strong we are and other people see that (Rumini 11 August 2016).

Several informants in the Tratak case said that the experience that is of greatest value to them is their opportunity to learn and understand more about the world around them, how it works and the confidence they have to act on what they think is important and necessary[121]. While they have participated in elections they do not believe that politicians and political parties are the most important things in achieving success in their campaigns.

[120] Discussion with Pam 15 December 2016. Discussion with Ina and Walinah 11 January 2017. Discussion with Rumini and Tabah 11 August 2016.
[121] Field notes from informal discussions with 10 members while preparing for a national independence day celebration and a local members meeting in Pagilaran.

Solidarity, working together, is how they have started to make changes in their lives. Tabah said that members' ideas about society, religion, and sexuality are more open and inclusive compared to non-members living in the same areas.

> [our culture] is like new. We have experienced so much, what we think, what we do is already so different. We have met all sorts of people… nothing really surprises us anymore… like the [trans] sisters[122]. They helped us, they defended us… they became our sisters [*saudara*] and we've helped them when they needed it. Our own family… some of them attacked us… we cut them off (Tabah 20 August 2016).

At a national level they know they have achieved recognition. When the Tratak case was finally resolved in favour of local residents in late 2015, the Minister for Agrarian Reform and planning, Ferry Mursyidan Baldan, the Central Java Governor and member of parliament Budiman Sudjatmiko attended the formal transfer of lands to local farmers in February 2016. Ferry said that "the agrarian reform in Batang district is the first step [in future agrarian reform]. Six more districts will be following [in the redistribution of land]."[123]

Land victories and individual property rights

The outcome of the group land claim has been the granting of land rights in the form of individual property rights. This has made land a tradeable commodity which intrinsically changes the nature and function of land for those previously seeking secure access as a means of survival in the first instance. While legal confirmation of their rights to use land in the form of private property (*hak milik*) land certificates is a relief for many local activists and a true moral victory, it has had the effect of extending the function and value of land to that of a commodity not only holding its prior use value. This has had several implications for how local groups have dealt with managing the agrarian land reform agreements with government. While there are efforts by local leaders in the former Tratak case to initiate collective approaches to farming to overcome the problems members face farming individually, most members tend to conduct farming individually or in collaboration with one or more local farming families from their local area.

As farmers with individual small pieces of land they must now struggle with all the challenges that other small farmers have but without the long-term experience, knowledge,

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[122] Batang district has an active transgender community that have actively participated in supporting FPPB/Omah Tani activities, from meetings and training to mass demonstrations.
[123] https://mediaindonesia.com/read/detail/29157-perjuangan-panjang-itu-kini-berbuah-manis

as well as formal and informal relationships that make small plot farming a viable livelihood in other regions such as in Sidomukti village[124]. Soil fertility, fluctuating prices for farm produce, access to markets and limited operational capital are all major issues. The cost of improving soil fertility is high and the results are not immediate. Sudden private ownership of land without long term relationships in making agricultural livelihoods, as we have seen in Banyusidi, makes the struggle for social reproduction more challenging. According to local leaders in the Tratak case[125], this highlights a weakness in the organisation of the Omah Tani union since the outset. Their orientation as a union has been to advocate for democratic and political rights with less attention paid to the economic rights and practical needs of small farmer members. Regional and national farmers' groups and NGOs oriented to agrarian reform and rural development also appear to be less than aware of the need, or unable, to advocate effectively for basic economic rights that underpin the capacity of smallholder farmers to reproduce themselves.

Individual members in the Tratak land case have different experiences of working on the land and different resources available to them as farmers. Families who have been farming the land for subsistence and as a source of cash incomes since before the 1980s described having an attachment to the land as the source of family livelihoods[126]. Some members have links to traders and small capital means that support their livelihood efforts and their ability to reproduce themselves. For other families who farmed only for subsistence needs or planted hardwood trees to generate a side income, they do not always have the same strong attachments to land. Some people wish to sell the land because they feel unable to farm successfully and the proceeds of land sale could be used to finance other small business opportunities[127] with less risk. Starting out to farm as individuals, without extensive farming knowledge and experience, or the necessary means of production, in particular access to operational capital, is daunting and in many cases the odds are stacked against their success. In addition, fertility of soil and access to water on the

[124] See chapter four.
[125] Discussion with Tabah 30 August 2016 and Rohmadi 23 September 2016.
[126] Discussion with Rohmadi 23 September 2016.
[127] The sale of land granted to small farmers has been a common experience across land struggles nationally as well as internationally (See Li 2014, Bachriadi, Lucas and Warren 2013).

land that has been redistributed is not uniform across the land claim and this has already lead to tensions, jealousies and sometimes sabotage of other members' efforts.

Previous relationships built over the last 17-18 years based on collective struggle appear fragile for some members as they try to make productive use of the land they now own. Jealousy and competitive rivalries have emerged and leaders in local groups and in the central organisation are struggling to find ways to promote and support positive social and economic initiatives for all members[128]. These local leaders hope that these initiatives will again strengthen social solidarities as families struggle to find a way to make their new small pieces of land productive and secure livelihoods. The 'GO Economy' program in this local land case has become a concrete strategy to support members to hold on to their land. Their program includes a common housing project and common land for a union local economy project[129]. They encourage members to organise management of the successful land claim as a collective project of the Omah Tani union, rather than individually. The local farmers' group leaders organise workshops that provide farming skills training in seedling production, irrigation, principles of organic farming, financial planning and to study trading opportunities in their local areas[130]. Omah Tani have initiated a farmers' cooperative that that they hope will support member with affordable operational loans but this is still in its early stages.

Pagilaran Land Case

The legal argument for the Pagilaran case rests on the historical claim by members' families that they were illegally evicted by the military from lands adjacent to the original leasehold held by the P&T Lands company in 1966. This claim is highly political with wide-ranging implications if it were to be successful as the experience of plantation workers in this case was repeated across many cases in Java in the mid 1960s (Herwati 2013)[131]. The leasehold signed in 1964 that was due to expire in 2008 presented an opportunity to reject the renewal of the leasehold, however a technical failure by a supporter to lodge an objection to the extension on time at the national level resulted in the company's contract

[128] Discussion with Tabah 14 December 2016 and Rohmadi 15 December 2016.
[129] Discussion with Tabah and Handoko 14 December 2016 and Rohmadi 15 December 2016.
[130] Discussion with Tabah and Handoko 14 December 2016 and Rohmadi 15 December 2016.
[131] It is cases like this that might benefit from national level coordination as a form of class action.

being renewed in 2008. This event caused significant distress and highlighted for local group members and Handoko Wibowo the need to be self-reliant in all matters[132].

As of 2017, domestic legal avenues appear closed for the foreseeable future, in particular after Bupati Yoyok's failure to take further action in this matter prior to the end of his term. Local group members have discussed the possibility of pursuing a new campaign strategy, linking their land claim to the mass violence in 1965 and seeking support and political solidarity both domestically and internationally. Because the seizure of people's land is entwined with such a controversial historical event this is a case in which the government has a vested interest in not acknowledging the truth of the events.

Many members in this case are no longer active because intimidation of activists remains, but there is significant sympathy and support by local residents for members who have remained active in the local area. At the same time, the majority of young people born in the region have had to leave the area over the last 10 years to seek work after graduating from junior high school because the plantation will not employ them and there is little or no other work close to their homes. Fear and insecurity in employment and housing continue to undermine direct solidarity action by many residents that live in the emplacement dwellings. Local group members continue to initiate projects that benefit all local residents, not only members that have remained active. They have built a mosque for hamlet residents and initiated, organised and maintain water supplies direct to people's houses, strengthening local solidarities based on responding to wider community needs, not only the needs of members claiming land.

5.5 Conclusion

The dynamics of local and regional political economies in Batang district have long favoured the interests of large agrarian capital. The rise of the New Order brought with it the more complete domination of agrarian resources by plantation and forestry industries in Batang district. The grinding exploitation of plantation workers, the loss of access by subaltern actors to expanding areas of land, the economic crisis of the late 1990s and the mass protests of the 1997-98 period provided the setting for many poor rural actors to take actions to claim land in 1998-99. The fall of the Suharto dictatorship presented a more open

[132] Interview with Handoko 29 June 2016 and Ratno 23 August 2016.

political space where pro-democracy activists sought to build solidarity with marginalised rural actors.

Successive political regimes have applied legislative as well as administrative strategies and direct repressive measures, including criminalisation of subaltern actors to secure access to land for agrarian capital investors. The social relations of production in plantation regions, which favour rural elites and companies investing in rural production, are manifest in the power dynamics of village and district institutions. Where village governments side with plantation companies or the Indonesian State Forestry Company, residents making claims on land are largely excluded from effective participation and representation in village structures, leaving little option but to form independent organisations to pursue their political claims and democratic rights.

The exchange of urban and rural geographies of knowledge between subaltern groups and other pro-democracy actors, were critical in the formation of the FPPB as a district-wide representative union. The formation of the FPPB introduced a new political actor to the Batang district political economy, which through the collective and mobilised solidarity of members forced state actors to take them seriously. By initiating new independent organisations of action, subaltern actors and their allies were able to craft strategies aimed at shifting long established social relations of power in their local political economies, adopting cohesive strategies that relied on the formation of new relations of social solidarity, mass mobilisations, lobbying of state actors and legal approaches.

The FPPB/Omah Tani has been successful in adopting strategic programs in support of their claims to access and use land, achieving several final legal outcomes for four local farmers' groups as of 2017. Their early strategy of collective mass organisation and mobilisation secured their position as an acknowledged political force in Batang district, demonstrating their capacity to apply and modify as necessary, multi-pronged strategic approaches in support of their members' land claims and other social rights. They have forged alliances with other pro-poor actors, urban workers, state and political party actors and asserted their ongoing political independence[133] with the flexibility to make and change tactical approaches to cooperation with state institutions and state actors over time.

[133] Political independence from political parties.

The individual land cases examined here highlight the many ways that social relations of power fragment the circumstances and experiences of the oppressed (Mamdani 1996). In the geographic spaces where these local land conflicts have taken place, the participation of subaltern actors is not universal. In the Pagilaran case, 1200 families or around 30% of residents in the affected villages joined local organisations. In Tratak the involvement of 430 families from 3 adjacent villages (a total of four hamlets) was a relatively small portion of the total village residents living adjacent to the claim. Thus the formation of a district wide peasant farmers' union was another critical factor in the capacity of many local groups to pursue their land claims.

Despite a strong orientation to engaging with state actors and institutions, in particular standing electoral candidates at village and district level, the evidence indicates that long established power relations in these village and district structures cannot be shifted simply by electing good candidates[134]. The experience of the election of members as village heads in practice did not secure control of village institutions. Village secretaries and village representative councils often blocked initiatives to support local farmer activists.

At the same time the growing recognition of Omah Tani's political clout in the Batang district led a former military officer, Yoyok Riyo Sudibyo, himself a Batang born citizen, to initiate collaboration with the Omah Tani and to make a political contract whereby Omah Tani would support him as district head candidate in the 2012 district elections. As a newcomer to Batang politics, his success was ascribed in large part to the mobilising campaign of the Omah Tani (Mahsun 2017). While this successful collaboration brought about some significant pro-poor reforms in government, in particular clamping down on corrupt practices and the replacement of corrupt or non-responsive government officials, this was not enough to shift the broader social relations of power, in particular in state bureaucracies, which remain dominated by actors that support large agrarian and forestry based industries at the expense of subaltern groups. The election of an individual as district head proved inadequate to the task of shifting broader social relations of power in favour of rural poor actors.

[134] In contrast to Banyusidi (Magelang) case study.

The land claim case studies presented here demonstrate that the capacity of local popular organisations to realise their political claims lies in part, in building social relations of solidarity with other local actors with similar claims to consolidate themselves as a recognised political force. Cross-sectoral alliances between multiple pro-democracy actors proved critical in strengthening the mobilisation capacity of multiple subaltern groups and their allies. Further, the strengthening of local organisations requires serious attention in developing increasing economic autonomy for the members of local groups and their organisations. This became most evident after land claims were successful and the individual economic interests of members began to clash with previously highly successful social solidarities. Here decisions were made by individual famer group members that were often short term, responding to immediate individual needs, but with the result of disrupting relationships of social solidarity that were formed during many years of collective struggles. The demonstrated weakness of the Omah Tani's organisation here, has been its difficulty in responding to members' needs (or claims) in relation to agrarian production, that is their need for access to productive capital, improving soil conditions and water supplies, secure market prices, and challenging exploitative relations with market traders (*bakul*), all factors that underlie their ability to make secure livelihoods and reproduce themselves. The coming years will show whether the relations of solidarity and cooperation developed during their struggles for land might become the basis for forging strong social relations of production that support successful farming in these local communities in the long term.

Chapter 6: Subaltern Ideologies and the Formation of Political Claims

6.1 Introduction

Critical scholars who examine the concept and practice of power in Java have tended to present hegemonic views of 'Javanese' culture and concepts of power that focus on the centrality of elite actors. These views position subaltern actors at the bottom of the political order with no power of their own, but willing to follow charismatic leaders with 'subversive' political ideas (Anderson 1972; Kartodirdjo 1972). While Anderson notes the apparent contradiction in this view for an Indonesian nationalist movement that placed liberation of the 'little' people (*rakyat)* as a central premise in popular struggles against the Dutch, and in the building of the newly independent nation of Indonesia, he effectively dismissed the potentially counter-hegemonic character present in popular Javanese culture (1972, 51). Based on the analysis of empirical data in this study, I required a different framework, one that could account for these potentially counter-hegemonic ideas.

Chapters three, four and five applied a dialectical materialist approach to examine the social relations of production and the political sphere of social struggles and contestation both historically and in specific case studies. This examination exposed how the differences in social relations of production across Java demonstrate a logic that can be understood as being rooted in their respective regional histories of social struggles and the corresponding unevenness in the developing mode of capitalist production. This chapter extends this approach to the examination of 'meaning making' that is to the making of cultures and popular ideas which form the material expressions of these histories of social struggles and political economies at local, regional and national scales. This chapter draws on Gramsci's (1987) conceptual and historical approach to the study of subaltern cultures, this chapter examines more explicitly how the subjects in this study make sense of their world and how their political struggles inform their perspectives as subaltern actors. Popular beliefs, folklore and religion, provide some of the essential constituents of subaltern hegemonies and of new social formations that are always in the process of emerging. Hence, the study of social relations here is a study of meaning and experience, more than simply a study of behaviour, in particular where acts of everyday resistance do not demonstrate 'overt' opposition to elite classes. We need to understand the actual 'lived-in'

experiences of the Javanese people, full of contradictions and social struggles (Heryanto 2002; Antlov and Hellman 2005, 15; Braten 2005, 39).

