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Patterns of Collective Violence in Indonesia (1990-2003)

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Abstract

Indonesia has witnessed explosive group violence in recent years, but unlike its plentiful economic statistics, the data on conflict were remarkably sketchy. Because it wanted to give the appearance of order and stability, the New Order did not believe in publishing reports on group conflict, nor did it allow researchers and non-governmental organizations to probe the patterns and causes of conflict. This paper is based on the first database ever constructed on group violence in Indonesia. Following, and adapting for Indonesian conditions, methodologies developed and used elsewhere, we cover the years 1990-2003, split the data into various categories, and identify the national, regional and local patterns of collective violence. Much that we find is surprising, given the common perceptions about, and in, Indonesia. Of the several conclusions we draw, the most important one is that group violence in Indonesia is highly locally concentrated. Fifteen districts (*kabupaten and kota*), in which a mere 6.5 per cent of the country's population lived in 2000, account for as much as 85.5 per cent of all deaths in group violence. Group violence is not as widespread as is normally believed. If we can figure out why so many districts remained reasonably quiet, even as the violent systemic shifts, such the decline of the New Order, deeply shook fifteen districts causing a large number of deaths, we may also understand how one should deal with the cataclysms of the endemically violent towns, as also how one might think about preventing, or minimizing, group violence in the coming years.

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Patterns of Collective Violence in Indonesia (1990-2003)

I. Introduction

How widespread is group violence in Indonesia? What forms – ethnic, religious, economic – has it primarily taken? Have the group clashes of recent years been significantly greater, or worse, than those in the late New Order period? Over the last six years, as collective or group violence in Indonesia has hit international headlines, these are some of the questions scholars, policy makers, international observers, journalists and activists have often asked.

Thus far, Indonesia has lacked a statistical base to allow precise and professionally adequate responses to these questions. Meticulously investigated empirical answers simply do not exist. Instead, one often encounters an impressionistic contrast being drawn between the chaos and violence of recent years and the stability and peace of the authoritarian New Order. Although the New Order had a remarkably bloody beginning in the mid 1960s, Suharto's Indonesia came to acquire the image of a calm, well-ordered society in the 1980s and 1990s. A brutal orgy of tumult, brutality and violence ended the New Order in May 1998, but the image of a peaceful New Order has returned in several quarters, especially as Indonesia has gone through the teething irritations of a fledgling democracy. In some quarters, comparisons are being drawn between Indonesia and Nigeria, and the idea that Indonesia may become a "failed state" has already taken roots. According to a recent and widely noted report, a "struggling state like Indonesia, whose weakness has allowed terrorism, corruption, and civil conflict to take root in alarming ways" has performed only slightly better than the comprehensively failed states of Afghanistan, Haiti, or Somalia.¹

Is this an accurate assessment? Is the image of a peaceful New Order, especially in its later years, correct? Is the violence of post-Suharto years spread over most of the country, or is it highly locally concentrated, leaving large parts of Indonesia more or less untouched? The last question is an important one. If group violence is locally concentrated and many parts of the country have remained peaceful, having at best small

¹ Center for Global Development (2004: 7). This report was produced by a commission headed by two US congressmen. It has already led to many articles in the press, including Martin Wolf (2004).

group clashes but no large-scale killings or wanton destruction of property, then the pessimism about the future of the country under a democratic dispensation may be less warranted. Indeed, significant lessons may be drawn from examining how peace has prevailed in some parts of the country, even as other parts have experienced repeated violence.

To be sure, a fair amount of literature has emerged on post-Suharto violence in Indonesia, but the available information is episodic, not systematic. Everybody, for example, knows that the Maluku islands, Central Sulawesi, or Aceh have seen a lot of violence in recent years. But other than studies of the most gruesome or persistent sites of violence, we have little systematic information on:

- What is the urban-rural, provincewise, districtwise distribution of violence?
- What is the nature of violence (destruction of property, killings, injuries, internal displacement, gender-based attacks) in different parts of Indonesia?
- What kinds of “triggers”, “sparks”, “precipitating events” lead to violence?

Such questions are not simply of factual value. Their analytical and policy significance is immense. The patterns we discover should lead to a more well-grounded and purposeful policy discussion, to a better understanding of the causes of violence and, hopefully, to a better policy response – by the international agencies, NGOs and governments.

However, before we clearly understand the causes of violence and ask what policy responses exist, we first need to identify the basic patterns of violence. This paper, first part of a two-part study, reports the findings from a new database on group violence for the period 1990-2003. The second part of the study, to be analyzed in a paper later in the year, will concentrate in-depth on two cities, a violence-prone Ambon and a peaceful Manado. It will be further followed up over the next two years by a study of four more cities: two that have had varying degrees of violence (Poso and Solo) and two whose peace has remained more or less undisturbed (Palu and Yogyakarta). The larger project, of which this paper is a part, seeks to combine the breadth that a database covering all incidents of group violence can offer, with the depth that studies of specific towns will

yield. This combination should allow a comprehensive analysis of collective violence in Indonesia, as also a solid identification of what policy interventions might be appropriate.

