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Citation: Hensengerth, Oliver (2011) Violence research in Northeast and Southeast Asia: main themes and directions. International Journal of Conflict and Violence, 5 (1). pp. 55-86. ISSN 1864-1385

Published by: Bielefeld University, Germany

URL: http://www.ijcv.org <http://www.ijcv.org>

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Violence Research in Northeast and Southeast Asia: Main Themes and Directions

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Vol. 5 (1) 2011

Violence Research in Northeast and Southeast Asia: Main Themes and Directions

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The study analyses research on violence in the Northeast and Southeast Asia with respect to four types: political, urban, domestic and youth violence, highlighting current research themes, tendencies and gaps in violence research on and in the region, and identifying needs for further research. Commonalities and differences between countries and subregions are examined, along with a treatment of the colonial experience that influenced political violence in post-colonial countries.

With the exception of political violence, violence in Northeast and Southeast Asia has been thoroughly understudied, particularly within the region.[1] One obvious reason for this is that many countries have been governed by authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes that applied political violence for the purpose of staying in power and had no intention of allowing independent research. Most research has therefore come from Western Europe, the United States, and particularly Australia.

For this reason, Australian and U.S. research institutes have also traditionally seen the presence of a large number of regional scholars. It is only in recent years, when most countries experienced some form of democratic opening between 1989 and 1999, that regional scholarship on violence has gained more prominence. Regional scholarship is unevenly spread across countries: six of the region's fifteen countries have small or negligible research infrastructure (Laos, Cambodia, Burma, East Timor, North Korea and Brunei). Of these, Laos, Cambodia, Burma and East Timor have all experienced several decades of internal violence.

The present paper has two purposes: First, it will detail the state of the art in violence research in Northeast and Southeast Asia. Second, it is designed to identify gaps in this research. The study analyses research on violence in the region with respect to four types: political, urban, domestic and youth violence. In order to examine the literature and to identify needs for further research, the paper highlights current research themes, tendencies and gaps in violence research on and in the region. This includes commonalities and differences between countries or subregions and an illumination of the colonial experience that influenced political violence in post-colonial countries.

Violence research in Northeast and Southeast Asia has traditionally focussed on political violence, reflecting the violent history of most countries in the region after World War II. Most forms of political violence are discussed through the lens of post-colonial nation-building and therefore in relation to specific political contexts: ethno-religious violence, secessionism, and state violence to preserve national unity and government power; the ideological contest in the Second and Third Indochina Wars; and domestic conflicts,

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1 Northeast Asia comprises China, the Koreas, Japan, and Taiwan. Southeast Asia is subdivided into continental Southeast Asia (Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam); and insular Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Brunei, and the Philippines).

in the form of communist insurgencies, anti-communist counterinsurgencies, and generalised civil wars.

In contrast, youth, urban and domestic violence have only recently become part of the scientific discourse, whereby youth violence still plays a marginal role. Youth violence is discussed in connection with political events, such as the violence surrounding the independence of East Timor, and also against the backdrop of paternalistic societies in which youth join gangs in order to find a role for themselves in society. This latter context is also the frame for the discourse on domestic violence: paternalistic societies, in which women struggle to make themselves heard and in which judges and legislators often relegate wife abuse to the private sphere. In the cases of youth violence and domestic violence, the context of authoritarian paternalistic societies meant that researchers neglected the issue until liberalising tendencies during the last two decades, which have allowed the emergence of a body of literature that is still thin for youth violence but already sizeable for domestic violence. Urban violence has also only lately made it onto the research agenda, given the low levels of economic development and urbanisation in many countries in the region.

The paper begins with an overview over the colonial histories of the countries in the region. These histories are linked to forms of political violence. It is therefore the aim of the history part to highlight causes of political violence as inherent in the colonial experience. Political violence is analysed along three lines: identity and sovereignty in borderlands, ethno-religious and communal violence, and violence perpetrated by authoritarian governments that exclude the wider population from access to resources through elite political processes. The sections that follow discuss causes and risk factors for urban, domestic and youth violence. A conclusion will synthesise the main points of analysis and outline potentials for future research.

1. Historical Introduction

Summarising the history of Northeast and Southeast Asia is no easy matter, due to the immense political, economic,

cultural and social diversity between and within the countries. Most crucially, all countries except Thailand, the Koreas and Japan were colonised;[2] China was a semi-colony whose own imperial government remained in power, but where Western imperialism carved out spheres of influence.

1.1. The Impact of Colonialism on Current Conflict Patterns

While colonialism had a profound political, social and economic impact on some colonies, life in other societies continued almost uninterrupted. Laos, Cambodia and East Timor were relatively unaffected by colonialism, with their agrarian societies and autonomous villages remaining largely intact. In these territories, it was post-colonial developments, rather than the colonial experience, that triggered political and social conflicts. These countries had not experienced strong, penetrative centralized bureaucracies prior to colonialism, and colonialism did nothing to change that. We will return to this point later. In other countries, colonialism firmly took hold, as the ruling powers constructed empires that required efficient administration and large-scale infrastructure (such as road and rail networks and deep-water ports) for the extraction and shipping of resources on a mass scale to fuel European industrialisation.

Colonialism had a variety of impacts on these places. First, it created new countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. The Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824 drew an artificial line through the Malay archipelago to settle the hostilities between the British and Dutch. The creation of Indonesia from the Dutch colony is largely responsible for the secessionist conflicts in Aceh and Papua. When Sukarno became the first Indonesian president in 1949, he attempted to create a nation-state that included all of the Dutch East Indies under the slogan "From Sabang to Marauke". Aceh and Papua resisted post-colonial incorporation into an Indonesian nation through their respective independence movements: the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) was established in 1976 and the Free Papua Movement (OPM) in 1965. Aceh was an independent sultanate colonised by the Dutch in 1873. After Indonesian independence it was merged with North Sumatra despite its insistence that it was ethnically

2 Japan annexed Korea in 1910 and colonised Thailand during World War II.

and religiously distinct from the other tribal groups in the area. As for Papua, the Dutch stayed in the small territory and created a statist entity independent from events in Indonesia, where Papuans were employed in the civil service and the army. The Dutch withdrew in 1963 under pressure from U.S. President Kennedy, whose administration warned that a military conflict between the Netherlands and Indonesia would ultimately benefit the communists in Indonesia (Lintner 2009b; Webster 2007).

As for Malaysia, the area consisted of small sultanates in pre-colonial times. British colonialism not only put an end to this political diversity, it greatly changed the ethnic composition of the area when the British encouraged mass Indian and Chinese immigration. Although Indian and Chinese traders had been present in the area long before British colonialism arrived, mass migration occurred between 1786 (when Britain took possession of Peneng) and 1957 (when Malaysia became independent). The peak of Indian and Chinese migration was in the second half of the nineteenth century when the establishment of rubber and coffee plantations created the need for large amounts of labour. The British authorities brought Indians from British India and negotiated the transfer of Chinese workers with the Chinese government. Both Chinese and Indians came initially as indentured labourers. Some Indians came to Malaya accompanying the British from India as domestic servants or in other functions. The early twentieth century then saw Indian migration in higher occupational categories, such as doctors and lawyers (Sandhu 1969; Periasamy 2007; Arasaratnam 1979). As a consequence of Indian and Chinese concentration on business, these two ethnic groups came to dominate economic life. British pre-independence plans to grant citizenship to Indians and Chinese resulted in mass protests by the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), which became the dominant political party after independence. In order to achieve an accommodation between the ethnic groups, the British formed the Malay Chinese Association, which was mostly active among Malay Chinese, as a non-communist alternative to the Malay Communist Party. The Malayan Indian

Congress agreed to join a coalition with UMNO and the Malay Chinese Association. This gave birth to the Barisan Nasional alliance, which came to dominate politics in Malaysia after independence.

As a result of immigration, Indians make up roughly 7 percent of Malaysia's population, Chinese almost 24 percent. Malays and other indigenous peoples make up only roughly 60 percent of the population of modern Malaysia. The relative economic success of Malay Chinese and Malay Indians in comparison to the indigenous population led to the race riots of 1969, which led the government to introduce affirmative action in employment and education (Chakravarti and Roslan 2005; Balasubramaniam 2006).

The Philippines were made up of a number of seafaring states that were at times part of the Malay kingdoms of Srivijaya, Majapahit and Brunei. The legacy of the Spanish, Dutch and British empires here is still the root of territorial conflicts between Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Brunei. The imposition of Spanish colonialism on the island group created the modern state of the Philippines. It also created a class of commercially oriented landowners, *caciques*, who were mostly Chinese *mestizos*.[3] In the absence of an indigenous aristocracy and bureaucracy the *caciques* became the Philippines' economic elite by the latter half of the nineteenth century. When the United States took over the Spanish colony in 1898 and moved to create a political system modelled on the U.S. presidential system, the *cacique* families came to dominate the political institutions from the localities to the central level. This gave rise to the characterisation of Filipino democracy as "cacique democracy" (Anderson 1988), indicating the domination of parliament and government by landowning families. Virtually all Filipino presidents since independence in 1946 came from landowning families, including post-Marcos President Corazon Aquino (1986–1992), President Gloria Macapagal-Aroyo (2001–2010), and the current President Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino, son of ex-president Corazon Aquino and assassinated senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino.

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3 For a history of the Chinese in the Philippines see Wickberg 1964.

The Muslim population of Mindanao, collectively known as Moro since Spanish colonial times but consisting of diverse linguistic and cultural groups, resisted both colonial domination and inclusion into the post-colonial state. Spanish rule converted most Filipinos to Roman Catholicism, thus creating a religious element in the Mindanao struggle against domination by the north. While the Spanish had never fully subjugated the Muslim population, U.S. policies eventually managed to do that, using land laws that enouraged Christian Filipino migration and the establishment of plantations by U.S. and Filipino companies. Continued discriminatory policies in the post-colonial Philippines, including migration into Muslim areas, sparked an insurgency against the government in Manila in the 1960s (McKenna 1998; McKenna 2007; Concepcion et. al. 2003). The conflict remains unresolved to the present day.