In the everyday sense of political activity, it is the practical demands of rural lower class actors that lie at the core of rural resistance and rebellion, demands that are connected most often to the basic material survival needs of the peasant farmer and other rural subaltern actors. In the first instance, it is the self-interested element in subaltern rural resistance that this chapter gives focus to, where self-interest results in evolving solidarities and identity formations that underlie the development of collective political will. Whether these demands remain limited to self-interest, or move beyond these to collective political claims with more socially emancipatory goals can not be pre-determined, rather this depends on how social struggles unfold.

The chapter opens with some notes on the methodological approach applied here to investigate subaltern cultures and ideologies. The remainder of the chapter examines the popular cultures and ideologies of the subjects in this study using three thematic frames that emerged as categories of examination during data analysis. The first theme considers the historical dimensions of subaltern ideas and ideologies at a more macro level, in particular, in the making of 'Indonesian national identity' and the ongoing contestations over these identities. These historical dimensions are explored further at the local case study level, drawing on new empirical evidence from this study as well as secondary literatures. With the data available I pay attention to the position of subaltern actors politically after the physical destruction of the PKI and other organised left-wing groups considering what implications this had for the ideas and ideologies available to rural subalterns from the late 1960s.

The second theme examines more specifically the cultural repertoires available to subaltern groups in their expressions of religion, folklore and popular beliefs. I explore how changing expressions in cultural and religious identities reflect contestations over power and changing social relations taking place at the local level. The third theme investigates the spatial practices in which solidarities and collective identities are (re)produced across local political economies. I examine how the dynamic, ongoing and uneven development of social relations of production across rural spaces influences the formation of identities and social solidarities at local level.

6.2 Methodological considerations

The examination of living speech was important in the methodological approach applied in this study, where analysis of contextual meaning became critical in the process of data analysis. I applied Vološinov's view that the "forms of signs are conditioned above all by the social organisation of the participants involved and also by the immediate conditions of their interaction (1973, 19)". Thus the tracing of the social life of the sign is critical in developing a consistent analysis of the political claims of different social actors over time. Here signs or symbols have meaning where they engage people in the making of social relations, and meanings should be sought in these engagements between real people, not only in the representations of those meanings. In the examination of people's speech, the position of the speaker and the speech partner(s) as well as actors' concrete actions were considered in order to interpret the meaning(s) being expressed.

What became clear in this investigation, was that the formation of lower class actors' political claims and how they are articulated, rests on a speaker's assessment of what their speech partner(s) may imagine as possible *and* how it may be made possible. This was important in the analysis of situations where ideas for action go beyond individual actions and become collective actions. Here I do not intend to imply or assume a hierarchy of better, or more legitimate ('class conscious') political claims or expressions of political agency in this analysis. Rather, I am most concerned with identifying the moments, conditions and local histories, where material experiences of social, political and economic interactions shape the way people understand the world around them and the conditions in which they make decisions to collaborate around self-identified common interests. This includes the formation of relationships or alliances with social actors not drawn from the same social groups or classes, who may hold potentially different social interests.

Chapters four and five introduced some of the vocabularies of resistance used by subjects in these case studies, highlighting stark differences in idiomatic expression. In Sidomukti, vocabularies of resistance are often everyday and not always immediately detectable. Here expressions such as 'serve the community', 'avoid conflict', 'my neighbours help me', 'I'm not really political', 'don't need to resist', I argue do not indicate political passivity or acceptance of status quo politics. Rather this case demonstrates how subaltern actors are able to critically utilize existent frameworks of hegemonic ideas to conceptualise

and engage in political actions that may be counter-hegemonic. Further, leaders in this community demonstrate strong attachment to legacies and social traditions drawn from pre-capitalist forms of social relations, in the form of *kejawen* practices, while drawing on nationalist idioms associated with Sukarno era, or pre-New Order, politics. Further, articulations of strong nationalist views in the discussions of politics underscore strong secular approaches to politics, where local actors view religion as a personal matter that should remain outside of the realm of politics.

In contrast, the vocabularies of resistance utilised by union members in the Pagilaran case study include more explicit political articulations of 'fighting for land rights, 'our families resisted', 'we organised demonstrations' and 'protesting governments that criminalise and jail us'. Simultaneously, local members actively work to demonstrate their religiosity, for example, by building a mosque for local residents. According to Ratno[1] there remains a communist stigma attached to plantation workers who fight for land rights since the events of 1965-66 and demonstrating religious piety is a strategy for securing some form of community protection and social legitimacy within their wider communities.
Local Tratak land case members (P4T) living close by the Omah Tani headquarters have been involved in a day-to-day way in the broadest activities of the FPPB / Omah Tani, meeting and conducting training with activists from a diverse range of social rights and political campaigns, from other farmer groups to industrial workers, environmental activists, to lesbian and gay activists. In these activities they have engaged with the diverse ideas and political expressions of other pro-democracy and social movement actors. Local group leaders here articulate critical assessments of agrarian social movements, legal approaches to agrarian reform, trade union politics and the limitations of electoral strategies in advancing pro-poor reforms. On the other hand, members organise routine collective religious study and prayer activities in their local farmers' groups. According to Tabah[2] these religious study and prayer activities provide a source of spiritual strength and renew the enthusiasm of members in their collective projects.

[1] Interview with Ratno 11 January 2017.
[2] Interview with Tabah 14 December 2016.

This brief engagement with the different vocabularies of resistance employed by different subaltern groups, provides a preamble for examaining the histories of changing social relations and solidarities that underpin these different vocabularies.

6.3 Historical dimensions of subaltern struggle ideas

Indonesian Nationalist ideas and ideologies prior to 1965 strongly conveyed meanings drawn from the everyday experiences of lower classes or *rakyat.* The dominant political ideas in Java and many other regions in Indonesia in the early independence period reflected the popular ideas and aspirations of subaltern actors and were often considered synonymous with communist, socialist and left wing nationalist ideas (Bourchier and Hadiz 2003)[3]. The needs and aspirations of lower class actors and their associated cultural expressions were dominant in the political programs of the PKI and its affiliated organisations, and in Sukarno's Nasakom platform, because they were the material expression of the potential hegemonic power that was increasingly mobilised both by (Mortimer 1972) and *independent* of the PKI[4]. In many local places, rural actors formed their own social groups based on their own local interests in the first instance without reference to the PKI or its affiliated organisations (Jay 1956; Sawita 2018). Many people, sympathetic to the political ideas and programs of the PKI and who would attend PKI led activities from time to time, were never members nor did they see a need to join[5].

> We were young, we had aspirations… we had our own groups... the only national party that organised meetings and events in our subdistrict was the PKI. … we were interested in their ideas so we attended their mass meetings… we met neighbours from other villages and family members there… but we weren't members (Sutardi 5 January 2017).

In the 1950s and 1960s, the PKI relied for its social power on the organisation and mobilisation of workers and especially small and middle farmers in Java (Mortimer 1982; Hadiz 2006) as it lacked the economic power of other political parties. The PKI used ideas that conformed largely to lower class Javanese concepts and values, such as the term

[3] Lieutenant-General Ali Moertopo, a significant figure in Suharto's inner circle, deputy Head of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency and Minister for Information and Communication in the third development cabinet, lectured his propagandists in the Information Department that, "Indonesians have been influenced by communism as a system of thought for so long that it came to be identified as the Indonesian way of thinking (Bourchier and Hadiz 2003, 110-111)."
[4] Interviews with Agung July 15 2016, Sutardi January 5 2017 and Walijo 11 January 2017.
[5] Interviews with Agung July 15 2016, Sutardi January 5 2017 and Walijo 11 January 2017.

'*rakyat'* (the people) which resonated strongly amongst lower class groups in a situation where the desire for 'one-ness' (*kesatuan*)[6] and 'togetherness or solidarity' (*kebersamaan*) were dominant political attitudes. In the making of the national revolution, social and political struggles that engaged indigenous subaltern, elite and other social actors played a significant part in consolidating and legitimating these concepts in everyday social relations. In Central Java, many '*abangan*[7]' Muslims adopted the PKI as a vehicle for their interests which gave religious and cultural distinctions a politico-ideological dimension (Jay 1963; Mortimer 1982). These ideas were significant to such an extent that after 1965, Lieutenant General Ali Moertopo was assigned to develop indoctrination courses "to make Indonesians truly Indonesian" (Bourchier and Hadiz 2003). Moertopo was tasked to recreate the meanings contained within symbols and expressions of Indonesian cultural identity (Hatley 2004; McGregor 2007).

The New Order regime invested heavily in the creation of a new national ideology that claimed itself to be the 'true' expression of *Pancasila* ideology[8] which was enshrined in the national constitution (McGregor 2007). The actions of Suharto and those that came to power with him were not only a repudiation of the popular ideas of ordinary people, but relied on the material destruction of the social basis for a new kind of political power (Meckelburg 2013). It was an ideological rejection of the popular mass participation that was unleashed during the Indonesian revolution and which continued to thrive in the 1950s and early 1960s. Not only were PKI affiliated groups banned and suppressed, but local popular cultural expressions in the form of dance and performance[9] that had no formal

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[6] *Kesatuan* or One-ness here can be understood as a single entity or as unity in action (against a common opponent).

[7] Javanese Muslims are commonly referred to as being *Abangan* or *Santri*. *Abangan* Muslims do not follow the five pillars of Muslim practice, do not pray five times a day and often hold syncretic beliefs. While nominally Muslim they often follow traditional practices from earlier Hindu, Buddhist or animist belief systems. *Santri* Muslims are orthodox Muslims who practice the five pillars of Islam and often oppose the integration of earlier systems of religious or philosophical thought with Islam. In Java in the 1950s and 1960s the split between *Abangan* and *Santri* Muslims was deep and often reflected in political cleavages. (Mortimer 1982: Jay 1963). *Abangan* Muslims most often aligned themselves with the secular nationalists in the PNI or PKI. Also see footnote 40.

[8] Katharine McGregor argues that Nugroho Notosusanto's "work on the origins of Pancasila was perhaps the most blatant case of historical manipulation for the New Order regime (2007, 87)". The regime associated itself with the pure implementation of the Pancasila in order to justify the mass killings and oterh acts of violence against the heathen communists. This work formed part of the ideological claim to political legitimacy for the New Order regime and was compulsory reading material for schoolteachers who taught the Pancasila moral education course and an essential reference text for schools and educators at all levels.

[9] The most common performance art in this region prior to 1965 was *Jaran kepang or Jathilan* (bamboo horse dance) which is often associated with performers and audience participants going into trance. This

associations with the PKI were banned and members of local performance groups were marked as 'PKI' on a mass scale (Hatley 2004)[10]. The New Order narrative made use of the *pancasila* ideology of the previous order led by Sukarno, but appropriated and redefined it to exclude the 'atheist communists'[11]. Museums were created, guidebooks, films, textbooks, school curriculum, reenactments of past events and commemorative histories were published that emphasised the military including its political role (McGregor 2007, 28).

Gender ideology was also a critical factor in the establishment of the New Order state, recasting the identity of Indonesian women as the subservient supporters of their socially active husbands, the guardians of home and hearth. It erased the leading role that many women had played socially and politically in social struggles for independence (Wieringa 2011; McGregor 2007). The new version of nationalist ideology claimed that the heroes of the anti-colonial movement were no longer the people, but the military (male) generals and aristocrats.

Local histories of subaltern struggle ideas

While the New Order narrative about the events of 1 October 1965[12] continues to dominate official historical discourse (Meckelburg 2013), at a grass roots level, local versions of history sometimes provide very different accounts of these events[13]. Sharpening social conflicts between different class actors following the national revolution of the 1940s that culminated in the political crisis and mass violence and repression of the mid 1960s, often

performance has long been one medium for practicing *silahturrahmi* and social networking between villages and across regions of Java.

[10] Field notes from discussions with Agung July 16 2016 and Sutardi January 5 2017. In the case of Balaikumpul village, Temanggung district and Sidomukti village, ninety-five and sixty per cent respectively of village members were labelled 'PKI'. Informants thought it was not the form or particular cultural representation being performed that resulted in their groups being banned but simply any form of local organisation of rural subaltern actors had to be dispersed.

[11] Atheist communists was used to refer to any people that refused to comply with New Order proscriptions, in particular rural people who attempted to organise independently of the New Order state.

[12] The New Order regime and the post-*reformasi* Indonesian government after Abdurrahman Wahid, refer to the events of mass violence in 1965-66 as G-30-S (the 30th September Movement) or *Gestapu* (See Hadiz 2006, 555). Research conducted since the fall of the New Order regime demonstrates decisively that the New Order version of the military coup and rise to power of Suharto and his New Order regime are fabrications constructed for ideological purposes (See particularly McGregor 2007). Amongst ordinary people who opposed the military regime and / or who were victims of the mass violence, this event is referred to as Gestok (Gerakan Satu Oktober – 1st October Movement). This represents a popular counter narrative about the actions of the military led by Suharto who commenced their military actions on the 1 October 1965. Out of respect to the survivors of 1965 and in the interests of historical accuracy I refer to the commencement of these events as 1 October 1965.

[13] See chapters four and five in this dissertation. See also recent academic scholarship of McGregor 2012; Fealy and McGregor 2012; Pohlman 2014; Hearmann 2018; Melvin 2018; Sawita 2018.

resulted in horizontal conflicts, sharpening social divisions within communities and the weakening of local solidarities amongst lower class actors at least for a time (Fealy and McGregor 2012; Sawita 2018). How subaltern actors then made sense of these events and their social consequences becomes evident in their ideas and actions across case studies.

Several research participants from both *Omah Tani* farmers' union (Batang)[14] and residents of Sidomukti village (Magelang)[15] put forward the view that in 1965 it was not lower class actors' ideological commitment to the PKI or to communism that made them targets of mass violence and repression in 1965[16]. Rather it was their everyday collective organisation, their ideas and aspirations that had been influenced by the national revolution for Independence, their engagement with political party ideas, and their struggles for everyday improvements in livelihoods including the creation of their own cultural organisations, that made them targets[17].

Patterns of military repression and the 'marking' of large groups of smallholder farmers in Sidomukti as "*PKI*"[18], or the threat of being marked as "*PKI*" in the Pagilaran case, was a tactic used to intimidate individuals and groups, divide communities and provoke horizontal conflicts.

> I went to People's Youth (*Pemuda Rakyat*) meetings. People thought I was a member… [I was] very lucky. A few days before [the army came] a relative told me to join the nationalist group, otherwise… Someone did disappear after that (Sutardi 5 January 2017).

Acts of state repression carried out from 1965, required the use of ideas and symbols in ways that that would afford legitimacy for the military and other social actors with elite hegemonic agendas and, in some cases, local non-elite actors[19] who might seize the opportunity to promote their own interests by sacrificing the interests of others.