Our database is a result of approximately 10,000 hours of work done by a team of 14 researchers, most of them based in provincial capitals.² We were able to cover more than 3,600 incidents of violence, of which more than a quarter -- a little over 1000 incidents -- resulted in deaths, leading to a total of over 10,700 deaths between 1990-2003. We believe we have been able to create the most comprehensive database on collective violence in Indonesia available to scholars, policy makers and activists thus far.

Our attempt to be comprehensive, however, does not mean that we have been able to cover all acts of violence in Indonesia since 1990. We should specify what we have excluded, or had to exclude, from our database and why. First, we did not cover all forms of violence, only collective violence. We define the latter as violence perpetrated by a group on another group (as in riots), by a group on an individual (as in lynchings), by an individual on a group (as in terrorist acts), by the state on a group, or by a group on organs or agencies of the state. We did not cover violence between two individuals -- the attempted or actual homicides -- unless they triggered a larger group clash. Our focus was on group violence, not on crime or violence *per se*.

Second, we also had to confine ourselves to episodes of violence that fell short of secessionist wars. Even though the violence in Aceh and Papua would have been part of our definition of collective violence, we were unable to include it in our database. The insurgencies in these two provinces posed serious personal risks for our team and made systematic research in their provincial capitals impossible. There were sources of information in the national capital, but as we will later show, the Jakarta-based sources are an inadequate substitute for the provincial sources on the ground.

In other words, our database covers collective violence in Indonesia with the exception of those areas where a war of insurgency has been under way. Substantively, our three most important conclusions are:

1. Though less violent in terms of deaths than the years after the fall of Suharto in 1998, there is no evidence that the late New Order (1990-97) was peaceful. The latter period had substantial collective violence. If we add what we already know

² Appendix 3 contains a list of researchers, who worked on this database.

about the 1980s to the findings reported in this paper, the most striking difference between the New Order and the post-Suharto period appears to be that the New Order often used state-perpetrated violence to bring order, whereas clashes between social groups have been much more common since 1998.

2. Overall, collective violence in Indonesia is highly locally concentrated. A mere 15 districts (*kabupaten*), holding 6.5 per cent of the country's total population, accounted for 85.5 per cent of all deaths in collective violence. This result makes it necessary that we not only take note of the national level factors that might have led to violence, but also pay special attention to local factors that kept peace in most of the country, even as 15 districts repeatedly burned. Group violence is not as widespread in Indonesia as is often thought.
3. Youth clashes constitute the single most important trigger of group violence. Young people in all parts of the world participate in large numbers in riots and various other forms of group violence. In Indonesia, however, the nature of such clashes is very different. Policy interventions that could somehow channel the energy of the youth in a positive direction are worthy of serious consideration.

It should be emphasized that a database is not necessarily good at generating new causal explanations. It is best used for developing a solid picture of empirical patterns and trends, and for testing of existing theories. We will, therefore, not make claims about the causes of violence until the second part of the study is completed. We will, however, use the evidence collected to suggest which theories of violence may be invalid, or may have limited validity.

The paper is organized as follows. Section II goes into the basic reasons for why a database was necessary, how it was constructed, what its limitations are, and how they might be remedied in the future. In Section III, we go through the existing theories of group violence in Indonesia and judge their applicability in light of our database. Section IV presents substantive results, concentrating on several questions: the level of violence before and after the end of the New Order; the types of violence, their relative intensity and geographical distribution, the types of triggers, and so on. Section V summarizes the conclusions.

II. A New Database: Why? How?

As already indicated, the existing statistics on collective violence in Indonesia are highly sketchy. Like many other governments in the developing world, the New Order, ruling Indonesia for over thirty years till 1998, did not ever publish any figures on deaths or losses in ethno-communal violence. In what Liddle has aptly called a “Hobbesian bargain”, the entire rationale for the New Order was its offer to Indonesian citizens of “prosperity and stability in exchange for acceptance of authoritarian government.” (Liddle, 1999: 37). Thus, other than seeking to deliver prosperity to the masses, the New Order also had an interest in showing that peace and order prevailed under their rule. Supplying honest data on group violence was contrary to a key regime objective. No statistics were ever provided.

How can one, under such conditions, determine the basic patterns of violence in a society? Viewing newspaper reports as a source is about the only other option that is known to researchers. In 2002, following this idea, and on the basis of reports in two capital city news sources, *Kompas* and *Antara*, primarily the former, UNSFIR compiled the only all-Indonesia database (Database I) available for the late New Order period and the period after its collapse, covering the years 1990-2001 (Tadjoeddin, 2002).

This attempt was indeed an improvement over what we knew, but it could not resolve a basic question that researchers and policy makers often ask: how reliable were the newspaper reports used as evidence?

Such a question is quite easily answerable in countries where the press is free. Not all newspapers may be trustworthy in such countries, but typically, countries with a free press also tend to have a newspaper or two, which can be called journals of record. In the US, the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* have long performed this role, and in India, until recently, *The Times of India* did. For Indonesia, it is sometimes argued, *Kompas* is a journal of record.³

This claim may well be correct for the regular economic and political reporting, but on ethnic or religious violence, its validity is questionable. The New Order did not

³ This view is held by William Liddle, a leading contemporary scholar of Indonesian politics (Liddle, 1999)

allow press freedom as a principle in its more than three decades of existence. Indeed, on ethnocommunal issues, the government had a so-called SARA policy. SARA was an acronym for ethnic (*suku*), religious (*agama*), racial (*ras*), and inter-group (*antar-golongan*) differences. These differences were not to be discussed in the public realm.