The second impact of colonialism, which is related to the creation of entirely new countries, is the imposition of the nation-state ideal in countries that were previously governed by traditional concepts of kingship. This created new problems of ethno-nationalism as new forms of national narrative developed and the new ethnic minorities resisted the new hierarchical patterns of domination in the nation-state. Conflicts erupted in Indonesia with Aceh and Papua, and in the Philippines with the Mindanao Muslims, as post-colonial governments attempted to extend their reach by force into minority areas. But also in the old kingdom of Burma, ethnic groups such as the Karen and the Kachin suddenly found themselves in conflict with a new government that sought their forcible subjugation to a Burmese state (Rajah 2002; Kuroiwa and Verkuyten 2008). And in Thailand, the Malay majority of the southern provinces resisted economic marginalisation and neglect by Bangkok. All these issues remain unresolved.

The third impact of colonialism was the temporary suspension of pre-colonial conflicts between the ancient states of Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, which broke out again after independence. The conflicts in this area stem largely from the succession of great empires: Khmer, Vietnamese and Thai. At the time when the French colonised Indochina, the Siamese and Vietnamese kingdoms had come to dominate large areas that had been under the con-

trol of a powerful Khmer kingdom during the Angkor period (802–1431). By the time the French arrived, Cambodia was already much reduced and the Angkor cities and temples lay in ruins in the forests. Restoration efforts began in the late-nineteenth century by the École Francaise d'Extreme Orient, that is, on the initiative of the French colonial power. After independence, the Angkor period became a major source of Cambodian nationalism.

The French advance stopped the Thai and Vietnamese states encroaching on Cambodian territory and thus effectively rescued Cambodia from disappearing. The unsolved issues are still visible today in the ongoing political and sometimes military conflict between Cambodia and Thailand over the Preah Vihear temple at the Thai-Cambodian border. The temple, built during the Angkor period, has been a source of conflict between the two countries since 1962, when a ruling by the International Court of Justice in The Hague asserted that the temple was on the Cambodian side of the border. The dispute stems from the cession of Thai territory to the French protectorate of Cambodia and the demarcation of the Siamese-Cambodian border in 1907, when the French survey team placed the temple on the Cambodian side of the border in contravention of an agreement that the border follow the watershed in the Dang Raek mountains. In 1954, Cambodia complained to the International Court of Justice after Thailand invaded the border area (Prescott 1996). Another military border conflict was sparked in 2008, when the temple was named a UNESCO World Heritage site. In 2011, Indonesia agreed to negotiate in the conflict. Similarly, Cambodia and Vietnam are at odds over the Mekong Delta region, a formerly Cambodian territory but ceded to Vietnam under French colonialism. The Mekong Delta area is still referred to in Cambodia as Kampuchea Krom, or Lower Cambodia.

The fourth impact of colonialism consisted in the introduction of new means of mass production (rubber plantations, tin mining, etc.) during European industrialisation, which created a proletariat. In Vietnam, for instance, economic changes attached Vietnam's economy to the international market. This development precipitated profound social changes. In the villages, the extension of French control manifested itself in the introduction of a

pervasive money economy, enforced tax collection, private property and agricultural production for the market (especially rice). These economic processes replaced the communal village organisation, village autonomy, subsistence farming, and the widespread acceptance of taxes in kind. As a result, peasants were not only forced into commercialized relationships under market conditions (replacing communal supra-familial institutions); events such as loan default, a drop in market prices, or a bad harvest could make subsistence farmers landless or turn them into poor peasants, tenants, or agricultural laborers (Chesneaux 1955; Ngo 1991).

In the urban areas, colonial industrialisation led to the emergence of an industrial proletariat that grew strongly during World War I due to France's need for raw materials, and continued to grow after the war, reaching its maximum in 1929 in the fields of commerce and industry, plantation agriculture, and mining (McAlister 1969). The proletariat was joined by landless subsistence farmers who moved to the cities as migrant workers in search of employment (Chesneuax 1955; Karnow 1991). The urban areas also saw the rise of an indigenous bourgeoisie, composed of absentee landlords, entrepreneurs and colonial officials, and a petit bourgeoisie composed of shopkeepers, small traders, artisans, clerks, managers, interpreters, primary school teachers, journalists, and technicians (Marr 1984).

The emergence of new social classes spurred by industrialisation and agro-industrial development occurred across the colonies with the exception of Laos, Cambodia and East Timor; in the Philippines the economy continued to be dominated by the indigenous *cacique* class. The appearance of new social classes was accompanied during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century by radicalising – but nevertheless factionalised – independence movements. During the nineteenth century, members of the indigenous elite began to advocate reform of political and education systems (for example the One Hundred Days Reform Movement in China or the Young Men's Buddhist Association in Burma). The aim was a cultural revival and a

strengthening of political and social institutions vis-à-vis the colonialists. However, the ineffectiveness of the reformers due to the inertia of conservative forces and the heavy-handed response of the colonialists gave rise to more radical ideas of anti-colonial struggle and revolution informed by readings of a cross-section of Western political philosophy (Cady 1958, 168–72; Fleischmann 1989, 1–3; Htin Aung Maung 1967, 268–83; Lintner 1990, 5; Smith 1993, 49–57; Trager 1966, 169; Thompson and Adloff 1950, 82–83; Harrison 2001).

The end of World War I marked a watershed, when it transpired that Woodrow Wilson's ideas of self-determination did not apply to the colonies. In China, for example, the German enclave of Shandong was handed over to Japan rather than returned to China. In the eyes of those advocating radical changes, this discredited not only domestic reformists and the old social classes, but also the democratic and capitalist countries. At the same time, the success of the Russian Revolution provided a direct template for changes reaching far beyond mere reforms.[4] The crisis of the world economy in the late 1920s greatly magnified both anti-colonial sentiment and the attraction of communism. The formation of unions and political parties (especially social democratic and communist) lent a structure. Concerted action began, including boycotts of Western products and strikes.

Communist parties had a major impact on all post-colonial countries including especially China. In 1949, the communist party under Mao won the civil war against the nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek. While Chiang retreated to Taiwan, wiped out the local political elite in bloody purges, and erected a military dictatorship that lasted until 1987, mainland China became communist. After a period of economic recovery it plunged into the Great Leap Forward (1958–1960) followed by the violence and upheaval of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) (Gao 2008), after which it set out to implement major economic reforms, which have brought strong economic growth rates since the 1980s.

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4 For more detail see Marr (1981), Harrison (2001), van de Ven (2003), and Thornton (2007).

The Potsdam Conference in 1945 divided Korea at along the 38th parallel into a communist North and a capitalist South. In South Korea, U.S. occupation led to the suppression of the radical labour movement and the rural insurgency. Under American sponsorship, Syngman Rhee became South Korea's first post-war president. While nominally democratic, Rhee was authoritarian as well as corrupt, and Korea experienced a period of political instability which ended only with the military coup led by Park Chung-hee in 1961. While economically extremely successful, Park established a brutal anti-communist regime which oversaw Korea's transformation into an industrialised state harnessing economies of scale in shipbuilding, car-making, heavy engineering and chemicals. Later, South Korea moved into high-technology industries such as semiconductors. Park was assassinated in 1979, but military rule continued until 1987, when South Korea embarked on democratisation at a time when economic success began to falter and a civil society began to emerge.[5]

Cambodia became independent in 1954, and was led Norodom Sihanouk whose officially neutral and nominally democratic regime showed its true authoritarian nature in repressing any challenges to his rule. This eroded the democratic institutions that had been half-heartedly introduced by the French colonial authorities and increasing repression forced the communists underground.

In 1968, the communists embarked on a nation-wide insurgency, which was the beginning of the Cambodian crisis that was to last until 1991. In addition, the army leadership under Lon Nol detested Sihanouk's neutral foreign policy and his refusal to take part in the Vietnam War. In 1970, the army under Lon Nol toppled Sihanouk, supported by the United States. The Lon Nol government was initially welcomed by the urban elite as a respite from the corruption and repression of the Sihanouk regime.

However, Lon Nol proved to be highly corrupt as well. In addition, the army campaign against the communist insurgency in combination with U.S. carpet bombing of Cambodian territory used by the North Vietnamese army led to mass flight to the cities, particularly Phnom Penh where the population rose from 600,000 in 1969 to 3 million in 1975. The army campaign against the insurgency proved futile, however. Unable to fend off the communists and sustained only by U.S. military assistance, the Lon Nol government was expelled by the communists led by Pol Pot in 1975.

Pol Pot erected a radically anti-Vietnamese communist state modelled on Maoist principles that was to last until 1979. Vietnam regarded constant border violations as a security risk, and in 1979 intervened and ousted Pol Pot. His regime fled to the Thai border, and the civil war that ensued between the new government and Pol Pot's forces dragged on until 1991 when it was ended by the intervention of a UN peacekeeping force.[6]

In Burma, independent since 1948, the government was challenged by a communist insurgency that was made worse by ethnic conflict. After a phase of unstable liberal democracy, the civilian government handed power to a military caretaker regime in 1958. When instability continued after the restoration of civilian rule in 1960, the military took over completely in 1962. In November 2010, general elections were held to institute a shift from military to civilian rule. However, political parties linked with the military, reserved seats for the military in the new parliament, and the ban preventing Aung San Suu Kyi from participating in the elections put a question mark over the sincerity of the military's intention to introduce democracy.

In Indonesia, independent since 1949, President Sukarno had to balance two domestic political forces: the communist party and the military. This produced political instability, exacerbated by a faltering economy and ethnic conflict. In 1965, the military blamed an attempted coup on the communist party and organised a hunt for real and alleged communists that led to mass killing of suspected communists.

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5 For South Korea's development see Amsden (1989), C. Lee (1992), Cho (1994), and Yeon-Ho Lee (1996).

6 For a history of the Cambodia conflict see for example Chandler (2008) and Hood and Ablin (1987).

In 1967, Suharto toppled Sukarno, became president, and established his New Order regime that pursued capitalist expansion and institutionalised a political role for the military under the *dwi fungsi* doctrine.[7] In the following period, Suharto created a wide patronage network with the economic elite that profited from exploiting resources, such as timber from the forests in West Kalimantan and Borneo. His rule was sustained by criminal and paramilitary groups that acted on the state's behalf, in a process which normalised violence and criminality as state practice (Wilson 2006). The collapse of the Suharto regime in the wake of the Asian financial crisis of 1997 produced a power vacuum that would lead to communal and anti-Chinese violence.

In the Philippines, a communist insurgency began in the 1960s against the U.S.-leaning regime of President Marcos when the Communist Party of the Philippines formed its guerrilla army, the New People's Army. The insurgency coincided with the revival of the independence struggle of the Mindanao Muslims. In 1972, President Marcos declared martial law and in 1973 assumed absolute powers. In 1986, he was toppled after broad mass protests led by Corazon Aquino, who reinstated democratic rule.