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[14] Discussions with Pak Walijo 12 January 2017 and Ratno 11 January 2017.
[15] Discussion with Sutardi 5 January 2017.
[16] This is supported by interviews with Agung and Ahmad in Temanggung regency 10 November 2016.
[17] Interview with Sutardi (Sidomukti, 5 January 2017), Walijo (Pagilaran, 12 January 2017), Ratno (Pagilaran, 11 January 2017) and Agung (Temanggung, 15 July 2016).
[18] This occurred in many places in surrounding areas including in Temanggung regency. Interviews with farmer activists in Temanggung regency (Agung and Ahmad, 10 November 2016) provided information on several villages where almost all residents (90% and more of village residents) were branded as PKI. In these cases, performing arts groups were the largest organised groups in these villages.
[19] Data from discussions with Pak Walijo 11 & 12 January 2017 and Ratno 11 January 2017.

> [After 1965] …one of mum's relatives became the village head. He replaced my grandfather who was hit [removed] in 1965… this [relative] joined Golkar…. he was the only one [who joined] … only two people in my hamlet didn't get branded ***(dicap)*** PKI. He was village head until 1999 (Agung 15 July 2017).

The mass disenfranchisement of villagers was facilitated by 'branding' (*dicap*) people as communists (PKI) which was then used as an instrument to repress and disperse locally based social organisations. Local expressions of cultural arts and ritual practice that articulated popular ideas of ordinary people (*rakyat*) and local expressions of national identity[20] in the form of dance, music and theatre, and that have a long history of critical social expression in Java, were repressed (Hatley 2004; Hatley 2015). Plantation workers active in unions in the Pagilaran case were criminalised and targeted when they worked on land lying outside of plantation lands. Threats of being 'PKI'-ed (*dicap*) were used to force people off their small plots, which were then absorbed in to the official state and private plantation land areas[21].

These threats often had little to do with lower class actors' membership of the PKI or any of its affiliated organisations and more to do with the intention of the New Order state in relation to land[22], which was to marginalise small farmers from land they had secured during or prior to the anti-colonial struggles and to provide new openings for large agricultural enterprises. This occurred in places surrounding the Pagilaran plantation where the penetration of colonial investment and capitalist social relations of production previously had resulted in more complete control of land by a capitalist enterprise[23] and periodically separated many local residents from their means of production. In regions such as Sidomukti village where smallholder farming has been and remains dominant in local political economies, long histories of popular organisation that respond to everyday needs in the realm of production, reproduction of livelihoods and popular cultural production through creative performance arts, were deemed significant enough to warrant systematic

[20] See Hatley 2004, p66-68.
[21] See chapter five.
[22] See chapter three.
[23] This would become one of several national projects attempting to develop modern large scale agricultural projects.

repression and dispersal[24]. They would later be replaced by centralised top-down village social organisations (Hatley 2004; Hatley 2015).

Research participants' recounting of family histories often highlighted links to past political struggles and the ideas and ideologies present in those struggles.

> Since I was small I already loved Sukarno… because of the stories from [my] uncles and neighbours… we had a book of his speeches… Dad would often read from it. My *kampung* always voted PDI (Indonesian Democratic Party) during the New Order… only the village head was Golkar. To [officially] hide the support for PDI they split our *kampung* (hamlet) into two voting areas and combined us with a neighbouring village *hamlet* that all voted PPP (United Development Party) so as not to embarrass the village head. Can you imagine [how we enjoyed his discomfort]? But we didn't talk about it openly (Agung 15 July 2017).

Mahsun (2017) notes in his research with the Omah Tani union that many members articulate ideas associated with Marhaenisme[25], the egalitarian-populist ideology of Indonesia's first president Sukarno.

Historical relationships of specific spatial communities to land form part of the local knowledge systems and cultures of the communities examined in this study. These knowledges and cultural representations underlie some of the political claims of subaltern groups. Chapter five outlined the long term connections and histories of struggle that local union members from Kamulyan Mountain Community Association (KMCA) in the Pagilaran company case have with the land that is being contested. These histories still underpin relationships of social solidarity between union and non-union members who in large part have been employed as workers in the tea plantation over several generations dating back to the 1920s.

> We [still] demand our right to the land but our struggles are more [broad]… we had to struggle together to get a real wage rise from the Pagilaran company in 2000. We went to the department of labour how many times? Now we want our rights under village programs…but some members can get access to government programs in one village but not in another village. It's more about village [government] conditions which are different… we can't get sick because there's no way to pay for medicine (haha)... but we help each other if someone has a problem… sometimes there are families who have no food to eat for several days (Walinah 11 January 2017).

[24] Interviews with Agung 15 July 2017 and Sutardi 5 January 2017.

[25] A popular ideology established by Sukarno. See Soekarno. (1956). *Indonesia Menggugat: Pidato pembelaan Bung Karno di Muka Kolonial*.

Beyond the solidarities amongst those who remain union members, there are strong bonds of solidarity between many people living in the areas surrounding the plantation as many of the issues they face are the same. At the same time there has been long-term co-option of some local residents employed by the company as security and administrative staff and factory or plantation forepersons. These actors actively promote the interests of the company and have the power to discriminate against, or punish, workers who are union members giving them the worst jobs or sending them home early which results in reduced wages.

Conversely, in the Tratak case, there are uneven experiences of social solidarity and collective action amongst local union members. Histories of land use in this case did not produce local forms of collective social organisation prior to the land claim actions beginning in 1998-99. Prior to this, the histories of people's struggle for survival have more often been struggles of individuals or family groups to make livelihoods in any way they can, as domestic migrants moving between urban and rural places, itinerant workers, day labourers and sometimes as sex workers. Other members precariously farmed lands that were leased to the Tratak company[26]. The occupation and formal land claiming actions on the Tratak leasehold lands in 1998, became the opportunity for members involved in the land claim to form new social relations of solidarity. These social relations took organised expression in the formation of a local land claim group, the Tratak Plantation Farmer Cultivators' Association (P4T) and in their participation in initiating the FPPB in the early period following the fall of the dictatorship. This organised expression of a common struggle sometimes brought them into conflict with their own family members, siblings and even parents.

> In our own family homes [some family members] became our enemies, paid by the [Tratak] company. They didn't comprehend that [Omah Tani] members were their own relatives… then [we made] social sanctions… we cut all ties… [later] they destroyed the mosque, spread a [black propaganda] leaflet… [with] awful accusations of us being some kind of new form of 'PKI". My wife's uncle took part… I said to my wife we must cut all ties… we had to sit with our parents and other elders and explain [for a long time] … (Tabah 30 August 2016).

[26] Discussion with Rumini 30 August 2016 and Rohmadi 15 December 2016.

Handoko Wibowo's[27] decision to become an active participant in these social relations of solidarity with his neighbours in the Tratak case, and later with other local farmers' groups, rests in part on his own family's experience of repression in 1965 when his father was detained and accused of being a PKI member.

> I think it's not a coincidence that I became like this [living and working with the rural poor people fighting for land]. I know the feeling… I have experienced discrimination since I was small… as a Chinese [man], the son of a man accused of being PKI [in 1965] … as a Christian, as a gay man. Maybe that's why I feel I cannot abandon them… why they have become my family (Handoko 30 August 2016).

Handoko's demonstrated commitment to poor farmers since 1998 would result in him being acknowledged and relied upon by many members as a leader in the umbrella FPPB / *Omah Tani* farmers' union. He remains consistent in his solidarity and support of Omah Tani members and their local groups and farmer activists generally.

In chapter four, Sidomukti residents talked about social values that highlight the past struggles of local people's ancestors in securing land that supports their survival today[28]. Political views that people hold, including critical opposition to the ruling Golkar party and the New Order regime during the 1990s[29], or the need to be active and lead in the local community were in part explained as upholding the traditions of their parents[30]. While local actors born after 1965 do not always know the detailed stories of their parents' experiences in the events of 1965-66, community elders still discuss their aspirations after independence and prior to 1965, in particular the ideas of political and economic independence for small

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[27] Handoko Wibowo believes that a combination of his parents' experience and his own personal experiences, shaped his ideas and subsequent experiences of social solidarity. His parents were local landowners. His father was arrested in 1965 and accused of being a communist. Because of their Chinese ethnicity, they experienced periodic repression and in the 1990s, faced financial bankruptcy due to Tommy Suharto's monopoly of the clove trade. Handoko's own experience as member of a social minority, Chinese, Christian and homosexual, prompted his concern and ultimately intensive support for the large numbers of landless Batang residents who began their land occupations after Suharto fell. In 2000 he chose to forego his opportunities to remain a successful private lawyer representing wealthy clients, by closing his private legal office in Batang city and became the full time legal advocate for Omah Tani members. Discussions with Handoko 31 August 2016 & 28 September 2016, Handoko's mother 31 August 2016, Ari 30 August 2016, Rumini 30 August 2016 and Rohmadi 15 December 2016.
[28] Interviews with Mulyono 11 November 2016, Marto 18 November 2016, Yatman 19 January 2017, Sabar 24 January 2016 and Atik 26 January 2017.
[29] A majority of residents voted for Golkar before the 1999 election where the large majority voted for PDI-P. Despite the voting patterns during the New Order there was significant opposition to the New Order regime. Discussion with Parto 4 December 2016.
[30] National election results are not seen as significant in the making of everyday lives. Interview with Sabar 24 January 2017, Atmo 4 December 2016 and Bagas 18 November 2016.

farmers and ensuring control over their own affairs. They criticise national government policies that prioritise big investors and marginalise small farmers[31].

> Imagine if *petani* [smallholder farmers] had their own union like the [urban] factory workers. We could force the government to set fair prices and have sanctions for the middleman (*tengkulak*) who pays the farmer a pittance and enriches himself (Sutardi 18 November 2016).

Similarly, ideas of social solidarity, collective action and community service rather than individual priorities are explained as ideas passed to them from their parents and other family members.

> I try to serve [village members] in the way I saw my big uncle (Pakdhe) do it. We don't think of ourselves, we are part of [our society] … it's not about helping… it's about us [*masyarakat*] being capable, being independent [*swadaya*] (Mulyono 11 November 2018).

Discussions with village elders[32] in Magelang district about values, ideas and political affiliations prior to 1965 told a story of patterns of political organisation along lines similar to 'aliran[33]' or religious lines found in other upland mountain areas in Java (Hefner 1990; Ricklefs 2012). The Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) hold strong *santri* affiliations and dominated in the lowlands while the PNI and PKI were strongly Javanist[34] (*Kejawen*) or syncretic in orientation and were dominant in the middle and upper slope regions including in this village. In the upland regions of Magelang district there were not the same tense social relations between lowland Muslims and upland Javanists as there were in regions such as the Tengger highlands (Hefner 1990; 2011) which experienced extreme and bloody violence. According to local residents, patterns of repression and violence in the Western slopes of Merbabu[35] were systematic but with fewer deaths and short or even no periods of incarceration. The mass branding of individuals as PKI and the suppression of all local forms of organisation was the more dominant pattern of repression in this region with sixty per cent of Sidomukti village residents being branded as PKI.

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[31] Bagas 18 November 2016, Bathi 7 January 2017 and Mulyono 11 November 2016.
[32] Pak Sudimin 4 December 2016, Sutardi 5 January 2017 and Daliman 7 January 2017.
[33] 'Aliran' denotes both differences in religious belief and practice as well as political allegiances.
[34] The term Javanist is used in Anderson (1990); Hefner (1990; 2011, esp. p227); Stange (1993, esp p349) to refer to Javanese people who practice *Kejawen* or Javanese spiritualism. According to Hefner "In Javanese, abangan literally means "red," but the term is a symbol for folk traditions generally. Javanese Muslims of this sort are also called kejawen, or "Javanist" (2011, 227)".
[35] Interviews with Daliman 6 January 2016 and Sutardi 5 January 2016.

In Sidomukti village, all village officials including hamlet heads, except for the village head were removed and branded as PKI. There were reportedly only two killings of local residents in the village[36]. Daliman said that bonds of social solidarity were extended by those not branded as PKI, to protect residents who had direct affiliations with PKI mass organisations. Strong family relationships across the village played some part in the desire to protect family members. Over the next several years, 'branded' local village members were encouraged to '… enter the Golkar Party, then their status as PKI began to disappear (Daliman 6 December 2016)'.

The threat of repression and violence in different local conditions since the beginning of the New Order, influenced expressions of resistance including the ways in which lower class actors use symbols, creating forms of communication that allow them to respond to and collaborate around collective needs and where necessary afford some form of protection for their activities.

> Most of us decided not to be 'political[37]' anymore… we still meet together and discuss what is going on. We teach our children to contribute to their community, to be useful, to think of others, not just themselves… [The system of] formal education… based on grades is wrong… it teaches children to focus on the grade not on learning things that are useful and beneficial… the system is corrupt; it teaches children to think in corrupt ways… some 'buy' their grades… the children think they succeed when their friends fail because their grade is better… what does that teach young people about what is important? (Pak Sutardi 5 January 2017)

While the mass violence of the 1965-66 period brought about the annihilation of the PKI and its affiliate organisations, the survivors of the violence were sometimes reintegrated in to local village structures with their political ideas and social values intact. While these ideas were often articulated in non-partisan ways they have provided social and political legacies that inform the ideas and strategies of new younger generations of village leaders. Similarly, local ideas that reinforce the avoidance of horizontal conflicts can be explained in part as lessons drawn from the social experiences of the events of 1965.

> We decide as a [hamlet] group who we will support for the village head… then until we vote we guard our hamlet borders… no-one is allowed in. [being] compact [as a community] is important. Divided we lose…. Whoever benefits from that doesn't always care about us (Atmo 4 December 2016).

[36] Interviews with Daliman 6 January 2016 and Sutardi 5 January 2016.
[37] To not be political meant to not be a member of or express direct sympathies for a party or other form of social organisation.

> The village head elections can be heated. We make an effort so that it doesn't happen. We discuss with all the potential candidates especially with the incumbent… if they still want to stand we won't put up our best new candidate. If there is a big conflict over it no one benefits… eventually we get the leaders we need… that is [our] experience (Bagas 25 January 2017).

The Sidomukti case demonstrates that subaltern actors are capable of critically utilizing existent frameworks of interpretation to conceptualise and engage in political action that is potentially counter-hegemonic. Here local leaders from the pre-1965 period who were branded 'PKI' were encouraged by local government officials to join Golkar in the early 1970s[38] so that they could participate in and exercise leadership in new village structures that had been reorganised by the centralised New Order state. When the New Order came to power, this provided a mechanism to facilitate community organisation after local organisations had been disbanded (*dibubarkan*).

Approaches to social and political organisation developed locally during the New Order have had some observable influence on the activity and participation of younger generations both prior to and since *reformasi*. Since *reformasi,* and more significantly since 2013, young men and women[39] leading at village and hamlet level, are the children of former political prisoners (*Tapol*), and / or the children of families that have retained strong commitments to Javanist philosophies and social ideas of mutual cooperation (*gotong-royong*), unity (*kesatuan*) and solidarity (*kebersamaan*). Experiences of social and political organisation within families and the ideas and values that underpin their involvement in organisations influence how people engage with critical (social and political) ideas and the actions they take[40].