In practice, too, the gaps in the *Kompas-Antara* database (Database I) raised many doubts. Neither source reported any incidents of group conflict anywhere in Indonesia in 1990, 1991, 1992 and 1994. Given the New Order restrictions on the press, these gaps appeared to be an artifact of government restrictions. They did not seem to indicate a faithful reporting of facts.

In other words, a database constructed from *Kompas* reports simply could not be viewed as reliable, unless cross-checked. But how was this to be done? There are, of course, several ways of running reliability checks on newspaper reports. The most promising and time-tested method is to cross-check the capital city news sources with reports in provincial newspapers. That is the path we chose.

Towards provincial newspapers

Are provincial newspapers any more reliable than national newspapers on violence? In principle, there are three reasons why this might be so. First, we know from the available literature that a highly centralized system, as the New Order undoubtedly was, is better able to censor the capital city than the provincial centers and the hinterlands. No authoritarian system is equally authoritarian all over country. Indeed, this is one of the greatest differences between authoritarian and totalitarian systems.⁴ The Suharto regime was always characterized – and rightly so – as authoritarian. It did not have the Soviet-style, ideologically monolithic totalitarian capacities, penetrating all aspect of social, economic and political life in Indonesia. Elections, for example, even though limited, allowed non-government parties to contest the government-sponsored Golkar party. Unlike the Communist systems, all available non-governmental organizations were not politically obliterated. Two of the biggest non-governmental organizations -- the Nahdatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah – may sometimes have been pushed by the government,

⁴ The distinction between authoritarianism and totalitarianism was underlined by Kirkpatrick (1982).

but they continued to be organizationally independent of the government for much of the New Order period (Hefner, 2000).

Second, the early 1990s – roughly 1990-94-- witnessed what came to be known as a period of relative openness, *keterbukaan*.⁵ This period of political relaxation made it possible to view regional newspapers as potentially quite usable. Interviews with the regional management of *Kompas* newspaper group confirmed our hunch.⁶ According to their own self-assessment, the provincial newspapers were likely to be better at reporting provincial violence than *Kompas* in Jakarta. The management explained that the process of censorship gave the regional newspapers greater room to report conflict. Not only were the regional newspapers closer to the ground, but newspapers were not required, in principle, to send their reports to the information officer *before* publishing them. The New Order issued a “negative list”, prohibiting certain kinds of reporting. This, in effect, meant that quite a lot of the regional reporting escaped the censors because reporting was not to be screened for the provincial authorities beforehand.

Third, we could also subject the provincial reports to the test of local knowledge. If there were doubts about the veracity of reports appearing in provincial newspapers, one could use local knowledge – through interviews with key local community actors -- to double-check their truthfulness. Such a vast fund of local knowledge simply did not exist in Jakarta. It also turned out that in Indonesia, the archives of provincial newspapers were available only in provincial capitals, not in Jakarta. Working in the provinces was not only desirable, but it was also our only option.

Which provinces?

Convinced by these arguments, our research team covered 14 provinces: Riau, DKI Jakarta, Central Java, West Java, East Java, Banten, Central Kalimantan, West Kalimantan, South Sulawesi, Central Sulawesi, East Nusatenggara, West Nusatenggara, Maluku, and North Maluku. We chose these provinces because in database I, they accounted for 96.4 per cent of all deaths. Given such magnitudes, covering these 14

⁵ This period came to an end in June 1994, when three major newspapers and magazines (*Tempo*, *Editor* and *Detik*) were closed down after they reported disagreements at highest echelons of government on policy (Bertrand, 2004: 444).

⁶ These interviews were conducted in the Jakarta headquarters of the *Kompas* group of newspapers in December 2002.

provinces, as opposed to all 28 provinces, appeared to be the most rational use of our resources, time and energy. And, following standard norms of large-scale empirical research, it also seemed sensible to rely on the argument that for database II, the share of the remaining provinces in the overall death toll could be *assumed* to be 3.6 per cent. Even if careful newspaper research in the remaining 14 provinces was carried out, the odds that the magnitude of deaths was considerably higher or lower than 3.6% were extremely low. The remaining provinces were most unlikely to alter our all-Indonesia figures seriously.

The details of our methodology are contained in Appendix 1 and 2. For reasons already mentioned, we had to leave out separatist violence in Aceh and Papua. We covered four categories of collective violence: (a) ethno-communal (inter-ethnic, inter-religious, and intra-religious); (b) the state versus community (attacks by government machinery on civilians and vice versa -- so long as such attacks were not demonstrably for ethno-communal reasons); (c) economic (conflicts over land, industrial relations, natural resources -- so long as such conflicts were not unmistakably linked ethnocommunal groupings); and (d) others (Dukun Santet, lynchings or vigilante killings etc.).

A decision was also required on whether the conflicts should be categorized according to forms, or according to substance or cause. The latter is nearly always tempting, but as conflict scholars have long known, it is grossly misleading, and can corrupt results irredeemably. Only research can establish the substance, or causes, of conflict. An assumed, or quickly established, cause can not be the basis of coding. We must begin with the form that conflicts take, and let later research decide the substance or cause.