In Malaysia, the Malayan Communist Party was outlawed and defeated by the British authorities in the Malayan Emergency of 1948–1960.

2. Themes in Regional Violence Research

2.1. Political Violence

Today, Japan and South Korea are the only countries in the region that are free from political violence. For the others, contemporary discourses on political violence can be grouped into three categories: first, the problem of state sovereignty in borderlands inhabited by minorities where the identity conflict is often also a secessionist conflict or one seeking autonomy from the central government (Burma, China, Indonesia including East Timor and Thailand). The second category encompasses ethno-religious violence and communal conflicts not involving demands for

autonomy or secession (Malaysia, Indonesia, East Timor). Both of these categories have direct links to the colonial past through the colonial project of creating state and nation-state (Jemadu 2004; for a general overview see Yeung 2002). They are also interlinked as they both relate to regime survival and territorial integrity in multi-ethnic states. The analysis will therefore cross over to touch on other causes of conflict where necessary. The third category consists of specific forms of political system and types of state – neopatrimonialism and so-called predatory states – and their links to particular forms of state-sponsored violence.

2.1.1. Borderlands and Rim Provinces: Problems of Sovereignty and Identity

As a result of an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to integrate ethnically disparate territories into a single colony, Indonesia has been riven by ethnic, religious and regional tensions that produced political and economic instability.

In West Papua, different visions of community, state and nation clashed during decolonisation and the early years of nation-building after independence. Sukarno's civic concept of nation-building failed to take into account West Papua's ethnic diversity that was employed by the ethno-cultural variant of nation-building in Malaysia in 1963 when Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah were integrated into the Federation of Malaya to form Malaysia (Kreuzer 2006; Kreuzer and Weiberg 2005, 6–9 and 27–37; Kirksey and Roemajauw 2002; for Islam in Malaysia see Teik 2006).

In Aceh, the conflict between the central government in Jakarta and the region of Aceh also dates back to Dutch colonial rule. After Indonesian independence, Aceh was denied the autonomy it hoped for, sparking Muslim-led rebellions. Autonomy was finally granted in 2005 in the wake of the December 2004 tsunami. After autonomy, Aceh introduced Shariah law in a development that pushed aside moderate Muslims in the province. As a consequence, the literature on Aceh focusses on the role of Islam and the relationship between Islam and nationalism (Barter 2010; Aspinall 2007).

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7 Anderson 2001; for the capitalist development of Indonesia under Suharto see Farid 2005; for the issue of political rehabilitation in post-Suharto Indonesia of those imprisoned as alleged communists in 1965 see McGregor and Hearman 2007.

The conflict with East Timor has its roots in Portuguese decolonisation, which set in after the Portuguese Carnation Revolution of 1974. When Portugal withdrew from East Timor, Indonesia occupied the territory and integrated it into the Indonesian state. This sparked an insurgency that was to last until 1999 when Indonesia allowed a referendum to be held over the future political status of East Timor. This caught international attention when pro-Indonesian militias and the Indonesian military terrorised the local population before the referendum vote. Since independence, East Timor has been a weak state and has seen successive UN missions sent to stabilise the country (see section 2.1.2. Ethno-religious and Communal Violence).

The fact that Aceh and East Timor gained autonomy and independence respectively made them the focal point of research regarding the secessionist conflicts in Indonesia. In contrast, West Papua has received little attention.

Thailand, too, has seen secessionist conflicts. In Buddhist Thailand, the southern provinces of Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat, and Satun have Muslim majorities. The conflict began after World War II as part of the Malay national liberation struggle (Wattana 2006). It is therefore a conflict between the Malay-Muslim south and the Buddhist central government. A famous rebellion occurred in 1948, when Malay-Muslim villagers clashed with Thai security forces (Satha-Anand 2006). The conflict owes its existence to "religious, cultural, economic, and political causes such as cultural discrimination, relative economic deprivation, and political alienation" (Croissant 2007).

Among the Thai Muslim population feelings of disenfranchisement from political decision-making processes and religious discrimination by the Buddhist-dominated central government are prevalent. The increasing intensity and radicalisation since 2004 is fuelled by two parallel developments: First, a radicalisation of Muslim ideology at home and abroad that draws on the failure of past secularist development projects and is increasingly dividing moderate and radical Muslims (Jitpiromsri,and Panyasak 2006; Wattana 2006). International terrorist networks are suspected of involvement in the 2004 attacks, but there is no

hard evidence (Liow 2004). The second factor is changes in intra-Thai political dynamics (McCargo 2006; Croissant 2007).

McCargo shows that the relative peace in southern Thailand during the two decades leading up to 2004 was upset by the anti-royalist Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. Believing that the south was controlled by monarchist forces loyal to the palace – an idea called network monarchy – he upset this balance and unleashed a renewed insurgency (McCargo 2006). The monarchists struck back, however, forcing Thaksin to make concessions to the separatists (convening a National Reconciliation Commission), and shortly afterwards removed him from power in the 2006 coup. As a result of this escalation in the south and between Thai royalist and anti-royalist elites, experts predict a deepening of rifts in Thai society and an erosion of liberal democracy toward a semi-democratic, one-party regime (Pathmanand 2006; Croissant 2007).

A third country beset with secessionism is the Philippines. In the south, Mindanao is home to a Muslim minority in a predominantly Catholic country. The largest armed insurgency movement is the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. A second Muslim separatist group is the Moro National Liberation Front. The most militant, however, is Abu Sayyaf, a fundamentalist group that split from the Moro National Liberation Front. Abu Sayyaf is suspected of maintaining links with al-Qaeda. The Moro groups are suspected of having links to the Indonesian terror group Jemaah Islamiah, which has training camps in the Philippines and also is suspected to have links to al-Qaeda (Ressa 2003).

Having resisted integration into the colony since Spanish times, Muslim groups greeted the independent republic of 1946 with suspicion. Filipino Muslims continued to resist political domination by Manila, leading to widespread conflict (Collier 2005; Kreuzer and Weiberg 2005, 10–18). At the time of Filipino independence, the stereotype of the southern Muslim Moros as backward was firmly held by Christian Filipinos. In addition, the government continues to encourage Christian immigration into Mindanao, leading to feelings of marginalisation among Muslims (Turner 2003).

The conflict in Mindanao has more facets than simply rebel groups fighting against central government domination. Mindanao is beset with clan feuds and inter-ethnic conflict, producing a highly complex landscape of violent central-local and inter-local conflicts (Torres 2007). Even more complexity is injected by the insurgency of the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines-National Democratic Front. In addition, guerillas who leave the underground pass their networks and skills on to a number of other actors: some are employed by local strongmen and the military; others join NGOs and campaign for better access to resources for the poor. This changes the provincial power distribution between state, local strongmen, and local society (Rutten 2001).

Burma, too, has been shaken by ethnic violence. The focus of the violence discourse is on the government's relations with the ethnic minorities, particularly the Wa, Shan and Karen. The conflict is a direct result of British colonial rule and the imposition of the nation-state ideal on an ethnically diverse entity. When Burma became independent in 1948, minority insurgencies such as those of the Karen produced a highly unstable political environment as they resisted central rule from Rangoon and integration into the new polity (Wee and Lang 2006).

Since the military regime took over in a national emergency in 1962, it has fought against the minorities that occupy the border lands in its drive to implement the official policy of "non-disintegration of the union, non-disintegration of national solidarity, and perpetuation of national solidarity." The Shan and the Karen in particular have put up much of the resistance against the military government. Research is looking into how the government dominates civilian life in the minority and majority areas through the destruction of homes, villages and means of livelihood, and the resistance that this provokes (Hudson-Rodd and Hunt 2005).

The Karen in particular have been constructing a national narrative across their linguistic and religious subgroups. Having experienced a separate education system and Christian missionary exposure during colonial times, the Karen have established a narrative that sets them apart as a

nation from the Union of Myanmar (Bryant 1997; Kuroiwa and Verkuyten 2008; Rajah 2002). The Karen traded teak with the British during colonial times, and use of forests was important in Karen identity. After independence, war broke out between the Karen and the Burmese army, and the illegal teak trade provided an important source of income for the Karen armed forces. From this point on the military government in Burma set out to destroy the forest, in an attack on both Karen income and also the Karen identity and livelihood which were intimately linked with forestry (Horstmann 2004).

The Karen are politically split, with the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army having separated from the Karen National Union and siding with the military government. However, a splinter group of the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, Brigade 5, engaged in a military confrontation with the Burmese army one day after the national elections of 7 November 2010 to voice their opposition against the government plan to consolidate ethnic minority armies into a centrally controlled border force (*BBC News* 2010). Fighting between the Karen National Union and the Burmese army had already erupted earlier in 2010 over the government's border patrol plans.

Other studies look not at processes of political control themselves, but specifically at the government's human rights abuses that are inherent to these processes of control. Here, the ethnic minorities, especially the Shan, and their subjugation to means of control such as forced population transfers, are often the subject of research (Beyrer 2001). As the Shan and other ethnic minorities occupy Burma's border areas, research also explores the transnational dimension of the refugee issue and the civil conflict as a contributing factor for the trafficking of Shan women and girls into prostitution (Beyrer 2001).

China with its unruly provinces of Tibet and Xinjiang stands somewhat apart from these ethnic conflicts. Having been incorporated into the Chinese polity under the Qing Dynasty long before Western colonialism arrived in China, the provinces of Tibet and Xinjiang have since proven difficult to control for the central government in Beijing. Studies here focus mostly on how China attempts to draw

Tibet into the mainstream of Chinese modernisation, which has sparked a number of atheism campaigns (to diminish the social and political influence of Buddhism) and violent suppression of demonstrations (Matou 2005).

For Xinjiang, studies focus on rebellions by the Muslim Uighurs sparked by feelings of racial discrimination by the majority Han population, the Chinese government's suppression of Uighur nationalism, and issues of Uighur identity (Petersen 2006; Hyer 2006). The conflict in Xinjiang is thought to be exacerbated by contact between radical Uighurs and militant Islamists in neighbouring Pakistan – especially the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) (Vicziany 2003; Haider 2005).