In Sidomukti village, many residents' ideas and political affiliations indicate long term resistance and not passive acceptance of New Order political ideas. In the early period of

[38] Interview with Daliman (6 December 2016) a former village official (KAUR) appointed in 1965 after all village leaders aside from the village head were removed from their positions due to accusations of affiliation with the PKI.

[39] Most hamlet and village leaders today are in their 30s and some of these actors were first elected to positions of hamlet and village head in their late teens and early twenties. Discussions with Yatman 19 January 2017, Mulyono 19 January 2017 and Bathi 7 January 2017.

[40] These conclusions are drawn from observation of and participation in formal and informal discussions with community elders, local village and hamlet leaders, meetings of women's groups, farmers' groups, village meetings, youth meetings, village and hamlet cultural events and discussions in people's homes between July 2016 and January 2019.

reformasi, pressing issues of fair prices for produce and programs to reverse land degradation were among their local political claims. These claims were expressed through direct actions and demonstrations and participation in party organisation, specifically in the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Perjuangan* or *PDI-P*) and the mass boycott of Golkar from 1999[41]. However, after the initial outpourings of popular protests and social actions surrounding the early period of *reformasi*, expressions of political action by many residents became more focussed on local level politics with the replacement of unpopular hamlet heads and the election of a new young village head. While issues of fair market price, land degradation, ecological and economic sustainability and access to affordable credit remain part of the political aspirations of many local residents, their focus for action has been in places where they have some direct control and influence over government programs and initiatives, that is at hamlet and village level.

Mulyono said that they try to be creative in how they implement government program, polices and regulations.

> …we don't need to resist. We accept [national or district led programs] but implement them in ways that fulfil our community's needs and that do not wreck (*merusak*) the strengths of our communities (Mulyono, Village head, 11 November 2016).

This statement was one among many statements made by the village head and other hamlet leaders in multiple informal discussions that I participated in. I argue that these are clear expressions of the conscious resistance of local actors to external attempts to exert control, ideologically and materially, over locally based village and hamlet institutions. In most part, these counter-hegemonic actions here are not generally in public view, but form a vital part of the normative subculture among members of these communities. It should be stressed here that the ideas promoted by the current village leadership are *not* uniform nor absolute across the village. There are residents that view the promotion of individual interests as beneficial to themselves and choose not to participate in some village initiatives that rely on collective organisation and solidarities. At this time however they remain a minority at the village and hamlet level.

[41] Discussion with Atmo and Parto 4 December 2016.

6.4 Culture, Religion and Local Belief Systems

Belief systems, including religion, and associated social practices reflect not *only* values and traditions handed down over generations but also the often dynamic changes that are taking place in the making and remaking of social relations. By deploying a political economy approach here we can observe the relationship between social struggles over power and control of material resources and broader questions of history and culture. Academic observers have referred to '*Santri'* and '*Abangan'* Muslims[42] to denote both differences in religious belief and practice as well as political allegiances, often referred to as '*aliran* politics' (Geertz 1963; Ricklefs 2007, 2008b; Hefner 1990, 2011). Geertz' study of Javanese society (1963) has provided a central reference point for scholars' study of the *Santri*, *Abangan* and *Priyayi* distinction that has been argued to form the basis of long established social and political cleavages. However, here I apply Ricklef's view that analyses of religious, cultural and social identity are historically contingent and not fixed categories (2008b, 35), therefore the consideration of these distinctions should be contextualised in the lived social relations between people within and across communities.

Ricklefs argues that the term *Abangan*[43] as a social category only began to appear in written texts from the mid 1800s and referred to a group within Javanese society – "who began to distance themselves …from commitment to Islamic identity (2007, 38)"[44]. From a dialectical materialist standpoint this distancing reflected changing social relations and a social polarisation taking place in Javanese society as the colonial authority attempted to extend its control over labour in Java from the 1830s. This polarisation was further sharpened with the introduction of the 1870 Agrarian law which attempted to assert colonial authority more completely over land as well as labour. The cultural manifestation of this polarisation saw many Javanese abandon Islamic prayer and other expected *Santri* Muslim practice, while continuing to observe other Islamic rituals, such as fasting, in the

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[42] See footnote 7 this chapter.

[43] In the early 19th century the concept of a Javanese Muslim was understood to represent "…a synthesis of 1. firm Islamic identity, 2. observation of Islam's five pillars, and 3. acceptance of indigenous spiritual forces, all within the capacious boundaries of what Javanese understood Sufism to be, [and] was found not only among the elite but also – so far as we can see from the limited evidence – among Javanese commoners (Ricklefs 2008b, 37)". This should be distinguished from the rise of the 'abangan' Javanese as a social identity, see Ricklefs (2007).

[44] Ricklefs presents the view that this occurred in parallel with the rise of a Javanese middle or bureaucratic class under colonial rule in the 19th century.

name of community solidarity. *Santri* Muslims became more often associated with the wealthier classes engaged in trade and money-lending, not drawn from the 'little-people (*wong cilik*) of ordinary peasant and labouring classes (Ricklefs 2008b, 50). The *wayang*[45] and other Javanese performances, from the *santri* point of view, were associated with *abangan or lower class 'popular' culture*, which was identified as poor, crude, without education and with little concern for a particular moral influence over children. Even the gamelan[46] was considered to be something that should be forbidden in Islamic law (Ricklefs 2008b). Ricklefs estimates that by the end of the nineteenth century, the *Abangan* would have constituted the majority of Javanese people[47], however there would continue to be some fluidity between *abangan* and *santri* groups.

From an empirical standpoint, religion, religiosity and local popular belief systems are sometimes difficult to disentangle as separate categories (Quinn 2018) and the meanings and practice of both local beliefs and religion, in particular *kejawen* and Islam, and *abangan* and *santri* 'identities' differ across these case studies. Therefore, the approach I apply here is to examine how ritual and tradition are enacted by particular social actors in the different locales and how the social organisations in which they are engaged give meaning to these beliefs.

In Sidomukti, local value systems that deploy ideas and expressions of popular *abangan* or *kejawen* philosophy, or *santri* practice combined with Javanese rituals and practice, are employed by many lower class actors to articulate their ideas and political claims[48]. Some articulations of these ideas are consciously opposed to values associated with mercantilist, capitalist, or market driven idea systems that focus on the individual rather than the collective and which often overlook or ignore the basic needs and interests of a majority of rural actors. Expressions of individual, as opposed to collective, views of the world are sometimes represented in the embrace of *santri* Islamic 'pillars' where social

[45] Wayang is a traditional form of puppet-shadow play originally found across the cultures of Java and associated with Javanese spiritual forces at work.
[46] Traditional Javanese musical instruments set.
[47] See also Quinn (2018) *Bandit Saints of Java: How Java's eccentric saints are challenging fundamentalist Islam in modern Indonesia*. Quinn provides estimates of *abangan* and *santri* affiliations in the Old Order and New Order periods and contrasts them to changing estimates for the 21st Century, see p377.
[48] Interviews with Mulyono 5 January 2017, Yatman 6 January 2017 and Sabar 6 January 2017,

service takes the form of *zakat*[49] rather than collective work practice as a form of social contribution. Some residents that hold more *santri* religious beliefs express ideas that Javanese or *Kejawen* 'tradition' are rituals from the past[50] which no longer hold value or meaning in a society striving for modernity. These claims can have a material foundation, where traditional practices embrace ideas and practices of social solidarities that are no longer essential to securing their livelihoods. If people no longer require these social solidarities, then 'tradition' may indeed constrain the pursuit of some actors' interests. This was observed in hamlets where there are weaker links to agrarian production as a means of survival or where social differentiation is more pronounced.

In contrast, several local leaders argue that their agrarian origins and traditional practices of social solidarity provide a strength to be drawn on to support the advancement of their communities,[51] in the first instance through local hamlets[52]. This includes the selective assessment of what aspects of modernisation are of benefit to a majority of residents. Their argument acknowledges that a large majority of residents still struggle to obtain secure livelihoods and material conditions of existence such as substantial housing, secure water supplies, sanitation and health care. Here the promotion of social solidarities as a community strength to support social improvements for a majority of residents are expressions of real contestation over values and ideas in local cultural practices. Here the promotion of social solidarity through Javanese cultural (*kejawen*) values, or, individual aspirations through religious piety and a rejection of non-religious (*kejawen*) practice, appears as one form of ideological contestation representing different social interests and struggles over power and representation at a local level[53].

While the fading of commitment to some social rituals is a common phenomenon in several lower slopes hamlets, the election of the current village head in 2013 and other young leaders at hamlet level, has brought with it a revival of many *kejawen* practices. The

[49] Zakat is a form of Islamic religious obligation or tax and is one of the Five Pillars of Islam.
[50] Singgih 28 November 2016, Sutardi 18 November 2016 and Mulyono 5 January 2017.
[51] Interviews with Mulyono 11 November 2016, Yatman 6 January 2017 and Bathi 7 January 2017.
[52] Hamlets often have their roots in self-initiated geographic communities outside of the colonial constructed village. Several hamlets were then incorporated into a single colonial village (colonial administrative unit) in order that they be subject to colonial tax regimes.
[53] Again, see Ricklefs on the need for a historically contingent approach to understanding the use and meanings of the concepts of Santri and Abangan (2008b).

village head and several hamlet leaders practice *kejawen* rituals and seek guidance from their ritual practice “in order that they are better able to lead their communities”[54]. The village head promotes local expressions of Javanese culture and traditions as a source of local knowledge and wisdom, of social values that are commonly shared and that highlight existing community capacities. The hamlet heads formed a *ketoprak*[55] performance group in 2017 which performs during Javanese *Rejeb* month. The village head and other hamlet and village leaders see revitalisation of Javanist agrarian traditions and social solidarity in the productive and reproductive spheres as part of their program for future village and hamlet development. They talk explicitly about ‘fostering local culture’ (*mengangkat budaya lokal*) to strengthen their sovereignty, autonomy and self-sufficiency [56]. In the face of the weakening of some social solidarities that have previously been grounded in making every day agrarian livelihoods, village government and local hamlet leaders actively promote the strengthening of agriculture and livestock farming as a means to achieve social security for more residents.

Across as well as within case studies, there are diverse expressions of religious belief and practice. In Sidomukti the majority of subjects are nominally Muslim. However, informants in Sidomukti village explained that there are many variants of Muslim religion and other faith based beliefs, with different kinds of religious or traditional practice, represented within their local communities. They explained that ‘Sukarnoist’ (pre-New Order nationalist) ideas, *abangan* Islam, *kejawen*, as well as pious *santri* Muslim ideas are all part of acknowledged local cultural, religious and political expressions in Sidomukti village[57]. Local residents referred to the majority of village members as ‘moderate’ Muslims with varying social and religious practices. Informants referred to *abangan* (practicing[58]) Muslims, syncretic abangan (non-practicing) Muslims, Javanist beliefs (practicing *kejawen* traditions), *santri* Muslims who practice *kejawen* rituals and practices and *santri* Muslims who no longer observe Javanese ritual practice. *Santri* Muslims are a minority in most

[54] Interview with Yatman 19 January 2017.
[55] *Ketoprak* is a popular Central Javanese performance art media that performs stories about Javanese society, from legends to everyday lives. It has a long history of critical social commentary and has been associated with ‘*wong cilik*’ or subaltern groups (Hatley 2004, 66).
[56] Interview with Mulyono 19 January 2017, Atik 7 January 2017 and Bathi 7 January 2017.
[57] Discussions with Atmo 4 December 2016, Sabar 5 January 2017, Mulyono 11 November 2017, Parto 4 December 2016 and Sutardi 18 November 2016.
[58] Sholat (prayer) 5 times per day.

hamlets; they dominate in one hamlet and are significantly represented in 3 more of the 22 hamlets in Sidomukti village. The majority of residents refer to themselves as Muslims with nationalist (secular) political views. For residents with long-standing political or aliran affiliations these are most often to the PDI-P or to *Nahdlatul Ulama*[59].

In the higher slopes of the village where hamlets remain predominantly agricultural, Javanese agrarian (*kejawen*) traditions are actively practiced. Important life events involve a ceremony (*slametan*) where offerings (*sesajen*) are prepared and the burning of incense (*kemenyan*) accompanies prayers that reflect syncretic Islamic-Javanese belief systems. The cultural practices enacted in these hamlets are observably connected to the ways people make their lives in agriculture, in significant life events, and in other activities of social cooperation such as community working bees to improve residents' housing, road building and water supply provision. *Slametan* are held when children are born, during pregnancy, prior to fasting month, in significant Javanese calendar months[60], as water protection rituals, prior to planting crops, before the commencement of community working bee projects and as memorials to the anniversaries of people's passing (*mendak*). The language of prayers is Javanese not Arabic and these are led by Pak Kaum[61], an appointed hamlet religious leader.

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[59] People's identification with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in both case studies is strongly attached to the Gus Dur tradition of NU. Some residents regularly attend *Kyai* led prayer meetings in Pakis sub-district but most would never attend the prayer meetings of a very famous *Kyai* who leads a *pesantren* in the adjacent sub-district of Tegalrejo. This *pesantren* has historically included many *abangan* practices such as Javanese performance arts in their Islamic events and are strongly associated with NU. Despite this, Sidomukti residents prefer to attend another prayer meeting that reflects what they refer to as a more plural and nationalist Islam (Atmo and Parto 4 December 2016).

[60] In Sidomukti *Rejeb* month ceremonies (*Rejeban*) are held involving cultural offerings, prayer ceremonies and traditional local arts performances in some hamlets. *Rejeb* month is a month in the Javanese version of the Islamic calendar.

[61] The origins of *Pak Kaum* are contested as to whether it originated as an Islamic religious figure or a syncretic or *kejawen* figure. In some hamlets the *kaum* is responsible to ensure the religious practice (*ibadah*) of all religions represented in the hamlet can be carried out, while in others only Muslim *ibadah* is supported. The function of *kaum* is to lead community rituals including *slametan* which in some hamlets involve syncretic or *kejawen* offerings and symbols such as *sesajen*, while in others they take the form of *pengajian santri (prayer recitation),* some lead prayers using Javanese language, others use Arabic. The majority of these rituals are conducted at a hamlet level and most residents will participate, that is they are not exclusive activities for given groups with specific beliefs. Residents' participation is generally self-selective and most residents are respectful of community members' decisions to not participate if they choose. These observations were recorded in field notes when attending meetings, *slametan* ceremonies and village or hamlet ceremonies. I observed varying practices across seven hamlets between December 2016 and January 2019.

In hamlets with more *santri* Muslim residents, prayers are sometimes led in Arabic[62] rather than Javanese language. In lower slope hamlets, *slametan* ceremonies remain part of routine hamlet life but are seen by some as traditions that no longer have a substantial meaning, in particular in hamlets where the majority of members are not involved in agriculture, or whose work activities take them away from their local hamlet communities. In lower slope hamlets, some of these traditions have stopped in the interests of being *hemat* (thrifty)[63] however some say this is more due to the fading of people's commitment to tradition[64]. In hamlets where some ceremonies have stopped, there are still monthly gatherings of residents where they eat together, but the beliefs and ritual practices associated with them are no longer practiced.