Finally, we concentrated on deaths as the only indicator of the severity of violence. The other possibilities were: (a) injuries, (b) violations of freedom, (c) property loss, and (d) internally displaced persons (IDPs). Statistically speaking, the ideal situation would have been to construct a composite index, which incorporated all of the above. But unlike in the field of human development, it has not been possible to construct such composite indices for ethnic conflict. There are at least three reasons why this is so. First, the data on injuries, property loss and violations of freedom, if not on IDPs, typically tend to be unreliably collected. Second, it is not clear how to assign weights to the various

components, if multiple components are to be included in the index. How many injuries, for example, would be equal to a death, and why? Third, figures on death are more comparable across cases and time, while injuries always require further specification.⁷ The finality of death makes numbers on death more analytically solid and usable.⁸

Caveats

Even with meticulous research, no researcher investigating a national-level database can vouch for complete accuracy with respect to each incident covered. Stated another way, after cross-checks with local knowledge, we can certainly get reasonable statistics, but we can not guarantee absolute precision. Professional social scientists cannot promise the truth, but they can provide their best estimation of it. The situation is akin to what happens in a court of law. Only that event is accepted, which can be proved with evidence, even if the truth is different.

Therefore, notwithstanding this difficulty, this method has been followed for the study of ethnic conflict elsewhere. And it has been found that a great many strong conclusions about trends and patterns of violence can be drawn on the basis of critically checked newspaper evidence (Varshney 2002; Wilkinson, 2004). Such statistics, of course, may not be good enough to tackle all questions that may potentially come to mind. Some questions, for example, are always about fine gradations, while others about *broad trends and patterns*. The method outlined above promises us advances on the latter, not on the former. Thus, if one wished to find out why Poso was slightly more violent than Maluku Tengah, our database could not be used with great confidence, but if we wanted to know why Ambon was *so much more* violent than Solo, our statistics would be provide the basis for that comparison.

Is greater precision possible in conflict research? Yes, it is, but only in ethnographic studies, confined to one or two cases, one or two villages, one or two districts. While we do gain accuracy that way, we should note the well known problem that it is impossible to know how representative or exceptional is the village, or the district

⁷ Was it a small wound, or a big one? Was someone incapacitated? Did the injury have serious psychological consequences? Until one can specify the nature of injury, the data on injury are not strictly comparable across cases, apart from being less meticulously collected.

⁸ People can be badly or mildly injured, but they can not be half or quarter dead.

that we have so deeply and accurately studied. In order for anyone to answer the latter question, a larger comparative picture is inevitably needed. That is what our database aims to provide. Ethnographers may be more accurate but they can't establish generalizability; the database builders may be less accurate, but they can present each case in its larger perspective. There are trade-offs here. Generalizations from a case study are impossible, and a large-n database cannot provide the fine details of a case study.

Finally, it should be pointed out that such a database can always be made more precise and better. As more accurate information appears, especially on bigger incidents of violence, we can correct the earlier imprecision. That is why database management will be an important issue after we have completed our work, and it will consist of two big tasks: updating the information for each succeeding year, and fixing any errors that emerge as a result of more accurate information on older events.

III. Existing Theories of Group Violence in Indonesia

As we have already argued, large databases may not be good at producing new theories in and of themselves, but their clear identification of trends and patterns does allow testing of existing theories. It is, therefore, possible to take a brief look at the available theories of collective violence in Indonesia, and ask which ones our database finds plausible. We argue below that some existing theories are clearly wrong, whereas others require modification.

The literature that has started emerging on group violence in Indonesia since the fall of Suharto has gone in three theoretical directions. The first is the popular view, not accepted by many scholars yet, that Indonesia under Suharto was on the whole relatively peaceful because it had the political, administrative and military mechanisms to discipline eruptions of social disaffection, and it is the end of the New Order and the collapse of its disciplinary mechanisms that accounts for the violence of recent years. A second view focuses on a longer time period. Some scholars suggest that "violence is embedded" in Indonesian society and culture. "The present violence is not simply, or not only, the

legacy of the New Order” (Colombijn and Lindblad, 2002: 3). The New Order was an instance of a longer historical tradition of violence. Finally, a third argument turns the first argument on its head, while not directly engaging the second. Violence, in this view, did not erupt after 1998 because the New Order’s disciplinary mechanisms collapsed; rather, violence was one of the fundamental pillars on which the New Order rested. In the end, the problem of legitimacy led to collapse of the New Order and also left a violent trail. The New Order, in short, is itself the cause of the violence, both during its life span and after its death (Bertrand, 2004).

Let us briefly take each view in turn, and ask how what our database, or other research, says about their validity.

The New Order and its disciplinary mechanisms

In July 2000, when Lorraine Aragon was doing research on Muslim-Christian violence in Poso, she was repeatedly, and wistfully, told by some citizens of Sulawesi that “for thirty three years under Suharto Indonesia was a peaceful place, but now....there are disturbances everywhere” (Aragon, 2001: 78). Such views are not uncommon in Indonesia today. A longing for the “stability” of the New Order is present in some circles.