2.1.2. Ethno-religious and Communal Violence

In Indonesia, the financial crisis of 1998 ended the Suharto regime as criticism increased over the regime's handling of the economic downturn. In May 1998, riots broke out across Indonesia, often targeting the Indonesian Chinese, who were blamed for the economic crisis. The riots were reportedly instigated by the military and police, some of whose members took part in the rioting wearing plain clothes. During the riots, ethnic Chinese were hunted down and killed (Purdey 2006).[8] Suharto was forced to resign on May 21. In other parts of Indonesia, especially in the outer islands, ethno-religious violence broke out, most prominently in the Maluku islands, North, Central and South Sulawesi, and Central and West Kalimantan. The conflicts were compounded by difficult ethnic relations between Indonesia's minorities and the Javanese majority population, and by the promotion of "Javaneseness" (Sutarto 2006; Coppel 2006).[9] Secessionist conflicts in Aceh, West Papua and East Timor gained new strength.

The end of Suharto's rule created a power vacuum. The patronage networks that had underpinned his government fragmented, and the criminal and paramilitary groups were no longer controlled by the central government. While this reduced central government-sponsored violence, violence

by private vigilantes and paramilitary groups increased. Group identification was often based on religion and ethnicity at a time when the state was perceived as having failed in the provision of essential services such as security and employment (Nursalim 2003; Wilson 2006). In addition, government associations with the criminal underworld and militias partly shifted from central government to local governments, leading to the criminalisation of everyday Indonesian politics at the local level (Bertrand 2004; also Hadiz 2003).

In Jakarta and other cities, the Chinese community again confronted the debate between assimilation and integration and the definition of their identity in Indonesia. This debate had raged among the Indonesian Chinese in the 1950s and 1960s, but was violently terminated by the 1965 coup and Suharto's subsequent assumption of power in 1967 (Purdey 2003; Turner 2003; Turner and Allen 2007).

Regarding the non-secessionist conflicts, researchers have looked into various issues that re-emerged when the central government's strong grip on power suddenly disintegrated. What all of these debates have in common is a focus on the re-shaping of community identities. The majority of studies on post-Suharto communal violence warn that these conflicts need to be located and understood in their context of colonial and post-colonial modernisation and capitalist expansion in order to understand their dynamics (Adams 2006, 194, 193–208 citing Sidel 2001, 48, and Bubandt 2001, 228; Colombijn and Lindblad 2002; Thorburn 2005; Azca 2005; van Klinken 2007; Wilson 2008). These conflicts have their roots in old animosities between ethnic or religious groups, grievances produced by Suharto and his cronies, or migration of ethnic groups to new areas (Arifianto 2009).

In North Sulawesi, conflict occurred between the local population and internally displaced people who had fled the violence that broke out in North Maluku in 1999. This conflict is therefore one between the original population

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8 For a deeper discussion of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia see Lindsey and Pausacker (2005).

9 For details on colonial policies in the Dutch East Indies concerning the Indonesian provinces on Borneo see Wadley (2001). For the ethnic gang violence

in relation to the Betawi community in Jakarta see Brown and Wilson (2007) and Bertrand (2008).

and roughly 35,000 internally displaced persons. The effects of the influx of refugees included falling wages and rising housing costs, which led to conflicts. In addition, aid for the refugees caused suspicion and jealousy among the North Sulawesi people. Civil servants and members of the local population treated the arrivals with distrust and hostility (Duncan 2005).

Central Sulawesi was shaken by Christian-Muslim conflict from 1998 to 2001. Although since then the violence has not reached the levels of the post-Suharto period, it does still break out occasionally. Decentralisation programmes in post-Suharto Indonesia led to political tensions between local elites as central government appointees for the regions were replaced by directly elected local politicians. An increase in the number of positions in the newly established legislatures and offices led to political rivalry.[10] Decentralisation involved redrawing administrative boundaries, leading to increased ethno-religious segregation, and voting has also opened up new conflicts as voting voting behaviour may now mirror different group identities (Diprose 2008).

During the 1998–2001 conflict, militias emerged up on both sides, Christian and Muslim, in a development where local residents were drawn into the conflict leading to district-wide riots. In fact, the roots of the power struggle are not religious but result from a combination of the legacy of policies under Dutch colonialism, power struggles between local elites and security forces, migration of settlers from Java and Bali, resulting competition for farmland between new arrivals and the indigenous population, and resource extraction (Davidson 2003; Aspinall and Berger 2001; Arifianto 2009).

In Central Kalimantan, conflict erupted in 1996 over long-standing grievances between Madurese migrants and the indigenous Dayaks. The conflict was mostly over land and was exacerbated by political competition during the decentralisation programmes, leading to mass killings in 2001

(Bouvier and Smith 2006). In West Kalimantan, meanwhile, the rubber plantations and timber forests had been part of identity construction between Dayak, Malays, and Chinese in colonial and post-colonial times. When state institutions were in disarray after the overthrow of Suharto, a realignment of ethnic relations occurred as different groups exploited the power vacuum to gain control over natural resources, particularly timber, which had been part of a thriving black economy since the Suharto era (Peluso 2009; van Klinken 2008; Davidson 2003).

Communal violence has also beset East Timor, which did not become part of Indonesia until 1975 when the Indonesian army invaded after Portugal ended its colonial rule. Indonesia's occupation generated a vigorous resistance movement, Fretilin, and in the following decades, its rule in East Timor was characterised by brutal suppression. In 1998, after Suharto resigned, President Habibie suggested that East Timor might be given autonomy. In 1999, the Indonesian government agreed that a referendum be held to choose between autonomy and independence. In the run up to the vote in September 1999, militias loyal to Indonesia and supported by the Indonesian military provoked bloodshed in order to scare the East Timorese into voting for autonomy rather than independence (Savage 2002; Wheeler and Ddunne 2001; Harper 2005).

Despite this, the referendum showed 78 percent in favour of independence. In response, Indonesia loyalists ransacked towns and cities and went on a killing spree across the country. A UN peacekeeping mission was sent to East Timor to stop the violence and put the newly independent country on its feet. After East Timor became officially independent in 2002, East Timor and Indonesia set up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate the occupation period.

The UN left East Timor in 2005. In 2006, communal violence broke out and was to last for two years. The violence involved youth gangs, especially in the capital Dili (Goldsmith

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10 The decentralisation process that was initiated shortly after Suharto's resignation has produced the problem that local governments all over Indonesia are often captured by local elites that are not accountable to the public and are highly corrupt (Malley 2003).

2009), former soldiers, and martial arts groups, and exposed the fragmented state of East Timor's social and political order after independence (Scambary 2009). The violence started as a conflict between the government and sacked soldiers but erupted into wider factional violence. Prime Minister Alkatiri of FRETILIN resigned over his inability to maintain peace and was succeeded by Jose Ramos-Horta.

Another UN mission was sent to East Timor to stop the violence. In 2007, in the second parliamentary elections, Fretilin won a relative majority in parliament, but could not govern alone. Rather than its leader Alkatiri, Xanana Gusmão was elected prime minister. Violent protests followed this contentious decision, igniting a period of political instability. In 2008, Gusmão was shot by rebel soldiers. The shot was not lethal, however, and in 2009, twenty-seven people were tried. The communal violence of 2006 and the assassination attempt on Gusmão revealed the incomplete reconciliation processes, ongoing processes of nation-building, and conflicting ethnic, social, and political identities (Scambary 2009; Kingston 2006).

Three violent episodes of post-colonial East Timorese history are discussed in the literature: the Indonesian occupation from 1975 to 1999, the violence surrounding the 1999 referendum, and the violence of 2006. Given that only a decade has passed since the vote for independence, most studies focus on the question of whether East Timor can become a viable state. This is linked with discussions of international humanitarian intervention, post-conflict peace-building and transitional justice (Bain 2003, 140–73).

Some studies in this field discuss the challenges of building peace in a politically divided society, particularly when the two main security institutions, the Timor-Leste Defence Force and the National Police of Timor-Leste are unable to cooperate and ridden by factional struggles (Goldsmith 2009; Lemay-Hebert 2009). Other studies focus on specific issues: the origins of the militias that created chaos in East Timor in 1999 (Robinson 2001), and the need for reconciliation between the different Timorese factions. Through reconciliation political violence can be decreased, the argument goes. Salla suggests five levels of reconciliation: intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national and

international (2000). The goal of the reconciliation process is the establishment of sustainable institutions of governance through elite negotiation and social dialogue to transform a society that resorts to violence into one that employs peaceful means of conflict settlement (Samuels 2005). These institutions need to be born out of the context of local institutional and legal traditions in order to be sustainable (Salla 2000).

This also holds true for transitional justice, which has to take into account the nature of the conflict and local cultures when deciding on the mix of legal instruments to be applied during transition periods (Harper 2005). Some studies critically examine the work of the hybrid tribunal and the Truth Commission that were part of the reconciliation process. Nevins, for example, argues that the Timorese Truth Commission did not achieve much as it focussed on individual acts and events of violence rather than on systemic forms of violence that include both direct and indirect forms as they may be intrinsic in social and economic systems (Nevins 2003; also Kingston 2006).

In northern Thailand there are conflicts over forest resources between the central government in Bangkok and ethnic minorities in the highlands. These include protected forests, which have traditionally served as source of livelihood for the local communities. This is therefore a conflict of identities between the majority population in the lowlands and the minorities in the highlands (Wittayapak 2008). However, this conflict garners little attention. Studies on political violence in Thailand focus on the secessionist conflict in the south and the continuing political instability following the coup against Thaksin.

Similar conflicts occur in Vietnam between the central government and the ethnic minorities of the Central Highlands, collectively referred to as Montagnards since French colonial times. Ever since they supported the United States during the Vietnam War, the central government has viewed the Montagnards with suspicion. Violent conflicts occurred in 1997/98, 2001 and 2004 over land and religious issues. The minorities of the Central Highlands are members of small Christian churches – so-called house churches – which the Vietnamese government does not recognize. They

also claim that they are deprived of their land to make space for economic development projects. While no organised conflicts have occurred since 2004, arrests are frequent. For example, in 2009 at least forty people were arrested in Gia Lai province, because they were members of the Dega house church *(Tin Lanh Dega)* (Jones 2002; Jordan 2004; *BBC News* 2004; De Launey 2004).

The Hmong in Laos have faced a similar problem since groups of them were recruited into a secret army by the CIA during the Vietnam War. While many Hmong left Laos after the communist victory in 1975, some of those who stayed behind are thought to have fought a low-level war against the communist government, which has regarded them with suspicion ever since their involvement in the U.S. war effort. During the conflict with the Laotian government many Hmong fled to refugee camps on the Thai side of the border. In 2009 the Thai government began to forcibly repatriate Hmong to Laos (Head 2009; McGeown 2003; Jinkinson 2004).