In the Tratak case, *Omah Tani* members from Cepoko hamlet are a mixture of *santri* and *abangan* Muslims. Prayer meetings conducted in Arabic or Javanese constitute a routine part of members' union activity[65]. Most members identify themselves as religious and there is less *kejawen* practice than in Sidomukti village. Members hold routine prayer meetings and rely on God to guide them and take care of them in their struggles.

> If we are preparing for an action, we have several special prayer meetings to prepare ourselves. We pray that everything will go well, for god's protection from harm in our struggles. Sometimes there is no logic (*tidak masuk akal*) … we travel more than 140km in 260 trucks through the mountains, thousands of us crammed in the back of the trucks… during 18 hours, from our departure until we arrive home, nothing goes wrong. We believe god is protecting us… how else could it be possible (Rumini 31 August 2016).

In union struggles many members believe that when their opponents suffer ill fortune, god has acted and when they conduct mass actions that are successful it is the result of God responding to their prayers[66].

Several members said that politically their union is in line with *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) groupings that hold with the political traditions of Abdurrahman Wahid[67], familiarly referred

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[62] Where prayers are led in Arabic language, the majority of residents can recite prayers but only have a basic understanding of Arabic language.
[63] Interview with Marto (18 November 2016), retired school teacher and son of Daliman who was deputy village head for 39 years.
[64] Interview with Pak Sutardi 18 November 2016.
[65] Informal discussion with Rumini from field notes made on 30 August 2016.
[66] Informal Discussion with Rumini and Pak Hadi from field notes made on 12 January 2017.
[67] Abdurrahman Wahid, popularly known as Gus Dur, was a long time president of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) muslim organisation, founder of the National Awakening Party (*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa*) and the first

to as Gus Dur and former president of Indonesia. Several members expressed criticism of sections of the current national leadership of NU saying they no longer follow the path that Gus Dur made, they were more interested in "playing politics" than the interests and concerns of their grass roots[68]. They expressed opposition to the politics of *Muhammadiyah* organisations who they say do not understand their struggles for survival, "as if our prayers could be enough to fill our bellies (Rumini 12 January 2016)". Individual members expressed opposition to a new *pesantren*[69] established very close to their land claim and objected to the 'purist' (*santri banget*) Islamic approach expressed by the *pesantren* clergy and students while ignoring the pressing issues of poverty, landlessness and hunger[70] of residents in the surrounding areas.

In the Pagilaran case, union members are a mix of *abangan* and *santri* in their religious practice. The shadow of being branded as heathen communists remains present in local residents' ideas and the need to identify as good Muslims is important. Members explained that one way that they have sought to extend social solidarity with non-members or former members of their union has been through self-initiated programs such as Mosque building and providing clean water supplies[71]. Where company staff and some plantation workers attempt to marginalise residents who have remained active union members, these acts of social solidarity that provide material and spiritual benefits to their neighbours, have assisted them to maintain strong connections of human solidarity with their neighbours and reduce their marginalisation as workers on the plantation and as local residents.

6.5 Local political economies and the (re)making of social solidarities

In Sidomukti village, one of the significant features of social and cultural life is that specific spatial communities grouped together in the form of hamlets constitute the basis for everyday social relations. Where agriculture and farming are the main sources of livelihood for hamlet residents, social solidarities respond in part to productive and

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elected president of Indonesia (albeit not yet by popular ballot) after the fall of Suharto. Gus Dur proposed substantial (and indeed controversial) democratic reforms including major restructuring of the military territorial command, the unbanning of Marxism-Leninism, an apology to victims of the 1965-66 massacres and new initiatives in resolving regional conflicts in Aceh and Papua (Aspinall 2010).

[68] Informal discussion with Rumini, Rohmadi, Hadi and Ratno 11 January 2016.

[69] A *Pesantren* is an Islamic boarding school.

[70] Discussion with Rohmadi 15 December 2016.

[71] Field notes made after a union meeting in Pagilaran hamlet on 11 January 2017.

reproductive needs of individual families[72]. These solidarities sometimes underpin the formation of common interests in the making of livelihoods[73] and how residents respond to government development programs.

> In Tanimaju the culture of solidarity (*kebersamaan*) is strong. The important thing is we should be useful in our communities. When we had an opportunity to make the women's group it was hard at first, but our families, our parents, our husbands supported us. They were proud, sometimes surprised as well, that we could make our own agricultural programs, the new horticultural program, raising animals, make a seedling nursery… a group of women working together we could do it all (Atik 26 January 2017).

Values connected to collective social organisation are evident in the sphere of production, social reproduction and the reproduction of cultures. Particular cultural expressions in the form of folklore, performance arts and *kejawen* rituals remain strong where people's use of land is a response to people's everyday need for survival, often having direct meaning for people's everyday activities. In Tanirejo, Tanimaju and Tanimantep hamlets, cultural rituals are still conducted for the protection of water sources, successful harvests and blessings of collective social work (*kerja bakti*) activities. In Tanirejo, hamlet based performance arts activities reflect not only a revival of historical traditions that were stopped in 1965, but are expressions of collaboration and social solidarity in their everyday lives[74]. Adults and youth, both men and women, participate in a single performance group[75]. They rehearse and perform together in public events. These activities reflect a social practice of inclusive values and practices in local communities[76]. Rituals and performance acknowledge the experiences and legacies of past generations that remain relevant in their everyday lives[77]. In other words, they are *not* symbolic repetitions of rituals

[72] This is the case in the three hamlets of Tanirejo, Tanimantep and Tanimaju that are the focus of more detailed study of everyday life in Sidomukti village.
[73] See Chapter four.
[74] Discussions with Wanah 6 January 2017, Bagas 25 January 2017 and Sigid 5 January 2017.
[75] According to Sabar (5 January 2017) this is not a general practice across rural communities but has become a common practice in Tanirejo since *reformasi*.
[76] There is a gendered division of labour in some domestic and livelihood activities. Men dominate formal representative forums, however women actively participate in social gatherings and discussions, which is not a generalised experience across all hamlets in Sidomukti village.
[77] Discussions with Sabar, Tarno and Yatman on 6 January 2017 and Karmin, Bagas and Sutardi 18 November 2016.

that represent forms of social organisation from the past;[78] rather they are the living practice of rituals that contain and (re)create cultural meanings.

The majority of residents in Sidomukti have had long term secure access to small plots of land and people's struggles and ideas are often connected to a range of livelihood strategies for retaining control of their land. Retaining land ownership has cultural importance[79] as a form of social security and in recognition of the legacy[80] (*warisan*) of ancestors' efforts to make lives for themselves and future generations on that land. Residents who own some land but do not rely directly on agriculture for their livelihoods, actively employ strategies to retain control of their land, which at a minimum provides some form of social security while not always guaranteeing household livelihoods[81]. They search for or create, livelihood opportunities, as workers or labourers, petty commodity producers and petty traders in local economies near their homes. These shifts in people's everyday livelihood activities have had impacts on their relationships with their neighbours and surrounding community.

Changes in farming strategies and mixed economy approaches to securing livelihoods have brought about changes in people's social practices and ideas about the function of social solidarity and collective action in their everyday lives. Where in the past collective forms of social labour performed in agriculture may have contributed directly to their survival strategies in the productive sphere, today other forms of collective social labour now support the provision of infrastructure such as roads, housing and water supplies which people require to support new livelihood activities and improve conditions of social reproduction for many residents.

> Our culture, *gotong-royong* (mutual cooperation), *kesatuan* (unity), is important in how we develop our village. If village members have already worked hard, really sweated, to build something together, they appreciate it and are enthusiastic to care and maintain it… our culture has to be protected… with every right that village members have there should also be responsibility (Mulyono 5 January 2019).

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[78] Discussions with Sabar, Tarno and Yatman on 6 January 2017.
[79] Discussions with Mulyono 5 January 2017, Yatman 6 January 2017, Marto 18 November 2016.
[80] Here the meaning of *warisan* has a material as well as an emotional and cultural value.
[81] When local residents do sell their land (which is extremely rarely), they sell it to other local residents who will often then allow that person to continue to use the land to provide family income. While there are no formal rules or regulations as to who can buy land there is a strong local principle that land should remain within the hands of local residents and not sold to 'outsiders'.

People who no longer rely directly on social labour for their immediate livelihood strategies sometime rely on new or changed relationships, some of which nonetheless continue to reinforce community based social solidarities. The re-making of social solidarities here emphasises that the concept and experience of social solidarity is not a static phenomenon, nor are the ideas of social solidarity guaranteed to remain strong or present in people's everyday lives. Where people pursue livelihood strategies that rely on themselves as individuals, their survival strategies may not rely in any way on interactions with or reliance on their immediate neighbours and this can be reflected in people's ideas and beliefs.

> Around 80 per cent of young women are active in the women farmers' group [in Tanimaju]. Those that don't join [it is] because [of lack of] consciousness (*kesadaran*). Because the fruits of our cooperation are non-material – solidarity, insights [new ideas], knowledge – for those that don't have a consciousness about [the importance of] non-material things they don't see the results as beneficial [for them]. Some are just too busy with other work (Atik 7 January 2017).

Prior to 2013, residents' focus for everyday struggles rested more on hamlet level organisations rather than village government institutions. Local hamlet leadership and hamlet based participation was much more important in people's everyday lives. Local identities relating to 'place' were more strongly linked to the hamlets to which residents 'belong'. Village level politics played a limited role in the everyday lives of residents except for those with a more specific interest in local, regional and national politics, or when trying to access government programs.

However, with the election of a new village head and the appointment of new young hamlet heads from 2013, many local residents are participating in the renewal of village organisations, both those related to village governance and those supporting direct participation in the provision of social services such as local infrastructure, healthcare and educational programs. Similarly, as some residents' livelihoods increasingly rely on non-agricultural or mixed sources of income and the improved access of village residents to sources of funds for development initiatives, the role of the village government has grown. With the shift away from direct agricultural production as the main source of livelihoods for some lower slope residents, hamlet based institutions of social organisation became less important in everyday ways. Thus, identity as a Sidomukti village resident has become more

important for some residents as their participation in village organisations has some connection with improvements in their wellbeing.

In the Batang cases studies, local political economies vary widely, where actors without access to land have adopted different livelihood strategies. Omah Tani members across and within land case groups hold mixed social ideas, differing political and religious views, reflecting a range of lived experiences across land cases as well as within locally case-based farmers' groups. These mixed ideas cannot be separated people's experiences – from the histories of local conflicts, individual acts of defiance, experiences of state and other criminal acts of violence against them, working as plantation workers, farming precariously as smallholder farmers without land security, or suddenly having access to land but having no farming experience – have all played a part in shaping people's ways of thinking and acting. Some struggles have involved long-term confrontational approaches in the form of land occupations, clearing new land areas, pursuing legal claims for land or organising in plantation unions[82], while others have taken the form of more silent everyday encroachments on state land[83], where individuals begin to work land that is not in productive use. These differences, in part, explain the more fragmented character of social struggles and social solidarities, both within local spatial settings as well as across the wider Batang district.

In the Tratak land case, the local farmers' campaigning groups formed in 1998-99, became a forum for new ideas and new forms of collective organisation and social solidarities.

> …members are more open in their thinking… [they are] flexible in accepting different kinds of people [and] confident to deal with anyone they meet. Government ministers, police, student activists – haha, even Megawati Soekarnoputri – came to Omah Tani and met with us… we are already different, the way we think, from other hamlet members who are not members… the way they think is still narrow [minded] (Tabah 30 August 2016).

> In Omah Tani [our] members have learned many things from their own experience, not from school learning… for me I gained confidence in my own ideas, [about] what we need [and] …how we can get [that]. Like the case with our natural spring (*mata air*) in our village… Village officials proposed we sell the water to a mineral water company… I spoke up, explained why it was wrong (Pam 15 December 2016).

[82] Walijo 11 January 2017 and Ratno 10 January 2017

[83] Rohmadi 15 December 2016 and Tabah 30 August 2016.

The formation of land claim groups sometimes resulted in conflicts and breakdown in family relations in local communities, where non-member residents became involved[84], physically attacking Tratak farmers' group members, damaging their homes and crops. "I lost some relatives permanently but I have new relations with thousands of union comrades (Tabah 30 August 2016)."

Where union members have been farming land insecurely since the 1980s, or further back to the 1930s, their experiences and ideas drawn from making livelihoods from farming are different to the ideas of members with limited or no experience in farming until the late 1990s or as recently as 2015. Some members granted secure land title in 2015 have wanted to sell their land. These have been members with limited experience in farming previously and who find the conditions of making livelihoods through farming too uncertain[85]. The longer term social relations they have engaged in in making their livelihoods, have not resulted in attachments to land either as a source of livelihood, as a means of social security, nor do they have an ideologically based concept of the importance of land for the poor and oppressed. Since 2016, the Tratak local farmers' group is developing strategies to support members so that they will not sell their land, or where this is unavoidable, they must guarantee that the land remains in the hands of other union group members committed to securing access to land for members in the long term.

Collectively organised claims for land rights in the first instance reflect people's struggles for survival and their social reproduction. At the same time these organised expressions of social solidarity have limited immediate connection to how they make secure farming livelihoods after they have access to land. In the case of a land claim that was successful in 2004[86], the limited attention paid by the union to the challenges of smallholder production, led to the withdrawal of many members from the union and many members sold their land. These experiences highlight the limitations of social solidarities that remain confined to securing land alone, without addressing the capacity of small farmers to successfully reproduce themselves as smallholder farmers.

[84] These family members admitted they had been paid by gang members from another sub-district in Batang to join in an attack on the farmers' group members (Tabah 30 August 2016). See chapter five for more detail.
[85] Discussion with Rohmadi and Tabah 4 December 2017.
[86] See Chapter 5 regarding the *Ambarawa Maju* land case with the local farmers' group *Kembang Tani*.

In contrast to the Tratak case, the ideas and ways of thinking of members of the Kamulyan Mountain Community Association members in the Pagilaran company case are strikingly political. Chapter five provided testimonies from members who described their experiences of intergenerational struggles as organised wage workers working for the Pagilaran company; intergenerational land rights claims and their dispossession as a result of the events of 1965; the realities of extreme poverty and their need for improved food sources and incomes; for housing security and employment for their children[87].