Whether or not this view is correct -- and we will have more to say on this matter later – an analyst needs to know what mechanisms might exist between the purported causes and the observed consequence. What features of the New Order -- political, military, administrative, ideological – could have produced the peace and stability? Aragon herself mentions the “military control mechanism that prevented expressions of...communal dissatisfaction” (Aragon, 2001: 78-9). Liddle goes a step further and gives the most plausible accounting of the possible mechanisms in the available literature:

“There is, particularly at the elite level, a strong Hobbesian streak in the modern Indonesian political culture: the belief that most Indonesians cannot be entrusted with extensive personal liberties or with the right to participate in political life on their own terms but must instead be persuaded or forced in their own interest to accept the superior wisdom of a paternalistic elite. In the late 1960s, as the New Order began to take shape, Suharto took advantage of this belief, offering prosperity and stability in exchange for acceptance of authoritarian government.” (Liddle, 1999, p. 37)

A “Hobbesian bargain,” thus, ensured peace: a heavily state-controlled society that accepted controls on freedom to avoid chaos and end poverty.

In order for the core of this argument to hold, one will have to demonstrate that the New Order was indeed peaceful. Presumably, its early roots in the massacre of several hundred thousand Communists in the mid-1960s are not part of the argument, nor are the largely anti-Chinese killings in West Kalimantan between 1966-1976 (Davidson and Kammen, 2002). Thus, for “the New Order was peaceful” argument to have any validity, we will have to start the empirical examination from the mid-1970s, not before. Was it peaceful after that?

The evidence from the 1990s is contained in our database and analyzed in the next section. It shows considerable collective violence. The 1980s, not part of the database, present a gory picture, too. A recent account taps new sources for the infamous Tanjung Priok incident (1984), and goes into the trail of violence it touched off:

“ After his fourth election (in 1983), Suharto...rejected ...that social organizations ‘religious in nature remain based on their religion and their respective religious beliefs’. Instead he said, it was time for Indonesia to consolidate politically, accepting the national ideology. Pancasila must become the sole basis – *azas tunggal* -- of all social and political organizations.”

When the government, in 1984, sent to the Assembly five draft bills for that purpose, the port area of Tanjung Priok, in North Jakarta, felt especially challenged. Tanjung Priok was populated mostly by men, many of them young, out of school, and out of work. At the urging of the lay preachers., this vulnerable group found a noble and uplifting goal in the defense of Islam... .

...On September 12, Amir Biki, a student activist in 1966, now prominent in Tanjung Priok, built up a crowd of 1,500 and led a march. ...Army soldiers blocked the roadway. Armored vehicles and military trucks moved in to the rear, preventing retreat. The crowd surged forward. The soldiers fired into the crowd. .. In half an hour, perhaps 63 (officials say 18: some say hundreds) were killed and many more severely wounded.” (Friend, 2003: 190-1).

Why kill so many by both blocking the front and the rear of a demonstration simultaneously? General Benny Moerdani, the commander of the army at the time, later explained to Theodore Friend:

“Toward the end of a generously long interview he appeared to answer a question I had not yet asked, about the management of the Tanjung Priok incident. ‘I am a soldier.’, he avowed, uncued by me. If I am told to shoot, I shoot.’ I believe he was saying: No one could have ordered me how to handle Tanjung Priok incident except Suharto”. (Friend, 2003: 194).

Was this an isolated act of violence in the 1980s? Hardly.

“There followed a series of fires and explosions in Jakarta: Sarinah Jaya department store in suburban Kebayoran was burned to the ground. . . Bank Central Asia branches were bombed, killing two. . . (T)he Marine Corps dump on Jakarta’s outskirts began exploding, eventually destroying 1,500 houses, leaving fifteen dead and twenty six wounded.

.....
As a continuing consequence of Tanjung Priok, in July 1985, fires in Jakarta destroyed a major shopping complex, a nine story office building, and building housing the state radio and television stations. Clashes arose between the armed forces and groups of aroused Muslims, most notably in Lampung, South Sumatra, in 1989. The estimates of death toll there ran from 41 to over 100..... (Friend, 2003: 192-3)

Islamic groups, even if peacefully protesting, were not the only target of state-sponsored violence in the New Order. Labor strikers, too, were. Here is an example, again not the only one to have taken place during the New Order.

“(I)n Sidoarjo, south of Surabaya, in May 1993, 500 workers went on strike seeking to implement the East Java governor’s edict for a 20 per cent raise in wages.. . The walkout awoke the local military and administration.... . When thirteen co-workers were interrogated at military headquarters and forced to resign, a young female activist, Marsinah, exclaimed to another group of co-workers that she would take the District Military Command to court. That night she was abducted. On May 8, 1993, her body was found, raped and beaten. The murder had taken place at the army headquarters.” (Friend, 2003: 206-7)

The essays in Anderson (2001) provide further illustrations of violence in the 1980s – in Java, East Timor, Papua and Aceh. Most such violence, as also the violence narrated above, was *state-perpetrated*. The overall picture, first, is not one of peace and, second, state-sponsored violence appears to be a principal mechanism of ensuring order. The evidence from the 1990s is analyzed in the next section.

Violence embedded in history and culture?