While largely free of ethnic violence today, Malaysia does have a violent past. Despite the careful creation of an ethnically balanced polity under British tutelage, political and economic disputes between Singapore and the federal government increased after independence, along with ethnic tensions between the Malay majority and Chinese-dominated Singapore, to such an extent that Singapore was expelled from Malaysia in 1965. Singapore henceforth prospered under an authoritarian regime that carefully managed its ethnic diversity through depoliticisation of ethnicity and government (Chua 1995; Means 1998; Vasil 2000; Lawson 2001; George 2007).

The Malaysian government gave preferential treatment to the majority Malay population, the *bumiputras*, or "sons of the soil", thus preserving Malay political prerogatives from the colonial period. While Chinese and Indian immigrants were granted citizenship and dominated the economy, Malays were given control over politics. The trade-off resulted in a delicate political balance, which failed during the 1969

race riots in the face of continued Malay backwardness and lack of economic advancement. The affirmative action programme introduced in response by the government in 1971, the New Economic Policy, has since prevented the recurrence of race riots (Case 2000).[11]

The situation in Singapore was also ethnically delicate. Race riots in 1963 and a social crisis particularly related to housing produced an authoritarian turn by the People's Action Party that was directed at depoliticising race. The People's Action Party has since then presided over an authoritarian Singapore and co-opts opposition groups to pre-empt challenges to its rule (Huff 1995; Hill and Lian 1995; Rodan 2004; George 2007).

2.1.3. Neopatrimonialism, Predatory Politics and Elite Political Systems

Cambodia is among the few countries in the region not beset by ethnic and religious violence. For political violence in Cambodia, two discourses are dominant: the discourse on a culture of violence, and the discourse on predatory politics. The first argues that three decades of civil war have socialised Cambodians into a preference for violent resolution of conflicts. After the civil war, which ended in 1991, international organisations working with Cambodian NGOs implemented weapons collection programmes. However, distrust of fellow-citizens, the security forces and the government in a volatile security climate led many to secretly keep weapons. The failure of weapons collections programmes therefore left an extraordinary number of weapons in the hands of ordinary people, who use them to settle conflicts with neighbours, family members, and others in their community (Huot 2005).

Post-war adversity combined with a weak state and an underdeveloped legal culture to produce a high homicide rate, including not only political violence but also general mayhem, banditry and murder-robbery (Broadhurst 2002). Cambodia had to embark on a second nation-building process, because the first one that followed decolonisation was aborted when Cambodia was drawn into the Vietnam War and its own three decades of political conflict (Freistein 2002).

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11 For an early report immediately after the 1969 race riots see Gagliano (1970).

The end of the civil war in 1991 did not end the political conflict. Instead, the major civil war parties struggled for predominance in the post-war political system. Assassinations became a routine means of dealing with political opponents, including opposition parties, trade unions, journalists, and social activists (Un 2005). Political violence only decreased after the post-war power struggle between the major parties was resolved in the wake of Hun Sen's 1997 coup against Ranariddh (Widyono 2008). In the volatile political climate, homicide rates reached the post-war rate of 1993 (11.6 per 100,000), partly brought about by police and mob killings that were not investigated by the judiciary (Broadhurst 2002).

A number of studies challenge the culture of violence hypothesis, warning against a culturalism that employs images of Oriental despotism and authoritarianism. In reality, these authors argue, violent conflict does not emerge because it is inherent to a particular culture, but because conflict is inherent to processes of political and economic reform (for example Springer 2009a). In particular, the call for marketisation in post-war settings functions as a pretext for elites to maintain an authoritarian political system that counteracts calls for democratisation for the sake of economic stability and neo-liberal reforms (Springer 2009b).

Other studies argue that political processes are path-dependent. Cambodian society is organised along patron-client lines, so these relations also organise the political system and have adapted to the democratic institutions that were introduced after the civil war (Roberts 2002). The present leadership is largely identical to the leadership that came into power after the Vietnamese intervention of 1978. Since then, the same leadership has managed to stay in power despite a UN intervention (1991–1993) that introduced democratic institutions and a defeat in the first national elections in 1993.

The leadership was able to survive any challenge to its rule because it had built up its power base since 1979 by devising a neopatrimonial polity that exercises leverage over the local government level (Pak et al. 2007). All village chiefs

were put in place by the post-1979 government, thus generating a viable power resource that democratic institutions were unable to challenge. After 1991, this neopatrimonial network controlled by the ruling party adjusted to the new institutions and provided Hun Sen with the ability to politically outmanoeuvre his chief rival Prince Ranariddh.

Since the introduction of multi-party democracy in 1993, Cambodia's polity has been characterised by rival patronage networks associated with political parties seeking political influence. The fact that the post-1993 political parties had been adversaries during the civil war resulted in widespread political violence, in particular electoral violence, through until the late 1990s. However, since then Hun Sen's ability to consolidate his power at the expense of his political rivals has led to a stark decrease in political violence (Roberts 2002; Un 2005). The legitimacy of political opposition is viewed from this vantage point: political opposition is seen not as a legitimate institution in the democratic system of a pluralist society, but as a rival patronage network that challenges the power holder's resource access.

This relates to the second argument of predatory politics, which proposes that the Cambodian government has created a system of neopatrimonialism in which political and economic power are in the same hands, linked by horizontal relationships between the political and economic elites. In this system, a dominant group secures access to material and immaterial resources: money, land, employment, education, health care, and natural resources such as timber. Vertical patron-client links ensure that the government is not accountable to the general public, and access to resources is restricted to those who are part of these networks (Hadiz 2004; McCulloch 2005; Wong 2008). Violence occurs when NGOs, individuals or members of rival patronage networks attempt to block this access, as when activists tried to publicise illegal logging by companies tied to the political and army leadership. They were subsequently shot, while the perpetrators escaped justice.[12]

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12 For details on the exploitation of natural resources by the Cambodian elite see Global Witness (2007).

Land disputes are particularly prominent, with national newspapers reporting forced evictions on an almost daily basis. Forced evictions are the result of companies linked to the political elite acquiring valuable real estate for commercial or infrastructure development and in the process evicting residents, who rarely have clear legal claims. The land registry was destroyed during the Khmer Rouge period and is still being reconstituted. Constant changes of formal or informal land ownership during the war periods from 1968 to 1991 have made the situation entirely unclear (Chan Sophal, Tep Saravy, and Sarthi Acharya 2001). Farmers and slum residents in Phnom Penh are therefore easy targets for politically well-connected businesses. Violence is frequent in these disputes, mostly involving the use of police and military force by the government to remove residents from land. One prominent current case is the ongoing conflict (as of March 2011) about the area around Boeung Kak lake in Phnom Penh.

In the Philippines, the political system has been characterised by clan-based patron-client relations since colonial times and is often labelled a predatory state (Quimpo 2003). Electoral violence is frequent, particularly in the south where rival clans employ private armies. In Maguindanao, violence broke out in 2009 in a local election conflict where a family from the ruling Ampatuan clan ordered the massacre of fifty-seven people who chose to support their rival. The Ampatuan family was said to have been allied with then President Arroyo, who pumped much money into the area, ostensibly for development purposes. As in many other parts of the country, this did not alleviate poverty at all – except perhaps for the Ampatuan family. In response to the massacre Arroyo declared martial law in the province, which she lifted again in December 2009. The episode shows yet another feature of violence in Mindanao: rather than communist-inspired and secessionist, this was a local conflict between rival clans (Rushford 2009; International Crisis Group 2009, 2010).

In Thailand, a coup of 1946 brought a military regime to power. Successive military regimes ruled directly or controlled the government until 1997. By then, fourteen constitutions had been enacted since the abolition of the absolute monarchy in 1932. Military control was only interrupted from 1973 to 1976, when the military regime

collapsed in the face of popular opposition. During this period, assassinations by the old elite were a common manifestation of political violence, as new groups such as farmers emerged as political force and demanded participation and land reform (Haberkorn 2009). The military took over again in 1976 and has retained a key role in the political process ever since. However, it was forced to allow more participation by the pluralising Thai society, particularly as NGOs began to blossom during the 1980s and early 1990s. In 1997, a new constitution came into effect, the most democratic to date. It was first tested in the 2001 elections, which brought the entrepreneur Thaksin Shinawatra to power, a populist politician with a strong base in rural communities and the urban poor. Thaksin was controversial in his business dealings, with allegations of corruption, but more importantly he was the first prime minister not to come from the traditional elite around the royal family and the military. This elite viewed Thaksin with suspicion (Hewinson 1997; McCargo 2001), and the military instigated a coup against him in 2006. Since then, Thailand has been in political crisis, with Thaksin loyalists and royalists pitted against each other, and at times taking to the streets in extended mass protests. Despite democratisation and decentralisation processes, the majority of the Thai population has little or no influence on the elite-centred decision-making processes (Arghiros 2002).

2.2. Urban Violence
With the exception of political violence, all the forms of violence discussed in this paper are under-studied, including urban violence. Many studies in this field look not at urban violence directly but at risk factors that contribute to urban insecurity and urban crime. They focus mostly on rising inequality and particularly on how segments of the population have been marginalised by economic growth. Some studies on urban poverty touch on urban violence, but the links between urban violence, poverty and poor governance have not been comprehensively analysed. This gap in the literature includes types of violence, reasons for violence, key actors, and most likely victims (Dwyer 2003).

The reason for this lack of research is that urban violence is a relatively recent phenomenon in the region, given the

generally low levels of economic development and urbanisation in all countries except Japan and the Asian Tigers: South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. For South Korea and Singapore, research looks into the effectiveness of pro-poor government policies, such as housing (whereby Singapore's housing policy forms part of the government's inventory of social control) (Ha 2002; Lee 2008). For Japan, studies focus on the fact that despite industrialisation crime rates have been declining since World War II.[13] Japan has also the lowest rate of youth homicide worldwide, with 0.4 per 100,000 individuals (UN Habitat 2007, 65).