For these local group members, social relations and solidarities have their origins in their experiences as workers on the plantation and from their families' experience of repeated dispossession from land. These earlier solidarities provided the context for the (re)making of social solidarities in the late 1990s, when members fought the decision of the company to fire them and initiated claims to land. Members openly reject the exclusive control of lands by the Pagilaran company and the part played by government at local, regional and national levels in supporting the company. Members articulate political claims in class terms where they identify themselves as plantation workers and as dispossessed smallholder farmers. This polarisation of self-identified 'class' interests influences their ideas about the forms of action that they should take[88]. However, the decisions by a minority of plantation workers to side with the company in return for more secure employment in the first instance, has resulted in the fragmenting of solidarities within the plantation workforce and in the local areas where plantation workers live. This fragmentation has weakened the capacity of local group members to wage more confrontational struggles after the repression they experienced in 2002.

6.6 Gender and culture

Patterns of gender participation differ substantially across case studies. Here I focus on the single case study where outcomes were quite exceptional. A women farmers' group (*Kelompok Wanita Tani – KWT*) was initiated in Tanimaju hamlet in Sidomukti village in 2014, funded by a national government program. This program has become a highly successful agricultural endeavour organised exclusively by women in this hamlet. Chapter

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[87] Field notes made after a union meeting in Pagilaran hamlet on 11 January 2017. Discussions with Walijo 11 January 2017, Walinah 12 January 2017, Painah 12 January 2017 and Ratno 10 January 2017.
[88] Discussions with Walijo 11 January 2017, Walinah 12 January 2017, Painah 12 January 2017 and Ratno 10 January 2017.

four outlined the successful activities of this women's group. Here I consider more specifically what influence local ideas and established local solidarities have had on the success of the program, as well as some unplanned consequences, in the form of notable shifts in gender relations within families and at local community level[89].

When the women farmers' group was established, it was agreed at a local level that the group was a forum in the first instance for learning and for working together to develop new knowledge and skills. Bathi, the local hamlet head said, "… If focus [at the outset] was on profit and loss then it wouldn't have run (at all).[90]" It was agreed at the outset that half of the income generated by the group, over and above the costs of production, should be reinvested in the group's activities and individual profits were not the principal motivation. This was in contrast to other local groups established across Indonesia, including in another hamlet in this village, who prioritise the program as a means for improving family incomes or providing food.

The age of members in this groups is generally young, between 20 and 35 years old, with members holding more or less the same farming skills and social experience when the group was formed[91]. The socio-economic and educational backgrounds of the women are very similar (primary or junior high school leaving certificates) and they work on their own family plots and as farmer labourers for other landholders. The group is cohesive and leadership is strongly collective. The headperson of the group participates in district and national representative forums of other women farmers' groups where she is by far the youngest participant[92]. Her leadership is in stark contrast with the leadership of other women's groups developing the same program in other regions where leadership tends to be by the more educated, financially secure, often older women of the communities.

The formation and development of the women farmers' group in Tanimaju has been supported by the majority of men and village elders. The head of the women's group

[89] The experience of this KWT has not been witnessed in other locations according to the Magelang district program instructor responsible for coordination with this women's group (Interview with Aji, Instructor from the Magelang district program office 1 February 2017).
[90] Discussion on 7 January 2017.
[91] Around twenty per cent of the women in Tanimaju do not participate in the women's group. Some say they don't because they are already very busy and have no time, while others are not interested or their husbands do not agree to them participating.
[92] In 2017 she was 34 years old and had held this position since 2014.

explained this was because most residents view collective organisation with a common social purpose as necessary work for a Javanese person.

> My father supports my activity in the group because it is an example of how community members should live [by] working together (Yuni, a 34-year-old woman farmer).

The families of the women are very proud of the achievement of the women's group. Fathers and husbands actively support the group explaining that collective organisation and cooperation is highly valued in their community and to see women step forward and organise this group, developing their confidence and gaining new experiences makes them proud and enthusiastic[93].

The formation of the women's group has had a significant impact on women's time for household work and on gender relations within families more generally. Some of the collective social work (*kerja bakti*) for the hamlet, as well as some household farming work previously carried out by men is now part of women's everyday life activities.

> [Previously] Women rarely picked up a hoe let alone hoed a field and prepared it for planting. They were only occasionally involved in raising livestock. Now women can do all of those things by themselves (Atik, Head of KWT Tanimaju 7 January 2017).

> … We really see [the impact] in people's mindset (*pola pikir*) … Men knew that doing housework and raising children is heavy work, but we accepted that working in the field was the real heavy work… [Since the women's group was formed] … men are increasingly aware of how women do farming work as well as domestic work… [in this sense] they are equal (*setara*). The men [in Tanimaju] see not only the physical work the women carry out… also the management skills that women are developing, they can plan out the costs of (a) planting (season)… (Bathi - Tanimaju hamlet head 7 January 2017).

> … [We] really feel [the changes] … Women used to know how to do cooking and [everyone thought] only really helped with farming… Now we do [what we used to think of as] men's work. Because we have so much to do, men do some housework… we cooperate... there's some women's group work that we need help with too and men help us… the challenges are many but [we can do it] because of the support from our husbands and parents… when I feel really tired of all the responsibility they remind me we are being useful members of our society and what is better than that… And then my husband will wash some clothes… (Atik 7 January 2017).

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[93] Informal discussion with four KWT members at an afternoon seedling production work group 1 February 2017.

A national program that was funded to improve food security of family households through training women in agricultural techniques, when applied in the local specific conditions of Tanimaju hamlet, has resulted in outcomes that demonstrate striking shifts in gender relations. Outcomes here relied not only on the externally designed and monitored development program, but on the actually existing social relations within the community that adopted it. Where already existing cultural practices prioritise social solidarities amongst between residents, gender targeted economic programs can produce progressive shifts in the dynamics of gender relations. These local specific conditions produced very different outcomes from those reported across the national program[94], specifically changes in the dynamics of social relationships between men and women at hamlet and family household level.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter examined the formation of social solidarities and collective identities across case studies by investigating more closely the character of local cultures and their reproduction. I have focussed on identifying the moments, conditions and local histories, where the physical experiences of making social relations have influenced the ways in which social actors understand the world around them and the conditions in which they make decisions to collaborate around self-identified common interests, or not. This approach highlights the dynamic character of social struggles taking place at local level where contestation over ideas and practices, as well as power and resources, is ongoing, responding to the changing structural and environmental conditions in which subaltern actors develop their survival strategies.

The empirical evidence shows great diversity in the creation and reproduction of Javanese subaltern cultures at local level. The approach applied in the analysis of popular culture here has emphasised the study of meanings and experience, alongside people's behaviour. By tracing the historical dimensions of subaltern ideas and ideologies, and linking these to people's political experiences at the local case study level, I have demonstrated some connections between local subaltern responses to the mass violence and repression after 1965 and the cultural ideas and ideologies that remained available to rural subaltern

[94] Interview with Aji, Instructor from the Magelang district program office on 1 February 2017.

actors after the late 1960s. While the mass violence of the 1965-66 period brought about the annihilation of the PKI and its affiliated organisations, many of the political ideas and social values of the survivors of the violence remained intact. Highly varied experiences of the mass violence and repression in 1965-66, strongly influenced subsequent local expressions of social and political ideas under the New Order authoritarian regime.

The cultural repertoires drawn on by subaltern actors in this study include nationalist, religious, class, ethnic Javanist and other traditional cultural claims and expressions. The differences in cultural repertoires utilised by local subaltern groups across spatial settings demonstrates that the basis for the formation of solidarities and collective struggle is *not* limited to marginality, rather that solidarities and collective struggles emerge through human experience in the making of social relations. Subaltern claims correlate with the making of social relations between different social actors at local, regional and national levels and are based on people's ideas and values, past experiences, as well as the practical needs of the people engaged in them.

Beyond the existent cultural and ideological frames available to subaltern actors, human experience emerges as a critical factor in shaping the way people think, their social outlook and how they (re)make social relations and solidarities or do not. Further, the spatial practices in which solidarities and collective identities are (re)produced in local political economies, highlight the dynamic, ongoing and uneven development of social relations across rural spaces, providing insights into some factors that contribute to the fragmented character of many subaltern identities and political claims. While human experiences do not pre-determine in any way the choices that build and strengthen, or conversely undermine, collective social relations and solidarities, they do inform the possibilities available to subaltern actors. This diversity in human experience, social identities and cultural expressions present a critical challenge for conceptualising the basis for extending social relations of solidarity and collective action between subaltern and other non-elite groups across geographically distinct communities and changing regional and national political contexts.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The economic and political crisis of the New Order regime in Indonesia in the late 1990s and the collapse of authoritarian rule in 1998 took place at a political juncture of expanding mobilisations of diverse social actors across urban and rural Indonesia. Wide ranging reforms enacted in the first year after the fall of Suharto fulfilled many of the demands of these political mobilisations including the removal of the military from formal politics, the lifting of restrictions on political parties, trade unions and other political organisations, release of political prisoners and establishing a framework for decentralisation (Aspinall 2010). Some early assessments of the scale of democratic political change taking place during the Habibie presidency were cautiously optimistic, but were rapidly replaced by more pessimistic assessments that focussed on the capture of democratic institutions by political elites. Twenty years after the fall of Suharto, most studies of Indonesia's democratic 'transition', have left the ideas, forms of organisation, strategies and impacts of lower class struggles largely unexamined (Aspinall 2013b). These studies have focussed on the mixed outcomes of decentralisation and democratisation of state power for elite actors in Indonesia since *Reformasi,* providing little or no framework for conceptualising popular political action in the context of this institutional restructuring. The central aim of this study has been to examine the ideas, political claims, forms of organisation, strategies and impacts of subaltern class struggles in rural Indonesia since 1998.

The principal thesis question to be answered was: How have social actors from subaltern rural classes, specifically landless peasants, smallholder farmers and other rural poor people, with different social interests from those in power, engaged in social and political action in the post-dictatorship era? The thesis has shown that the historical diversity and dynamism of local and regional political economies is testimony to the creativity of subalterns in waging their struggles for autonomy and self-determination. By applying a dialectical materialist approach to examining capitalist social relations and class struggles I have highlighted the connections between everyday forms of subaltern self-assertion and subaltern actors' participation in the making of social movements that

contribute to transformative political change. The approach applied here extends the analysis of political studies beyond the state, its institutions and hegemonic practices by focussing on the persistent, albeit often fragmented, popular struggles to secure control of resources and shift social relations of power in favour of subaltern and other non-elite classes.

The study applied a theoretical approach and an ethnographic practice to support the detection and analysis of the repertoire of forms of popular action that rural subaltern classes engage in. Ethnographic approaches are well suited to studies of political agency as they build on the premise that people do not function in a vacuum; that their modes of thought and behavior develop in interaction with their real world environment (Brodkin 2017,131). The study focussed on identifying the moments, conditions and local histories, where the physical experiences of building social relations and human solidarities contribute to the ways in which subaltern actors understand and respond to the world around them. This approach highlights the dynamic character of social struggles taking place at local level where contestation over ideas and practices, as well as power and resources is ongoing, responding to the changing structural and environmental conditions in which these actors develop their survival strategies. The results demonstrate that we should take seriously the micro-scale cultures and practices of everyday resistance, in order to make the connections between these fragmented expressions of subaltern agency and moments of regime crisis and political upheaval where people engage in collective forums for political action, often for the first time.

The ethnographic approach applied in this study uncovered three primary factors that provided critical points of comparison of subaltern agency across case studies, i) access to land; ii) social relations of production; and iii) the ideas and ideologies of subaltern actors. A hybrid theoretical framework was then devised that positioned subaltern subjects as historical social actors by paying attention to the long term and uneven dynamics of capitalist development in Java in order to explain the diverse expressions of subaltern political agency. Drawing on propositions from Marxist political economy, Gramsci's concept of hegemony and social reproduction theory, the framework facilitates the reconnection of these diverse expressions of agency, allowing us to respond to the broader question of how

popular subaltern struggles may be capable of generating more progressive forms of social relations.

The thesis treats the capitalist state as both a field of struggle and as the material condensation of power relations. This view underpins the proposition that dynamic forces of social change lie in the conflicts and social struggles that take place between different social groups and classes over power and access to resources. It asserts that questions of power are settled through political struggles conducted in the making of social relations between contending elite, subaltern and other social groups and classes. Therefore, political analysis of changes in social relations of power should extend beyond the limits of electoral politics, parliament and political parties. This approach is important for studies of social movements that often lack a theoretical analysis of capitalist social relations and consequently miss the dynamics of class contradictions, failing to see how these influence the current organisation of capitalist power and changing forms of subaltern responses.

7.2 Findings

Chapter three explains how the origins of the uneven development of capitalist social relations in Java lie in the histories of social struggles and contestations between subaltern, elite and other social actors over power and the control of labour, land and other resources. By situating subaltern actors' struggles against dispossession and exploitation within their spatial and temporal dimensions we gain a more complex picture of the dynamics of individual and collective subaltern struggles and the formation of subaltern political claims. By highlighting the historical diversity and dynamism of local and regional political economies, this chapter casts light on the complexities of state-local relations and associated class structuring processes. Conflicts over the control of people, land and resources since the pre-colonial period, have produced different patterns of social relations of production and reproduction across diverse regions of Java and Indonesia more generally. The outcomes of these social conflicts have had appreciable consequences for subaltern actors' capacity to gain secure access to and control over land, and for social relations of power that manifest in village and regional state institutions today. Today, access to land and to local and regional institutions of power play a significant part in the unfolding dynamics of class conflict, and more specifically in subaltern actors' struggles to

secure livelihoods in rural areas. Further, structural changes in national labour markets following the Asian economic crisis of the late 1990s have underpinned a notable decline in permanent migration away from rural areas dominated by smallholder production.

Case studies in chapters four and five build on this socio-historical analysis to examine and explain the heterogeneity in social relations of power deployed across local and regional political economies at the time of the fall of the dictatorship. For subaltern actors without access to land and other resources, securing livelihoods is a precarious endeavour often resulting in the intensification of land conflicts. Conversely, in regions where farmers retain smallholdings or have secure access to land, expanded rural-urban livelihood pathways have stimulated changes in the dynamics of local political economies, providing new petty commodity production and wage-labour opportunities. Whether actors have secure land tenure or not has ongoing implications for the making of social relations at a local level. By tracing these historical relationships, the diversity in organisational arrangements that subaltern actors and groups engage in, and the collective solidarities they produce and reproduce become exposed. In both case studies, the making of collective solidarities is evident in actors' social reproductive strategies whether they involve collective struggles for securing access to land, or collective organisation for securing and improving housing, water supplies, transport infrastructure or health care.

Chapter four examines the structural context in which rural smallholders have developed strategies to keep control of their smallholdings. I consider the strategies not only of villagers that rely on agricultural production for survival, but the formation of solidarities and collective approaches by locally based groups which support diverse livelihood strategies, including retaining access to land while relying on other non-agricultural sources of livelihood. Further it demonstrates how the constitution of social groups and the formation of social relations and solidarities are not always based in the first instance on issues of 'class identity' (peasant, worker, trader). Rather, the making of social identities can be contingent on the making of social relations based on place, drawing on established cultural practices of collective organisation to support both productive and reproductive strategies.