Putting the New Order in a historical perspective, some scholars speak of the many episodes of mass violence in the country right through its modern history, arguing that violence is culturally and historically embedded in Indonesia. The New Order was simply the newest link in a long historical chain.

Lynching, or mob justice, an important form of violence in Indonesia, as we will show later, did not all of a sudden erupt after 1998. “In 1904 it was reported from the interior of Central Java that a thief caught red-handed by villagers did not come away

alive. Around 1909 witches in Poso (Central Sulawesi) were killed by a small group of young men. In 1882 a pickpocket at the market of Pariaman (West Sumatra) was killed by bystanders. ... In 1853 the Supreme Court ruled that inhabitants of a house who killed a burglar were not liable to punishment” (Colombijn 2002: 315-6). Others speak of the historical tradition in the Javanese community of “cattle theft, extortion, opium smuggling, violence and especially intimidation” as “daily phenomenon” and the *Jago* phenomenon, referring to “the local strongmen who, operating in the shadow of the official colonial government during the nineteenth century, in fact controlled the Javanese countryside” (Nordholt, 2002: 39).

Benedict Anderson (2001) also makes similar suggestions:

“Violence in the 20th century Indonesia has never been the legitimate monopoly of the state. It has been deployed, under differing circumstances, with differing kinds of legitimation, by revolutionaries, middle classes, villagers, ethnic groups, corporate apparatuses, quasi-official gangsters, the CIA and so on. ..It is ..a manifestation of the absence of a Law by which monopoly could be generally justified... Today after three decades of corrupt, cynical and arbitrary dictatorship, under which elites were completely immune to legal punishment, while judges, police, prosecutors, and even defense advocates treated cases simply as commercial transactions, or as political shows of force, very little of (legal) seriousness... exists, except among young intellectuals, professionals and middle class reformers. Nothing shows its general marginality better than the spread of vigilante justice, “mob attacks” on police stations and jails, and ever-increasing middle class demands for stepped-up security. These middle classes are quite aware of what has happened here and there to the Chinese, and how ‘structurally Chinese’ they have themselves become. There is not much in modern Indonesian history to give them long-term assurances.” (Anderson, 2001: 18-9)

Giving a much needed historical perspective, these arguments are of great intellectual significance. But two interconnected reservations, if not outright criticisms, are in order. The first point is a generic one. From an action- or policy-oriented perspective, which underlies this paper, the argument about a historically embedded and stubborn culture of violence becomes a counsel of despair, as Anderson’s last lines manifestly are. The activist or the policy maker can not possibly give up the idea of reform and redirection, even if the odds are against optimism. She must believe in the possibility of change in history.

Second, if the collective violence in Indonesia is as locally concentrated as outlined above and developed at length below, then an intriguing question is left unresolved by this historical perspective. Why did a mere 15 *kabupaten* (districts), which contain only 6.5 per cent of Indonesia’s total population, have as much as 85.5 per cent of all deaths in

collective violence between 1990-2003? Why did so many *kabupaten* remain either quiet, or witness only small acts of violence? Clearly, even if the overall violence is large, the intra-Indonesian variation is so substantial that an argument about a “stubborn culture of violence” needs serious local or regional adjustments. The remarkable variations suggest that despite such history and despite the absence of a tradition of rule of law, large parts of Indonesia were able to live their life quite peacefully in the 1990s, or were able to prevent fires from breaking out even if sparks emerged.

Both mechanisms – those sustaining violence and those preventing violence -- appear to have been present. We may be able to learn a great deal about the possibilities of change, if we understand how peace was maintained, or violence minimized, in so many localities or regions, despite a larger historical tradition of violence.

Critical junctures and the violence of the New Order

The third argument focuses on the institutions of the New Order, and seeks to show how at certain “critical junctures”, as the 1990s turned out to be, institutional change, or its possibility, led to a great deal of violence. This perspective also draws linkages between the violence of recent years with the institutions and policies of the New Order, suggesting how the authoritarianism of the New Order produced the violence that accompanied its demise and what followed thereafter.

Bertrand (2004) is the latest example of this line of argumentation. According to him, the institutions of the New Order created profound social and political exclusions, bred distrust of the state, and often relied on overt violence.

Bertrand’s argument has two components. The first relates to the ethno-religious exclusions of the “national model” the New Order: Dayaks and Papuans on grounds of lack of modernity, the Chinese for lack of indigeneity, the East Timorese for historical reasons, and Islam on ground of ideology. At a fundamental level, such a variety of exclusions could have been sustained primarily with coercion. Coercion, however, can not keep a system going for ever. Especially at critical junctures – and this is the second component of the argument -- violence in response to these exclusions, or in justification of them, was more or less inevitable. Critical junctures are defined by Bertrand as those moments when, due to a variety of reasons, a political system comes under strain, begins

to lose, or loses, its legitimacy, and group dynamics -- between the winners and losers of the existing system -- starts to change. The New Order's renegotiation with Islam in the early 1990s was one such moment, leading to a change in Muslim-Christian relations, and the declining legitimacy of the system by the mid-1990s was yet another moment of violent group renegotiation.