In China and Vietnam, where communist policies aimed at egalitarian wealth distribution, urban crime has only become prominent since the economic liberalisation programmes created stark differences in wealth distribution during the 1990s. Both countries are in the process of introducing country-wde systems of social welfare, so studies on China and Vietnam analyse progress and effects of national social welfare systems for the urban poor and rural migrants introduced to cope with the potential dangers for urban security (Wu 2009; Gao, Garfinkel and Zhai 2009; Liu, He and Wu 2008; Wang 2006; Salditt, Whiteford and Adema 2008; Liu 2007; Wang, Shi and Zheng 2002; Long and Pfau 2009; Isik-Dikmelik 2006; Shanks and Turk 2003). In addition, China's rapid economic growth has significantly reduced security of housing, as forced evictions and insufficient compensation payments have led to increasing disaffection (UN Habitat 2007, 314–15).

In many of the less developed countries of the region, economic growth has centred on the capital city and a few urban centres (the classic examples are Bangkok in Thailand and Phnom Penh in Cambodia). Most other areas remain dominated by agricultural activity. However, the growth of these centres of economic activity has led to an increase in certain forms of violence, "from street crime, such as muggings, robberies and carjackings, to kidnap-

pings, murder, drug-related violence and organized crime conducted by gangs, to assault, sexual violence, and personal abuse" (Dwyer 2003; see also UN Habitat 2007, 53–66). According to Gulfer Cezayirli, Senior Urban Development Specialist at the Asian Development Bank, an "inadequate urban environment and social and economic exclusion, coupled with a lack of access to safety services, lead to distrust, frustration, and hopelessness, and contribute to circumstances that encourage urban violence" (Dwyer 2003; see also UN Habitat 2007, 66–72).

As a consequence, studies focus on developmental issues and the inability or unwillingness of the state to provide comprehensive welfare programmes owing to clientelistic politics. This is the case in the Philippines, where the tradition of governance allows the elite to pursue predatory politics exploiting material and immaterial resources for their own benefit (Quimpo 2009). Civil society has little or no influence on political decision-making processes, a situation also observed in Thailand (Piaseu and Mitchell 2004; Piaseu, Belza, and Shell-Duncan 2004; Silvey 2001). In Cambodia especially, the state has been unwilling to provide comprehensive welfare: The government, dominated since 1979 by the Cambodian People's Party and Prime Minister Hun Sen, is not publicly accountable, because its power is generated through patron-client relationships with the rural electorate (Roberts 2001). Therefore, when the government recognises a potential threat to its rule from dissatisfied segments of the population, its strategy is to extend control over this group. The government responded in this manner in 2006, when it passed a military service law to place urban youth, who are increasingly threatened by unemployment, under governmental surveillance rather than implementing sustainable anti-poverty programmes (Hensengerth 2008a).

In Phnom Penh, urban crime is on the rise, and Phnom Penh's residents report crime and violence as their major problems (Asian Development Bank 2007, 1). As a consequence of the rise in urban crime, studies examine how

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13 For Japan, studies find that crime rates have declined since World War II despite increased levels of industrialisation. See for example Tsushima (1996).

to reduce crime by fostering social integration through upgrading infrastructure and access to public services such as health care and education (Asian Development Bank 2007, 1; UN Habitat 2007, 304, 313–14). At the same time, the insecurity of land titles stemming from the civil war period has to be clarified in order to put an end to mass evictions carried out by the Cambodian regime and companies under the protection of the police and the courts (Chan, Tep and Acharya 2001).

The most common crimes committed in Phnom Penh are robbery, burglary, motorcycle theft, theft of valuables from passengers, street fights, physical extortion, and gang rape (Asian Development Bank 2007, 2).[14] Gang rape is concentrated in youth gangs in Phnom Penh, where it forms part of a male bonding ritual and hedonistic display of masculinity (Gender and Development for Cambodia 2003). The crime hotspots are the quarters with high concentrations of squatters, drug addicts, and unemployed, where there are also gambling dens and brothels. A corrupt police and judicial system contribute to popular perceptions of insecurity (Asian Development Bank 2007, 2).

This lack of trust in the criminal justice system is a key factor in the feeling of insecurity (Asian Development Bank 2007, 2). This is confirmed by studies on the Cambodian governance system, which argue that the Cambodian judiciary is not only corrupt but also politically controlled. This allows the rich and powerful to evade punishment if they belong to the appropriate patronage networks (for example Kent 2006). Given that members of the political and economic elites are engaged in illegal land seizure, illegal logging, and extortion from owners of brothels and gambling establishments, political control of the judiciary serves to ensure impunity and a constant cash flow between organised crime and members of the ruling elite (Hensengerth 2008a).

2.3. Domestic Violence
Domestic violence is an issue in all countries in the region, but has only slowly been acknowledged as a social problem

in these patriarchal societies. This contrasts starkly with the high economic growth rates experienced by many of these countries since World War II and the surge in female participation in the labour market.

Across the region, research finds a prevalence of shame, secrecy, non-intervention, police disinterest, a consequently unprepared healthcare system and a connection between abuse and mental illness. Studies find that witnessing parental violence, husbands' unemployment, husbands' frequent alcohol use, women's acceptance of a subservient role, and lack of money in low-income households are risk factors for wife abuse. However, most of these factors were also prevalent in high-income households with domestic violence (Milwertz 2003; Kyu and Kanai 2005; Phillips et al. 2006; Yount and Carrera 2006; Aekplakorn and Kongsakon 2007; Brickell 2008; Ansara and Hindin 2009).[15] Violence against pregnant women is treated as a separate field of research and focuses on the ill effects on maternal health (Sricamsuk 2006). Scholars seeking to generate effective intervention methods distinguish between physical, sexual and psychological abuse (Xu et. al. 2005; Yount and Carrera 2006; Yoshihama et. al. 2007; Nguyen, Ostergren, and Krantz 2008; Ansara and Hindin 2009).

Women's rights discourses in the region are framed with reference to international norm frameworks, most importantly the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development and Women's Legal Bureau 2007, 8–9, 45).[16]

The most pervasive issue is the situation of women in conservative, male-dominated societies: They occupy low socio-economic positions despite playing a major role in food production and family care; more women than men are illiterate, and fewer are enrolled in educational institutions; and

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14 Asian Development Bank 2007: 2.
15 For a general overview of risk factors see Jewkes (2002).

16 For an overview on human rights norms and their application to violence against women see Walker (1999).

women are financially dependent on their husbands (Asian Population and Development Association and Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development 2007, 111–12; Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development and Women's Legal Bureau 2007, 21–22). This affects societies with conservative Islam in Malaysia, Indonesia and minority areas of the Philippines (Hilsdon 2003; Foley 2003; Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development and Women's Legal Bureau 2007, 21–22), conservative Catholicism in the Philippines (Women's Legal Bureau 2006, 8 and 26; Ansara and Hindin 2009), non-religious ideologies such as Confucianism in China, Japan, South Korea and Vietnam (Yoshihama and Sorensen 1994; Doe 2000; Shirahase 2001; Yoshihama 2002c; Xu et. al. 2005; Nguyen, Ostergren, and Krantz 2008), and in general patriarchal societies such as those in Cambodia and Thailand (Yount and Carrera 2006; Aekplakorn and Kongsakon 2007; Brickell 2008).

This raises more fundamental questions of social change. Since the 1950s, countries in the region have experienced the "Asian economic miracle". Japan was the first country to see strong rapid growth. In the 1960s, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong followed as the newly industrialising economies (NICs) or Asian Tigers. In the 1980s, the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia were termed the New Tigers or second-generation NICs. This surge in industrialisation precipitated social differentiation and an increase in female employment, mostly in clerical jobs and light manufacturing such as textiles (Shirahase 2001).[17] But social change has not always altered traditional views on gender (Truong 1999).[18] Instead, it has led to new conflicts as women became empowered through wage-earning and better education, leading to a loss of (or a threat to) male identity.

The issue of female subjugation in Muslim societies intersects with the issue of political violence, but is discussed here with reference to women's rights. Indonesia is one example, where the introduction of an anti-pornography law shows the great influence of conservative Muslim groups

on politics, despite the liberal views of President Yudhoyono and the majority of Indonesian Muslims. The extent to which this can be regarded as a concession to the strengthening of conservative Islam in local governments since the start of decentralisation programmes can be debated (Hadiz 2004; Erb, Sulistiyanto, and Faucher 2005; Sherlock 2005; Drexler 2006; Chauvel 2006; van Klinken 2007; Hainsworth 2007; Miller 2009).

Indonesia has seen a variety of Muslim organisations that cover the spectrum from non-violence to militancy. The latter is usually associated with the Indonesian terror network Jemaah Islamiah. Major terrorist attacks were carried out in Bali (in 2002 and 2005) and in Jakarta (Marriott Hotel in 2003, Australian Embassy in 2004, and the Marriott and Ritz-Carlton Hotels in 2009) (Desker 2003; Liow 2004; Jones 2005; Hamilton-Hart 2005; Cady and Simon (eds.) 2006; Park and Niyozov 2008; Sidel 2008; Aljunied 2009).[19] Yet, there are other radical Muslim groups in Indonesia that have only recently been influenced by transnational Islamist networks and whose origin can be traced back to the 1940s (van Bruinessen 2002).

Aceh, on the northern tip of Sumatra island, was first allowed to institute Sharia law in 2001 as part of a peace deal with the Jakarta government. After becoming autonomous in 2005, Aceh's government put more stipulations of Sharia law into effect. While at first this involved less controversial passages, in September 2009 Aceh's parliament legislated stoning as punishment for adultery (*BBC News* 2009).

A similar strengthening of conservative Islam can be observed in Malaysia. However, this is mostly superficial as the government has employed a deliberate strategy of co-opting conservative groups in order to fend off challenges by more radical Muslim groups and accusations by fundamentalists that Malaysia is not sufficiently Islamic. In conjunction with the government's moderate stance, such a policy also protects the economically important Indian and

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17 For an overview of the social effects of economic restructuring particularly after the Asian financial crisis see Deyo and Agartan (2003); Lee (2006).

18 Truong presents further detailed analyses of the effects of economic growth on gender practices in the workplace, e.g. the introduction of childcare facilities.

19 For a non-violent radical Islamist group in Indonesia, the Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, see Ward (2009).

Chinese minorities.[20] Despite the government's efforts to forestall the advance of radical groups, Malaysia made headlines when a court ordered the whipping of a woman who had drunk beer in public (the punishment was deferred after widespread protests) (Fuller 2009).