Their reproductive strategies rely on social solidarities in the making of livelihoods, in developing and sharing local skills and knowledge as well as the building of physical

infrastructures. In local political economies dominated by smallholder production, the reliance on these solidarities provides some relative political autonomy that in the context of decentralisation has resulted in some cases of subaltern capture of state institutions at village level. The desire of local subaltern actors to maintain their relative autonomy, requires strategies to strengthen popular control of local government. Here local actors may not implement, or they may modify, how they apply and implement laws or regulations, development programs and funding initiatives that they consider undermine or disrupt their local social organisation or social solidarities. What remains to be seen is whether their political claims might be expanded to ones that would strengthen their economic security and political position, for example, base price setting for agricultural products, market regulation to protect domestic production, or financial and technical assistance for developing sustainable farming practices for the long term.

Chapter five explains how the rapid growth of agrarian social movements in Batang in the late 1990s was highly dependent on the formation of new social solidarities between local subaltern groups and other pro-democracy actors. The formation of the FPPB / Omah Tani farmers' union introduced a new political actor to the Batang district political economy, which through the collective and mobilised solidarity of members forced state actors to acknowledge their political claims. By initiating new independent organisations for collective action, subaltern actors and their allies crafted strategies aimed at shifting long established social relations of power in their local and regional political economies. They adopted cohesive strategies that relied on the formation of new local organisations of social solidarity, mass mobilisation, political education, lobbying state actors, electoral strategies and legal action resulting in successful land claims in four cases.

The distinctive character of each different land case demonstrates some of the ways that social relations of power fragment the circumstances and experiences of the oppressed even where they form collective organisations with the same broad political claims. Different local histories of social relations of production and social solidarity formations underpin the fragmented dynamics between locally based struggles. Further, in the geographic spaces where these local land conflicts have taken place, the participation of subaltern actors is not universal, and sometimes different positions occasion horizontal conflicts between subaltern groups. The formation of this district-wide organisation

demonstrates the potential for the expansion of solidarities across local geographies, specifically where these groups meet physically and engage in collective political actions. However, where political claims remain limited to securing land without taking on the question of improving the reproductive capacity of agrarian smallholders, these new social relations and solidarities can easily break down after access to land has been secured.

The examination of the effects of political decentralisation since *Reformasi,* exposes diverse outcomes across local political economies which strongly correlate with the historical development of class struggle politics within different regions and even between and within local villages. The Sidomukti case demonstrates that where social class differentiation is limited, it is possible to shift power relations in favour of subaltern groups. Here we see that the implications of the new Village Law no.6/2014 for local communities can be highly contingent on the prevailing social relations of power in particular villages. This case demonstrates that the increased access to resources of village governments since 2015, has been utilised to support existing collective solidarities to improve material conditions of housing, health, economy and cultural programs as well as activities that encourage the expansion of social solidarities and collective organisation around common aspirations.

The Batang case studies present a stark contrast with the Sidomukti village experience. Despite a strong orientation to engaging with state actors and institutions, including political contracts with district candidates and standing activist members as electoral candidates at village level, long established power relations in village and district structures were not shifted simply by electing good candidates. The election of Omah Tani activist members as village heads in practice did not immediately strengthen land claim strategies. Nor did it automatically lead to greater control or accountability of village institutions for subaltern residents. Alliances with sections of the state did produce some pro-poor reforms in government, demonstrably in challenging corrupt practices and by replacing corrupt and unresponsive government officials. However, a temporary alliance with the district head proved inadequate to the task of shifting broader social relations of power in favour of rural poor actors, in particular where state bureaucracies remained dominated by actors that support large agrarian and forestry based industries at the expense of subaltern groups.

Chapter six contributes to our understanding of the historical dimensions of the reproduction of subaltern ideas and ideologies at both macro and micro levels by examining the impacts and effects of the mass violence in 1965 and the establishment of the New Order regime. This is important as historical shifts in the articulation of ideas and expressions of agency continue to have implications for how subaltern actors do politics when authoritarian rule ends. By tracing the historical dimensions of subaltern ideas and ideologies, and by linking these to people's political experiences at the local case study level, I have demonstrated some connections between local responses to the mass violence and repression after 1965 and the cultural ideas and ideologies that remain available to rural subaltern actors. While the mass violence of the 1965-66 period brought about the annihilation of the PKI and its affiliated organisations, many of the political ideas and social values of the survivors of the violence remained intact. Varied experiences of the mass violence and repression from 1965-66, strongly influenced subsequent local expressions of social and political ideas under the New Order authoritarian regime, which continue to impact upon the formation of local political claims, cultural identities and society-state relations. This study demonstrates how subaltern experiences gained in real social struggles have the potential to generate new forms of identity and political practice.

The differences in cultural repertoires and vocabularies of resistance utilised by local subaltern groups across and within different settings demonstrates that the basis for the formation of solidarities and collective struggle is *not* limited to marginality; rather that solidarities and collective struggles emerge through human experience in the making of social relations. Subaltern claims are influenced by the making of social relations between different social actors which can be at local, regional or national levels. People's claims are articulated within the ideological frames available to them and are informed by their ideas and values which develop through their experiences. The spatial practices through which solidarities and collective identities are (re)produced in these cases, highlight the uneven development of social relations across time and space, providing further insights into factors that contribute to the fragmented character of many subaltern identities and political claims.

The Sidomukti case demonstrates how expressions of conscious resistance by local actors to external attempts to exert control over locally based village and hamlet

institutions may go undetected. Their counter-hegemonic actions here are not generally in public view, but form a vital part of the normative subculture among members of these communities. Whether their political claims remain limited to the context of locally specific opportunities , or move beyond these by developing wider geographic solidarities with broader socially emancipatory movements can not be pre-determined; rather this depends on how social struggles continue to unfold.

7.3 Limitations

There are limitations to the analysis presented in this thesis. Having drawn almost exclusively on the experiences, ideas and opinions of subaltern actors involved in collective organisations in the empirical cases selected, the experiences and ideas of actors who do not participate in collective organisations are less well represented. An investigation that more explicitly focuses on actors who do not share subaltern identities or participate in collective resistance, or who engage in direct conflicts with these groups would expand the empirical evidence and scope of analysis of political conflicts. More specifically, this approach would contribute to explaining why individuals and groups do *not* participate in developing collective solidarities and organised resistances.

The case study of everyday politics is limited in scope to the examination of upland areas. Undoubtedly further micro-studies in lowland coastal and interior regions of Java would expand our understanding of the diversity of local political economies and social relations of power. The Sidomukti case would have benefited from examining further the social relations between local and district political actors, in particular the incumbent district head, and from observing interactions between village representatives in sub-district and district forums. This would widen the analysis of changing society-state relations between villages and district levels of governance. The Omah Tani case study could have extended the research to include individuals who chose not to participate in land claims, as well as those who left Omah Tani in 2008-9. This would have expanded the exploration of horizontal social conflicts and the opportunities and constraints that emerge in building cross-class or cross-sectoral alliances. Finally, more detailed explanation of the cultural

dimensions of ritual and performance in both case studies and the function of *silahturahmi*[1] in building social solidarity across villages and districts would provide further insights into the articulations of subaltern ideas and their cultural expressions.

7.4 Implications

This thesis has made a number of contributions to the empirical study of rural subaltern agency in Indonesia, but it has wider applicability. Applying a critical political economy lens to examine the constitution of rural subaltern classes, their expressions of agency and their political claims, expands the frame of analysis beyond the boundaries of electoral politics and parliament. The theoretical framework developed here refocusses political inquiry on the study of social classes, contentious politics and class struggle to detect more precisely the dynamics of social struggles over power in post-authoritarian New Order Indonesia. Further, applying a dialectical materialist approach to the study of social classes uncovers the material connections between everyday forms of subaltern self-assertion, social movements and world historical movements while considering the specific conditions of rural subaltern actors.

The study applies Bayat's (2015) approach of taking seriously the micro-scale cultures and practices of everyday resistance, in order to make the connections between these fragmented expressions of subaltern agency and moments of regime crisis and political upheaval where actors are drawn into collective forums for political action often for the first time. The various ways that rural subaltern actors exercise social power in given social relations brings focus to the spatial and temporal dimensions of 'the local', where subaltern actors must engage with the larger structural context of national state policy agendas, international divisions of labour and international development agendas. Despite the common structural context that is set by national and international political agendas, local political economies provide another arena which can present quite different opportunities and constraints. The empirical findings in chapter 4 highlight the function of access to land as underpinning some measure of economic and political autonomy for smallholder farmers which has implications for the social relations of power at the local

[1] The more literal translation is ties of family (or friendship) but it can also mean maintaining or nurturing good relations with certain groups or individuals with the connotation of a responsibility to do so.

level. Here it is demonstrated that reforms and amendments to national legislation and regional regulations that have the potential to undermine local autonomies can be quietly resisted or managed in ways that do not disrupt existing social relations that are mutually beneficial.

Rising precariousness and increasing mobility between urban and rural spaces have become significant features of subaltern existence as these actors seek livelihoods in more varied forms. This study has shown that these features have implications for the formation of collective solidarities and identities on at least two scores. Where geographies of knowledge are generated and exchanged between subaltern groups moving between urban and rural contexts, this has expanded the frames in which local actors interpret and understand their own experiences and extended the potential for building collective solidarities beyond the local. The shortened distances between actors across geographic space, sometimes blurs these strict rural-urban demarcations while expanding the potential for direct physical engagement and the making of new social relations. On the other hand, precariousness has the tendency to disrupt and fragment social solidarities where pressures to just survive can constrain, or undermine, their reproduction, especially where political claims do not extend beyond the economic sphere. Moreover, the highly varied dynamics of locally based collective struggles and actors' engagement with decentralised state institutions, contributes further to 'fragmented' expressions of subaltern groups' political claims.

Hadiz (2006) argues that the reason for the failure to make more significant democratic gains for the majority of Indonesian citizens after the fall of the dictatorship in 1998, lies in the destruction of the left in the mid 1960s. The empirical findings in this study present some epistemological challenges to this view. Firstly, the argument makes no analysis of what happened to subaltern actors, who constituted the majority of mobilised social forces of the 1960s, after the destruction of the PKI and other organised left-wing groups. It fails to detect that many of the political ideas and social values of the survivors of the violence remained intact, albeit articulated and enacted in changed forms. Furthermore, the empirical evidence demonstrates that systems of control of labour and land developed by the New Order were unable to create passive non-resisting lower classes. On the contrary, the growing social contradictions of exploitation and repression imposed on rural

and urban lower classes under the New Order regime, led to increasing mobilisations of workers, students and poor peasant farmers in the 1990s which became significant contributing factors to the economic and political crisis that would lead to the downfall of Suharto (Aspinall 2005).

This study confirms Hadiz' (2010) view that the lingering legacy of direct repression of labour and peasant movements, the criminalisation of political activists and the association of subaltern struggles with the claim of communist revival continue to be a constraint on organised labour and peasant farmers. However, the characterisation of mass mobilisations in the late 1990s as largely spontaneous (Hadiz 2010, 157) does not stand up to scrutiny. That these struggles were initiated and organised by subaltern actors themselves, usually outside the framework of organised labour, peasant or other social movement groups or NGOs, at least in the first instance, does not make them spontaneous. Seemingly sudden mass mobilisations, widespread demonstrations or even riots with clear political aims, often emerge out of long term, ongoing everyday political actions, quiet encroachments and social organising at the most local level[2]. The evidence here demonstrates that the ideas and actions of subaltern rural actors often take the form of organic local expressions of class antagonisms and struggles for power and control of material resources and are not dependent on party formations or nationally coordinated social movements. These actors organise across multiple scales[3], establishing common claims and sharing common sentiments with other social actors and groups, engage in temporary alliances with state actors and employ diverse strategies and tactics to pursue their political claims. Historically, where political vehicles such as the PKI and social movement organisations have been available, some subaltern actors engage with and participate in them. Yet even in the 1960s, a large number of subaltern groups were active in a great variety of social organisations that had much more local characters.

The decline of the politically organised left and the fragmented character of subaltern and other social movements has been a generalised political phenomenon across nation states since the latter part of the 1980s. Here I argue that inherited notions from past

[2] The recent demonstrations organised across the nation by diverse local groups and individuals rejecting a range of regressive amendments to legislation in late September 2019 are a case in point.
[3] At hamlet, village, district, provincial, national and even international scales.

periods of what popular organisations should look like, hinder us from considering what new forms of popular organisation have emerged and the challenges this presents in recognising alternative paths towards transformative change. This is important to consider as previous institutions or organisational infrastructures utilised by subaltern actors may no longer prove useful as vehicles for subaltern political action[4] or they may be the target of official repression[5]. Therefore, we need to pay more serious attention to how subaltern actors have responded to these constraints and what implications this has for the study of social movements.

This study demonstrates that in local and sometimes regional specific contexts, popular actions by subaltern actors can and do generate more progressive forms of agrarian relations. Whether these are temporary or more permanent will be tested as these struggles unfold. Does the course of popular actions and struggles by subaltern groups contribute to the broadening and deepening of pro-poor democratic struggles? In a limited but very real sense for the actors involved in this study, definitely yes. But the further question is how can these actors' struggles, their political claims and the repertoire of political actions employed, be sharpened and extended? This question goes beyond the scope of this thesis; however, there are some empirical findings that indicate directions for further investigation.

Bayat (2015) draws our attention to the formation of political claims by the urban poor in Egypt and Iran in the 'Arab Spring' of 2010-2011. These claims, while often individual and fragmented, in moments of political upheaval often move from individual or localised struggles for things such as shelter and basic needs to broader collective or human rights based claims. Bayat's assessment of the aftermath of the Arab Spring revolutions was that while mass mobilisations had disappeared for now, after political elites refused to respond to their political claims, subaltern actors have returned to their strategy of quiet encroachments but with new capability and political influence. These examples have parallels with the emergence of some land claim movements in Indonesia in the late 1990s,

[4] Problems of co-optation, Opportunism within labour and social movements or the anti-subaltern class actions taken by many social democratic parties in different national government (Barker et al 2013).
[5] Particular organisational forms (mass mobilisations including occupations, failure to comply with discriminative laws) or ideological ideas (such as the ban on Marxism-Leninism in Indonesia) may systematically become targets of state (including extra-state) repression.

while the everyday politics of smallholder rural communities have manifested in quite different ways.

Bayat's view stands up to scrutiny here where, since December 2018, mass nationwide demonstrations have re-emerged again in the Arab world, in Sudan, Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq calling for a change in government. Some are referring to these mobilisations as a second wave of the 2010-2011 Arab Spring mobilisations, which despite the failure to bring immediate long lasting political changes have "overcome a long-entrenched politics of fear in ordinary people and changed the political consciousness of the region (Habbal and Hasnawi 2019)". The question that all of these struggles raise then, is if the interests of these social actors are sometimes, or even often, best served at local or regional scales, how should we then apply our critical understanding of the efficacy of subaltern agency when it does not *always* appear to make generalised impacts at national and international scales?