A great merit of this argument is its focus on the institutional characteristics of the New Order, and its ability to demonstrate how some groups were clearly excluded from the institutions of power and had no normal ways of reversing such exclusions available to them. The group-specific nature of the argument allows it to show why only some groups were the targets, or perpetrators, of attacks, why violence was concentrated in some geographical regions of Indonesia, why violence was not more generalized.

Our database, however, does raise some issues for this framework. If violence was highly *locally*, not simply *regionally*, concentrated, we would need to go beyond an argument that focuses entirely on groups and provinces. In 1998, the Chinese were targeted in some parts of Indonesia, not everywhere they lived, especially not in Kalimantan. Similarly, despite what should have been a changing relationship everywhere between Muslims and Christians as a result of Suharto permitting a greater role to Islam in the power structure, Muslim-Christian violence took place primarily in the Maluku, parts of Central Sulawesi, and some towns of Java. Much of Central Sulawesi and almost all of North Sulawesi remained quiet, in addition to several other parts where both Muslims and Christians live in large numbers.

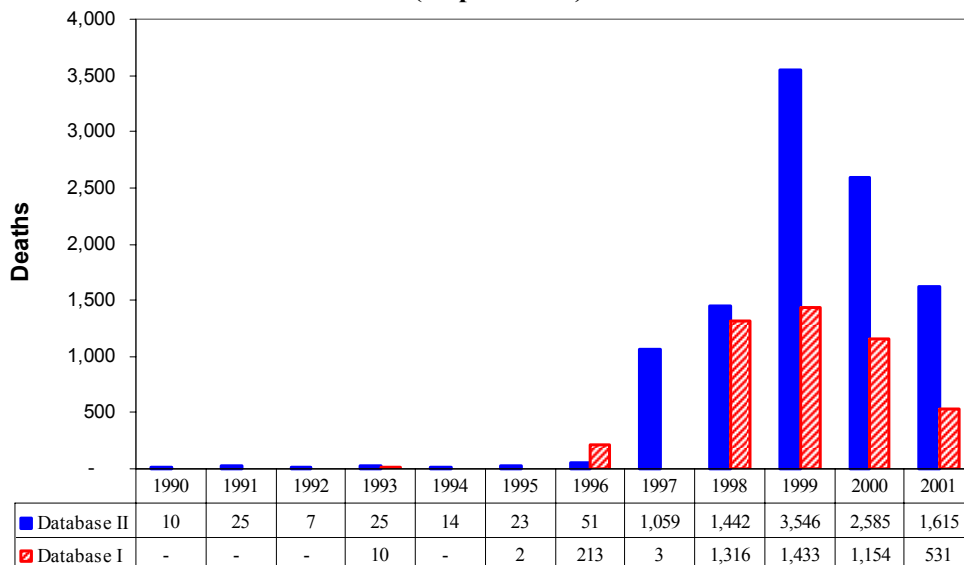
Once we recognize these particularities, our analytic focus will not only have to stress changes that the New Order brought about at a systemic level, or how exclusionary its policies with respect to some groups and geographical regions were, but we will also have to incorporate into our explanations the local differences existing within such regions or groups that presumably kept many towns or districts peaceful, even as violence broke out elsewhere in the region. An emphasis on institutional factors at the level of the nation or region can constitute only part of the explanation for the highly localized concentration of group violence our database has discovered.

IV. Results

Comparing the two databases

Let us begin with the differences between database I and II. Our hunch about the utility of provincial newspapers was right. For the period 1990-2001, in 14 provinces, we have 10,402 deaths in database II, more than twice as many as in database I, where the total was 4662 deaths.⁹ Figure 1 shows the divergence each year. Only in 1998 do the two databases come close. In all other years, the lack of correspondence is substantial.¹⁰

Figure 1
Deaths by year according to Database I and II (1990-2001)
(14 provinces)



⁹ This point had become transparent in the mid-term review of the database research in October 2003. In each province, we were beginning to get many more incidents and deaths than in DBI. Also, since database II covers two more years than database I—2002 and 2003-- the final differences are, of course, larger.

¹⁰ Only in 1996 does database I record more deaths than in database II. It turns out that this is because the Madurese-Dayak conflict that began in late December in 1996 has been wrongly coded as having had all deaths in 1996. A more careful reading shows that the conflict began in late December 1996, but it continued well into 1997. Most deaths, in fact, took place in 1997.

It should be clear that for conflict, if not for other subjects, *Kompas* cannot be viewed as a journal of record for all of Indonesia. Even if we supplement it with *Antara*, the coverage is not nationally representative. More important, for the island of Java, too, *Kompas* is not fully adequate. As Table 1 shows, for each of Java's provinces (with the exception of Yogyakarta, which we did not cover), deaths and violent incidents in database I are substantially lower than in database II. *Kompas* did not report many incidents, especially the less violent ones in which just a few people died. Moreover, it also often underreported larger incidents.