In order to combat the subjugation of women and their exposure to abuse in the family, women's rights NGOs have formed regional networks to advocate for women's education, raise their awareness about their rights under international human rights treaties and change traditions that have a preference for boys over girls. For this to occur, they believe that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations must be lobbied for the protection of human rights; governments must be lobbied to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child; an independent body to document human rights violations must be established; legal changes must be advanced through legislation and judicial practice; networks joining affected women must be created; and activists must engage with the younger generation to institute generational change (Asian Population and Development Association and Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development 2007, 113–14; Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development 2001; Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development and Women's Legal Bureau 2007, 29–30, 45–46). More specific suggestions include the application of the due diligence principle, the precondition of which is transparency and accountability of government and security forces (Pusey 2008).

Importantly, the measures suggested here go beyond legal rights derived from international frameworks, and do more than request governments to pass appropriate legislation. They aim to bring about a profound socio-cultural change in the role of women in traditional societies by using proactive and strategic approaches rather than only formalistic legal instruments (Hebert 2008).

The application of international norms is also a key point in country analyses. In China, feminist activists have generated new knowledge drawn from international discourses on women's rights to form an epistemic community that subscribes to global norms in order to overcome local notions of masculinity (Milwertz and Bu 2007). Women's rights have a history in China, beginning with marriage reform under the communist government after 1949 and female leadership of paramilitary groups at the height of the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1967. Still, however, this has not changed the basic patterns of male domination of the household, given that Confucian principles of family organisation survived both the 1949 revolution and the Cultural Revolution (Milwertz 2003; Xu et. al. 2005). The economic reforms introduced after 1978 did little to change this, as men continue to be seen as those who uphold the family line (Women's Feature Service 2004; Milwertz 2003). Traditional attitudes toward gender relations and the justification of wife-beating are associated with a higher risk of exposure to domestic violence (Xu et. al. 2005).

The problem begins at birth, with boys being assigned higher value than girls. Currently China is experiencing a shortage of girls, and treatment of women may improve. However, better treatment does not automatically increase women's autonomy, as their subordinate position in the family may stay the same (Das Gupta and Li 1999). The Chinese Communist Party has been trying to counteract this trend by instituting rule of law in marriage policy to supersede traditional notions of masculinity and gender dominance. The latest amendment of the Marriage Law in 2001 enhanced the protection of women against domestic violence (Zhang 2002). However, the weakness of legal intervention in China is implementation. Another problem is the patriarchal political system that rarely allows women to rise to top positions in politics. Since the reform process in the late 1970s, the only woman who has attained a leading position was Wu Yi, who was Vice Premier between 2003 and 2007 and Acting First Vice Premier between 2007 and 2008.[21]

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20 On the political situation of Islam in Malaysia see Haneef (2001), Liow (2004), Thirkell-White (2006), Liwo (2009), and Julian C. H. Lee (2010).

21 For statistics on China see for example Parish et. al. (2004) and Xu et. al. (2005).

Hong Kong also struggles with a high incidence of wife abuse. While the practice is to jail wife abusers, there is advocacy for court-mandated counselling, a practice tested in China and Taiwan. The idea is to begin a learning process that encourages non-violent settlement of household conflicts. Court-mandated counselling, it is argued, should engage the local cultural discourse on masculinities rather than attempting to impose a system that carries notions of British culture and is detached from Confucian family tradition (Chiu 2001).

In South Korea, "patriarchal social values . . . had traditional primacy over family members' human rights" with the result that "husbands often physically abused their wives in the name of maintaining hierarchical order in the family" (Doe 2000, 234). However, the recognition of domestic violence as a social problem led to the passing of the Law for Preventing Domestic Violence in 1997 (Doe 2000, 234). In contrast to this, the Basic Act on Healthy Family of 2004 is seen as a reaction to women's increased participation in the labour force, decline in fertility rates and increased rates of divorce. Direct government interference in family life is seen especially by feminist scholars as a reaction to this "crisis", and an attempt to cement women's subservient status in male-dominated Korean society and their secondary status in the labour force (Park 2005).

Japan also has a history of domestic violence, stemming from the patriarchal social structure and an emphasis on shame rather than justice. Research into the issue is examining the evolving social and policy frameworks that attempt to help abused women. With abuse long having been considered a private matter, official assistance programmes, police protection and political initiatives are still evolving. Family, friends and professionals often blame the victim, making it difficult to escape from physical violence and break out of the social isolation imposed by the husband (Yoshihama 2002a; Nayak et al. 2003).

Shirahase reports that even working women often perceive their status as depending on their husband's work. This supports gender asymmetries, which prevail despite the sharp increase in the number of women in the labour force caused by Japanese economic growth after World War II (Shirahase 2001).[22]

Grassroots organisations were the first to take up the issue, helping women to break out of their isolation (Yoshihama 2002a; Nayak et al. 2003). According to Yoshihama (2002c, 345), domestic violence has been recognised as a social problem only since 1992 when a national survey revealed that domestic violence occurred frequently and was not treated as a criminal matter, but as a quarrel between a married couple. Mediators at family courts tended to tell women to accept their subordinate status, thus imposing conservative norms.

The 1992 study helped domestic grassroots organisations take the issue to the international level. At the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 a workshop on violence against Asia Pacific women was held in cooperation with the Asian Women's Human Rights Council. In addition, the UN Conference on Women in Beijing generated publicity across the region (Yoshihama 2002c, 351 and 355).

Japan's social and political climate slowly improved since then, encouraging medical research into the connection between depression and anxiety in women and physical, sexual, and psychological abuse at home. This, it is hoped, will assist the development of medical care for victims and inform the political process to ensure better legal protection and healthcare systems for women (Weingourt et al. 2001; Yoshihama 2002b).

In Vietnam, domestic abuse of women is associated with mental health problems that meet an unprepared health care system and a lack of policy initiatives. Violence against women is treated as a private matter, and a culture of shame and the prevalence of traditional gender roles often discourages women from revealing their abuse and seeking help (Vung, Ostergren, and Krantz 2009; Jonzon et al. 2007). Patriarchal family norms and traditional gender

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22 Shirahase's data are based on the 1995 Japanese
Social Stratification and Mobility Survey.

norms "continue to prevail" even though "more than 70 percent of women of working age (16–55) participate in the labour market and women constitute 52 percent of the total workforce" (Nguyen, Ostergren, and Krantz 2008), and despite the fact that – like China – Vietnam experienced socialist revolution and embarked on an economic reform programme in 1986.

In Thailand, the Domestic Violence Act of 2007 has not yet improved the situation: it encourages reconciliation; police officers still turn women away saying that domestic violence is a private problem; and medical staff in the One Stop Crisis Centers of the Public Health Ministry are not sensitive to gender-specific problems (*IRIN News* 2008). Most women who seek help turn to friends or family members and only rarely to the police and the courts (Institute of Population and Social Research at Mahidol University and Foundation for Women 2003). While some studies of high- and low-income families find no significant difference in the frequency of domestic violence incidents (Hindin and Adair 2002; *The Nation* 2006), others associate low income, poor education and low occupational status with higher risks of domestic violence (Hoffman, Demo, and Edwards 1995).

For Cambodia, studies find that a lack of economic resources in the family (such as financial problems due to unemployment) and the resulting frustration and alcohol abuse increase the risk of violence (Zimmerman 1994; Yount and Carrera 2006; Brickell 2008). Women's economic dependence on their husbands also makes them more tolerant of partner abuse and exposes them to a higher risk of abuse (Yount and Carrera 2006). A woman who has experienced violence between her parents during childhood is more likely to end up with a violent husband through a process of mate selection, although she is not more likely to accept partner violence as being justified (Yount and Carrera 2006). This shows the importance of family resources and childhood experience of violence between parents as an important factor for domestic violence (Yount and Carrera 2006).

23 See also UNIFEM's annotated list of Indonesian women's NGOs at http://www.unifem-eseasia.org/ projects/evaw/vawngo/vamindo.htm. .

Similar to Thailand, the Cambodian justice system also encourages reconciliation. Violence against women is the result of traditional roles in a hierarchically ordered society in which women have to obey the husband and are often severely beaten for trivialities. Cambodian judges tend to see wife abuse as a criminal act only if the victim is "stabbed, shot, unconscious or dead" (Zimmerman 1994). While men maintained their traditional role of authority in the family, expecting women to remain obedient and sexually available (Surtees 2003, 97, citing Dworkin 1997, 120), post-war employment in industry, particularly in textiles, often favoured women, thus upsetting traditional gender roles. Sexual and physical violence in the family engender shame, while friends, family and neighbours ask the victim to remain quiet so as not to worsen the situation. Attempts are made to overcome these attitudes by forging partnerships and running awareness-raising campaigns with local police and communities (Spindel, Levy, and Connor 2000, 57–69).

In Indonesia, the government long denied that violence against women was a problem on a mass scale. However, the mass rape of Chinese Indonesian and other ethnic minority women in the May 1998 riots forced the government to acknowledge the scale of the problem. The issue of mass rape of Chinese women is discussed in the broader framework of masculinity and sexual violence in Indonesia (Strassler 2004). In response to the crisis, the government established the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan, KNAKTP). The move was heralded as a major policy step, but concrete outcomes are lacking (Wandita 1998; Budianta 2000; Tan 2006).[23]

In Singapore, police have been slow to respond to marital violence, despite legal reform. The problem here is to be found in police subcultures and the conditions under which the Singaporean police force operates. The issue is therefore not so much legal change, but the organisational response of the police force (Ganapathy 2002, 2006, 2008).

A study on domestic violence in the Philippines reports that regular church attendance in the Roman Catholic country is associated with a lower risk of domestic violence (Ansara and Hindin 2009). The same study found that women were just as likely as men to perpetrate aggression against their spouse. However, women are more likely to need medical attention, and women are frequently subjected to sexual coercion. Thus, forms of violence (psychological, physical and sexual abuse) vary between genders while frequency does not. Church attendance especially by both partners is a cultural factor that appears to lower the risk of violence perpetration (Ansara and Hindin 2009). A study on intergenerational transmission of partner violence in Cebu found an association with the experience of interparental violence by at least one of the partners (Fehringer and Hindin 2009).

Studies on Thailand found that women were as much subject to physical and psychological abuse in low-income families where violence is often about money problems, as they were in high-income families where women pursue an independent career (Hindin and Adair 2002; *The Nation* 2006). It was found that patterns of household decision-making are a better predictor of violence than income and employment status: Men are more likely to use violence when they dominate household decisions. Women who dominate household decisions are also more likely to experience violence. Men are most likely to refrain from violence in households where decisions are made jointly by husband and wife (Hindin and Adair 2002).