I argue that our approach to political analysis needs to allow a refocus on how subaltern actors are engaged in challenging the basis of oppressive social relations and to consider how their fragmented expressions of agency might constitute the basis for altering hegemonic relations. This is consistent with the view of the state as a social relation, and it is at this fundamental level that hegemonic relations are challenged and transformed. On that account, we should examine further the multifarious ways that subaltern actors pursue their political claims – whether through mass mobilisations, building (state or non-state) institutions that support local and regional economic and political autonomy, everyday collective reproductive strategies, political education, ignoring or breaking laws and regulations that undermine collective solidarities, *as well as* their electoral strategies and alliances with state actors and institutions.

Harnecker (2015) argues that transformative shifts in social relations of power require a *social force* that comes from the direct participation of ordinary people, based in their own expressions of grass-roots collective organisation. I argue that the phenomena of ongoing, widespread and 'fragmented' assertions of subaltern agency could be understood as critical elements in the future constitution of such a social force. Finally, the study supports Gramsci's views on praxis, where it is the physical action component involved in subaltern struggles which underpins the creation of social solidarities and collective will. The

implication being that the formation of collective solidarities beyond the local requires physical engagement between subaltern groups. Thus, strategies to initiate or facilitate solidarities between these fragmented elements should take seriously the work of generating meeting spaces where different social groups can become directly engaged, not merely delegating active engagement in social struggles to movement 'representatives' or leaders who negotiate with state actors.

Appendix – Informant Profiles as of 2017

	No.	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Employment / organisation	Language of interview
1	MG01	Marto	M	60s	Farmer	Indonesian / Javanese
2	MG03	Daliman	M	93	Former *kamituwo*, farmer	Javanese
3	MG04	Nur	F	38	Teacher (*honorer*)	Indonesian
4	MG06	Sri	F	36	Teacher (*honorer*)	Indonesian
5	MG07	Slamet	M	38	Farmer, trader, sells agricultural supplies	Indonesian / Javanese
6	MG08	Karmin	M	60an	Farmer / Performance art trainer	Indonesian /Javanese
7	MG12	Parto	M	47	Farmer, member of Village Community Empowerment Board	Indonesian /Javanese
8	MG13	Sutardi	M	74	Retired farmer, runs small shop (*warung*) from his home	Indonesian /Javanese
9	MG15	Bagas	M	29	Head of village youth group / Labourer, trellis maker	Indonesian /Javanese
10	MG16	Tutik	F	27	Pre-school teacher (unpaid)	Indonesian /Javanese
11	MG17	Mulyono	M	39	Village head / former hamlet head	Indonesian /Javanese
12	MG20	Bakir	M	65	Farmer	Indonesian /Javanese
13	MG26	Trisno	M		Carpenter, builder	Indonesian /Javanese
14	MG35	Budi	M	40	Farmer	Indonesian /Javanese
15	MG36	Atik	F	36	Farmer	Javanese
16	MG39	Joyo	M	70	Performance art trainer	Javanese
17	MG42	Atmo	M	40an	Farmer PDI-P activist	Javanese
18	MG44	Yatman	M	45an	Farmer	Indonesian /Javanese
19	MG45	Minah	F	16	High school student	Indonesian /Javanese
20	MG47	Sabar	M	35	Farmer	Indonesian /Javanese
21	MG50	Tarto	M	32	Farmer	Indonesian

22	MG51	Totok	M	34	Farmer / hamlet head	Indonesian /Javanese
23	MG53	Suyatmin	M	65	Farmer / former hamlet head	Javanese
24	MG56	Ramidi	M	45	Former village head	Javanese
25	MG59	Yahmi	F	42	Village staff / KASI / Farmer	Indonesia
26	MG60	Soleh	M		Village Staff / KAUR / Farmer	Indonesian /Javanese
27	MG61	Haryono	M	38	Village secretary / civil servant	Indonesian
28	MG63	Karno	M	35	Hamlet head	Javanese
29	MG65	Aji	M	36	Agrarian instructor, Magelang district Agricultural Department	Indonesian
30	TMG01	Agung	M	42	Farmer / cow trader / tobacco trader	Indonesian /Javanese
31	TMG03	Ahmad	M	76	Farmer / horticulturalist	Indonesian /Javanese
32	BTG01	Handoko	M	55	Farmers' advocate/lawyer	Indonesian /Javanese
33	BTG02	Rohmadi	M	33	Local Tratak group organiser / Omah Tani organiser	Indonesian /Javanese
34	BTG03	Tabah	M	44	Local Tratak group organiser / Omah Tani organiser	Indonesian /Javanese
35	BTG04	Ratno	M	46	Omah Tani Organiser	Indonesian /Javanese
36	BTG05	Rumini	F	48	Local Tratak group organiser / OT	Indonesian /Javanese
37	BTG09	Pam		70	Local Tratak group organiser	Indonesian /Javanese
38	BTG14	Yoyok	M	40	District head	Indonesian
39	BTG23	Walijo	M	52	Pagilaran local group organiser	Indonesian /Javanese
40	BTG24	Walinah	F	48	Pagilaran local group organiser	Indonesian /Javanese
41	BTG25	Painah	F	50	Pagilaran local group member	Indonesian /Javanese
42	BTG29	Lantip	M	62	Pagilaran resident / Omah Tani sympathiser	Indonesian /Javanese
43	BTG30	Ari	M	52	Driver for Omah Tani	
44	OTH	Arga	M	42	Former People's Democratic Party activist	Indonesian

Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
Abangan (Javanese)	Abangan literally means "red," but the term is a symbol for folk traditions generally. Javanese 'abangan' are also called kejawen and commonly hold syncretic beliefs. While nominally Muslim they often follow traditional practices from earlier Hindu, Buddhist or animist belief systems.
Adat	Adat is a generic term derived from Arabic language for describing a variety of local customary practices and tradition.
Aksi sepihak	Adat is a generic term derived from Arabic language for describing a variety of local customary practices and tradition.
Aliran	Denotes both differences in religious belief and practice as well as political allegiances.
Bakul (Javanese)	Trader
Bekel (Javanese)	Lowest level officer in Mataram Islam kingdom era until Dutch colonial era which had direct connection with ordinary people as a tax collector. Onghokham (1984) compares the Bekel of the pre-colonial period as a person holding similar responsibilities to the village head or *lurah* in the colonial system.
Bergiliran	Take turns
Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Old Javanese language)	Unity in Diversity An official motto of the Republic of Indonesia since independence.
Bupati	District head
Cacat	Disable
Cultuurstelsel (Dutch)	System of forced labour
Dongeng cikal-bakal (Javanese)	This is a story about the people who first established a community. In some cases this story refers to an actual

	person, in others it refers to historical figures from Javanese legend or a mystic figure.
Dana Desa	Village Funds
Demang (Javanese)	Farming coordinator
Departemen Kehutanan	Forestry Department. Since 2014 the name changed into Ministry of Environment and Forestry.
Desa	Village
Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah	District People's Representatives Council
Dibubarkan	Disbanded
Dicap	Branded or stigmatized
Dipukul keras	Hit hard
Domein Verklaring (Dutch)	The concept that land without certificate of proof of ownership shall become state land.
Dusun	Hamlet
Fakultas Pertanian Universitas Gadjah Mada	Agricultural Faculty of Gadjah Mada University
Gotong-royong	Work together (to respond to individual or community needs). To help each other, demonstrate solidarity. This practice is still very strong in rural area.
Gubuk	Hut
Guru honorer	Teacher with temporary employee status, does not receive full wage or other employee benefits and sometimes is not paid at all.

Hajatan	Special occasions Can be a family or community occasion.
Hak Milik	Private Ownership
Hak Ulayat / Suku	Traditional communal tenure rights
Hasil bantuan dimakan sendiri	Government program funding was corrupted.
Hemat	Thrifty
Ibadah	Religious practice
Ikut naluri	Follows a local logic or historical tradition.
Iuran	Dues or routine financial contribution for collective matters.
Jalan agropolitan	Agropolitan road Village road built through government program to support the development of agricultural districts.
Jaminan Kesehatan Nasional	National Health Insurance
Karesidenan	Residency A territorial administrative unit introduced by the Dutch colonial administration. It existed until the government of the Republic of Indonesia adopted the provincial system.
Kas desa	Village funds
Kebersamaan	Togetherness
Kecamatan	Sub-district

Kejawen	Javanese spiritualism. The term is a symbol for folk traditions generally. Javanese syncretic Muslims are also referred to as kejawen, or 'Javanist'.
Kelompok Wanita Tani	Women Farmers’ group
Kemenyan	Incense
Kemiskinan	Poverty
Kepala desa	Village head
Kepala dusun / dukuh	Hamlet head
Kepala Seksi (Kasi)	Village head’s staff
Kepala Urusan (Kaur)	Village secretary’s staff
Kerja bakti	Collective voluntary work or working bee
Kesadaran	Consciousness
Kesatuan	Unity
Ketoprak	A kind of Javanese traditional theatre.
Kulak (Javanese. Verb.)	Buy commodities in order to resell them.
Kurang / tidak mampu	Marginal poor In the context of family’s economic condition.
Kyai (Javanese)	An expert in Islam, but not necessarily a Muslim cleric.
Lebaran	End of fasting month celebration.

Malem Jumat Kliwon (Javanese)	Friday Kliwon night Kliwon is part of Javanese five-day market week system.
Mancanagara (Javanese)	Kingdom’s outer area Not directly ruled by the king but was claimed to be part of the kingdom’s realm.
Mandek (Javanese)	Discontinued or stopped in the middle of the process.
Marhaenisme	Marhaenism A populist ideology established by Sukarno as a variant of Marxism. It was said that Marhaenism is Marxism applied according to the situation and condition in Indonesia.
Massa mengambang	Floating mass. The ‘floating mass’ (*massa mengambang*) policy effectively worked to exclude ordinary (poor) people from politics by eradicating any kind of mass or collective organizing at the local level.
Masyarakat	Society or community
Mata air	Natural spring
Mataram Kuno	Ancient Mataram or Hindu Mataram A Javanese Hindu-Buddhist kingdom that flourished between the 8th and 11th centuries, based in Kedu and Kewu Plains in Central Java; these areas were referred to as Mataram.
Mataram Islam	Islam Mataram An Islamic sultanate that ruled Central Java between 16th and early 19th century, based in Kedu and Kewu Plains.
Megawati Soekarnoputri	The leader of Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle.
Mendak (Javanese)	Memorials to people’s passing. These memorials are conducted at ritual intervals after someone’s death.
Mengangkat budaya lokal	Fostering local culture

Merantau	Leave home to explore life opportunities and new experiences.
Merusak	Wreck / damage
Numpang	Stay at someone's place In the case of having nowhere else to stay.
Pak Dhe (Javanese)	Uncle
Pak Kaum	The origins of *Pak Kaum* are contested as to whether it originated as an Islamic religious figure or a syncretic or *kejawen* figure. In some hamlets the *kaum* is responsible to ensure the religious practice (*ibadah*) of all religions represented in the hamlet can be carried out, while in others only Muslim *ibadah* is supported.
Pancasila	The Five Principles of Indonesia's state ideology. Belief in one God, Humanism, Unity, Democracy and Social Justice.
Papan	Thin timber
Partai Bintang Reformasi	Star Reformation Party
Partai Komunis Indonesia	Indonesian Communist Party
Pasisir or pesisir	Coastal
Pemilikan perorangan	Individual ownership
Pemilikan komunal	Communal ownership
Pemuda Rakyat	People's Youth Affiliated to Indonesian Communist Party.
Pengajian santri	A collective study on the teaching of Islam by pious Muslims led by an Islamic expert.
Pengikut	Followers

Persaudaraan Warga Tani	Fraternity of Peasant Community
Pesantren	Islamic boarding school
Petak	A block of land
Pethuk D (Javanese)	Land tax certificate from the colonial period.
Petani	The word *tani* (*petani*) in Indonesian can be translated as either peasant or the more commercial oriented 'farmer'.
Pola pikir	Mindset
Pos ronda	Community night watch patrol post
Priyayi / Abdi Raja	A social class, originally a class of public servants during the colonial period.
Pro-rakyat	On the side of ordinary people.
Program Keluarga Harapan	Government financial assistance paid in cash directly to poor families that have children who are school students.
Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga	Family Well-being and Empowerment Organisation A New Order state initiated organization, which every single family in the whole country has to be involved.
Preman	Gangster or thug
Rakyat	The (little or ordinary) People
Reformasi	Reformation 1. Refers to the pro-democracy movement of the late 1990s that forced Suharto to step down. 2. Also refers to the post New Order period.
Rejeb (Javanese)	A month in the Javanese version of the Islamic calendar.

Rencana Kerja Pembangunan Desa	Village Development Work Plan
Rumah layak	Liveable house
Rukun Tetangga	Neighbourhood organization. Smallest unit of administration in Indonesia.
Rukun Warga	Greater neighbourhood organization.
Santri	Pious Muslim
Santri banget	Very pious muslim
Saudara	Sister or brother. Can also refer to extended family or fellow members of the community.
Sawah	Wet rice field
Saya berpihak	I take sides
Sekretaris Desa	Village Secretary
Semuanya lancar	Everything goes well
Senasib	In the same boat but with an element of solidarity.
Sensus Pertanian	Agricultural Census
Sesajen	Offering Related to local beliefs.
Setara	To be equal
Sholat	Muslim's five times daily prayer.
Slametan (Javanese)	Javanese ceremony for overcoming or avoiding calamity.

Suara Ibu Tani	Voices of Peasant Women
Sukarnois	Sukarno's loyalists
Susah-payah	Work very hard with many challenges.
Swadaya	Self-reliance
Tanah bengkok	Village land that members of village government.
Tanah pelungguh / Apanage	System of land management under the Islam Mataram royal kingdoms.
Tanah terlantarkan	Abandoned land
Tanam paksa	Forced labour
Tani	Work as a farmer.
'Tani adalah ngenteni'	Being a farmer means always in waiting. Ordinary farmers cannot control whether their harvest will succeed or fail. It depends on many factors, mostly naturally occurring once.
Task Force Siaga Komando Kebun Pagilaran	Pagilaran Plantation Alert Task Force Commando
Tanah kas desa	Land owned by village which provides a source of village funds.
Tidak masuk akal	Makes no sense or unbelievable.
Tidak berpolitik	Not engaged in practical politics.
Tengkulak (Javanese)	Middleman

Tumpang sari	Polyculture
Undang-Undang Desa	Village Law
Warga	Community
Warisan	Heritage
Wayang (Javanese)	1. Javanese traditional puppet. 2. Javanese traditional theatre. 3. Javanese traditional story.
Wong cilik (Javanese)	Ordinary people Associated with the mass of poor people.

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