In contrast to the above studies, the domestic violence discourse in East Timor is part of the peace-building process initiated after the violent excesses surrounding the 1999 independence referendum. Here, the argument is that the democratic opening and the high international profile during the 1999 referendum brought international norms that are being internalised in the peace-building process and are used by women's NGOs to promote awareness-raising campaigns that aim to empower women in the new democratic spaces (Hall 2009). However, a quantitative study compar-

ing the pre-1999 and post-1999 situation argues that the incidence of intimate partner violence against women has not declined since the crisis, although there is a significant decline in sexual and physical assaults against women by perpetrators outside the family (Hynes et al. 2004). These findings are partly corroborated by Simião, who argues that the modernisation process and the fight against domestic violence in East Timor require an understanding of the different meanings of violence, body and gender that complicate the current processes of reform (2006).

2.4. Youth Violence

Like domestic violence, youth violence can partly be seen as a result of social change. Youth violence is the most neglected of the four forms of violence discussed in this study, and research is rare. To some extent, this may reflect widely held beliefs that youth in Northeast and Southeast Asia, are well controlled and integrated into rigorous public and private institutions of social control, such as schools and families.[24] Psychologists, particularly in Japan and Singapore where the profession is well developed, challenge this assumption, and it is psychologists rather than social scientists who also appear more likely to investigate the issue of youth violence in their respective countries. Studies on youth violence in the region all agree that youth gangs form as self-help systems, resulting from various forms of social exclusion in paternalistic societies.

The issue of attaining visibility through gangs is tied to the question of social change – urbanisation, globalisation, migration, and economic structures shifting away from an agrarian economy (Hensengerth 2008b; Roeske 2006, 6–17). In such a situation young people are caught between tradition and modernity. Their transition from childhood to adulthood is made more difficult by having to negotiate their parents' values with a new youth culture that uses symbols of consumption such as pop music, mobile phones or motorbikes. In authoritarian societies, the emergence of this new social group may contrast with the "exclusion of the young from national economies" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2005; Milnitsky 2006, 196–97; Gender and Devel-

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24 Confidental interview in Phnom Penh, 31 May 2007.

opment for Cambodia 2003, part 3). The rise of youth as a new consumer group with distinct lifestyles has produced new identities, leading to conflicts with teachers and parents as traditional patterns of interaction lose their value within the new group (Gender and Development for Cambodia 2003, part 3; Roeske 2002, 6; Milnitsky 2006, 203).

In Cambodia, youth gangs form as systems of self-help in a society that is paternalistic and structured by patron-client relations. In this system, youth have no opportunities to partake in political decision-making. Although the system is formally a democracy, political processes cannot be influenced by the public and are controlled instead by the political and economic elite through a system of neopatrimonialism. Economic growth rests on three pillars, textiles, construction and tourism, and is geographically concentrated on the capital Phnom Penh, the port city of Sihanoukville, and the tourism centre of Siem Reap. The rest of the country remains largely untouched.

With the formal economy so small, many young people migrate to Phnom Penh to work in the textile industry, or they have to seek employment in the informal economy. Once in Phnom Penh, rural youth are often picked up by one of the gangs. These gangs are usually led by children of the political, economic, or military elites and are therefore immune from prosecution. In turn, they may be functionalised by these elites for acts of violence against the opposition (Hinton 2006). The gangs provide access to jobs, education, and healthcare for their poorer members, arranged by the gang leader who enjoys access to these resources owing to his influential family background. The gang leader therefore occupies the position of patron, the members further down the internal hierarchy are his clients. As a result, Cambodian gangs adopt the patron-client structure of Cambodian society (Gender and Development for Cambodia 2003; Hensengerth 2008a; Ministry of Social Affairs, Labor, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation 2002, 38–39).

The origins of Cambodian youth gangs lie in the low levels of human development after the civil war. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Labor, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation reports that after the war, many children were left to

live by themselves and had to find their own food. Dysfunctional families and domestic violence led children to run away from home and live on the streets. Juvenile delinquency and the formation of youth gangs in the cities emerged as a new phenomenon. Crimes committed by youth include theft, robbery, and drug use (Ministry of Social Affairs, Labor, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation 2002, 37–38).

The situation is unchanged today, with a government that is not accountable to the general public having failed to provide national social security systems in almost two decades of post-civil-war development. Youth are also disenfranchised, as they have no influence on political processes. Instead, the approach to integrating delinquent youth is authoritarian and follows the patronage approach. The military service law passed in 2006 is such a tool, aimed at integrating a potentially destabilising and critical social group into the neopatrimonial system (Hensengerth 2008a).

In Singapore, too, adolescents join gangs to achieve social visibility and status. However, rather than coming from families were they are abused or where the parents are uninvolved in their children's lives, Singaporean youth tend to join gangs from families in which the mother is "over-protective, over-controlling, critical, guilt-inducing" (Kee et. al. 2003). Gang youth have lower self-esteem and higher levels of aggression than peers who do not join gangs (Kee et al. 2003). As to the question of why youth violence occurs in a highly collectivised society such as Singapore, Lim and Chang argue that collective self-esteem is a factor in the execution of violence (2007). The key factor is allocentrism, the social obligation to the ingroup, particularly when the ingroup advocates violence. This tendency of collectivism in relation to the ingroup is in line with the demands of a collectivist society and explains how youth violence may become a phenomenon in such societies (Lim and Chang 2007).

A second strand of Singaporean youth gang research deals with minority street corner gangs, which often consist of lower class Tamils who are seen as a threat by the police because of their potential to upset the relationship between the police and Chinese secret societies. The police enlist the help of secret society members to keep the peace in areas the police cannot effectively control: prostitution, illegal

moneylending, coffee shop owners, hawkers, newspaper vendors, contractors, and massage parlours and karaoke bars. In return, the secret society in the area gains control over the territory and its legal and illegal economic activities. Tamil street corner gangs are viewed by the police as upsetting this relationship when they try to gain a foothold in the criminal underworld. Gangs comprised of working class Tamils therefore experience failure not only in the legitimate Singaporean society, but also in the underworld scene (Ganapathy and Lian 2002).

In Japan, youth violence has traditionally been discussed in terms of violence against family members, so research focuses on individual acts of violence rather than youth gangs. But individual youth violence has only attracted increased attention in the last ten years as juvenile delinquency has risen. The crimes range from general anti-social behaviour to sexual offences and murder. This is especially the case for violence in schools, where pressure exerted by parents often causes frustration even among students with good results. These children and adolescents often have no history of crime; their delinquency appears suddenly with the development path leading to the violent act undetected. School bullying and pervasive developmental disorder are among the risk factors frequently cited by psychologists. But the justice system and popular opinion are geared towards stricter punishment rather than treatment and prevention of mental problems (Ono and Pumariega 2008; also Hayes and Kameguchi 2005).

In China, research focuses on youth gangs. By the point when they are picked up by the police, youth in gangs already have a history of violence. The organisational level of youth gangs is low, however. Gangs are often composed of fellow workers or people that originated from the same geographical area. So gangs are based on the traditional social organising principles of work unit and interpersonal relationships defined by area of origin. The reaction of the Chinese state is similar to the reactions in other countries in the region: the administration of severe punishment (Zhang et al. 1997; Zhang and Liu 2007; Zhang 2008).

Like the domestic violence discourse, discussion links youth violence in East Timor to the events following independence.

Adolescents were prominently involved in the communal violence of 2006 to 2008. They were organised in rival martial arts groups (which date back to Portuguese colonialism and Indonesian rule and linked up with the factionalised security forces after independence); ethnicity-based gangs fighting for economic control; gangs led by resistance figures with loyalties to different political parties and military factions (whose antipathy dates back to the anti-Indonesian resistance); and diverse disenfranchised groups led by ex-combatants, opposition politicians, former militia members, and unemployed youth who migrated from the rural areas to Dili and feel socially, politically and economically excluded. Of all these groups, it was the marginalised youth who caused most of the violence (Scambary 2006, 2009; Arnold 2009). The diversity of groups shows not only the complexity of East Timorese society (Scambary 2009), but also the detachment of youth from the solidarity of the resistance era and a process in which youth are disenfranchised from political decision-making processes that are controlled by members of the former resistance (Arnold 2009).

3. Conclusion

Patterns of political violence hinge at least partly on colonial experiences: minority problems caused by colonial-era frontiers, and, tied to this, the creation of a nation-state ideal where ethnic majorities dominate central government and attempted to subjugate ethnic minorities into a centralised state. Colonialism also created new social classes, ultimately triggering ideological conflicts between capitalism and communism in East Asia.

Post-war economic growth increased social differentiation and female participation in the workforce, leading to conflicts between modern and traditional gender attitudes. A focus on shame, privacy, reconciliation in the legal system and traditional gender roles clashes with ideas of women's rights, thus trapping women between tradition and modernity.

In lockstep with economic modernisation, globalisation has created new patterns of consumption that lead to generational conflicts. New youth cultures emphasise new symbols of identification that deviate from social values of hierarchy and obedience in paternalistic societies. One way out for youth is the formation of gangs in order to achieve

social visibility and to gain access to jobs and services that are otherwise unavailable – be it because an elite political system blocks access or because of a general lack of resources after war.

In contrast to the above types of violence, urban violence is often addressed indirectly by studying poverty or economic marginalisation as risk factors that emerge during urbanisation. Urban insecurity and urban crime are the focus of this research, along with rising inequality, marginalisation and deprivation. In this sense, urban crime is linked to certain forms of youth violence where gang violence emerges from slum quarters. Here, violence and deprivation are linked and demand strategies of social integration.

Regarding the thrust of violence research, youth and urban violence are the least well-researched forms in East Asia. The goal of coordinated violence research must therefore

be to strengthen research on the emergence and forms of youth and urban violence. This should include suggestions for sustainable strategies of youth integration and exit strategies for adolescents.

To achieve this, existing strands of research scattered across disciplines and themes (such as urbanisation, deprivation, youth gangs and social exclusion) should be drawn together in order to gain a clearer picture of causes and links between urban violence (including its subtypes), poverty, violent actors and victims.

Such an endeavour could enlist the expertise of interested international organisations and donor agencies. Cooperation of this kind could help not only to research causes and forms of violence, but also to assist in devising strategies for minimising violence.

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