Table 1
Comparison of database I and II, Java (1990-2001)

Province	Database II (1990-2001)		Database I (1990-2001)	
	Deaths	Incidents	Deaths	Incidents
Banten	28	102	4	3
West Java	234	742	67	85
Central Java	145	432	42	52
East Java	145	449	29	32

Whatever its status for other kinds of reporting, from the perspective of conflict *Kompas* should be basically viewed as a newspaper covering Jakarta well. That is why in 1998 the two databases came so close. An overwhelming proportion of group violence took place in Jakarta that year. Whenever Jakarta's proportions were lower in the total violence, the differences between the two databases were large.¹¹

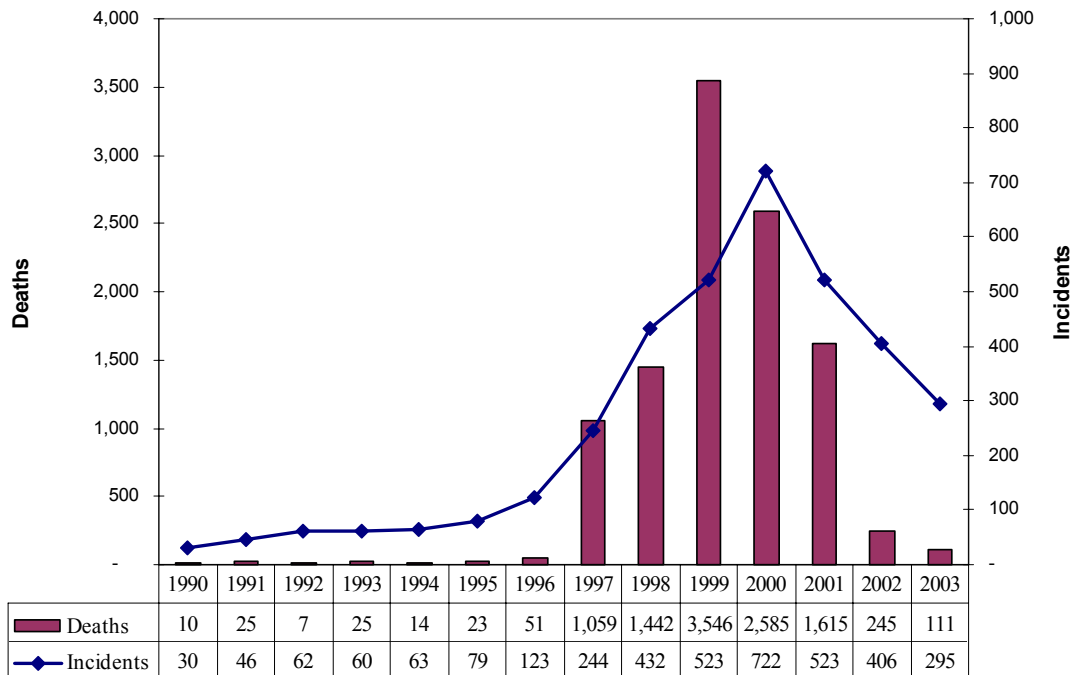
National trends

Let us now turn to broad national trends. Figure 2 shows the aggregate picture. The years 1997-2001 have been the most violent, but it should be noted that high levels of

¹¹ The other use of *Kompas* is to use it as a supplementary check for very big incidents, such as those in Maluku or Kalimantan, if the regional newspapers do not have full archives or clear reporting. This problem is somewhat serious in Maluku, where after January 1999, the local press ceased to be neutral and newspapers either became Christian newspapers (for example, *Suara Maluku*) or Muslim newspapers (for example, *Ambon Ekspres* which was born in June 1999 after Muslims of Ambon realized that they needed a paper that represented their concerns).

collective violence were in evidence more than a year before the May 1998 events that caught the world's attention. The Madurese-Dayak conflict began in Central Kalimantan in December 1996, acquiring huge proportions in 1997, killing over a thousand people.¹² 1996 also witnessed 51 deaths, a substantial number, with 17 deaths concentrated in East Java.

Figure 2
Deaths and incidents of collective violence in Indonesia (1990-2003)



Let us now turn to a question already posed in the last section: how much violence took place during the late New Order? This question, of course, raises a prior issue. If we treat 1990 as the beginning of the late New Order, when did the New Order really end? On May 22, 1998, when Suharto formally resigned; on May 13 1998 when virtually uncontrolled anti-Chinese violence erupted in many parts of the country, especially in the capital city; or earlier? If we suppose that the May 22 resignation of Suharto ended the New Order, both formally and really, then the May 1998 violence would have to be included in our assessment as part of violence that took place before the end of the New Order. But if we treat the May 1998 incidents as exceptional, for they were one of the

¹² For a comprehensive treatment of the 1996-7 Madurese-Dayak violence, see Peluso and Harwell (2001). For a comparison of East Kalimantan's peace and Central Kalimantan's violence, see van Klinken (2002).

principal immediate causes of the end of the New Order, we will have to find another, more “normal” dividing line, as it were. There are no good, and well known, theoretical ways of selecting a normal cut-off on a matter like this.

In the absence of a theoretically obvious dividing line, let us first see the results with various possible cut-off points (Table 2). If we take December 31, 1997, as a cut off, 11.3 per cent of the total deaths and 19.6 per cent of the total incidents in the period 1990-2003 go into the share of the late New Order. If April 30, 1998, is taken as the cut-off point – before the exceptionally high violence of May 1998 erupted – the late New Order shares of deaths and incidents are 11.5 and 22.3 per cent respectively. If, however, we stick to May 22, 1998, as a dividing line, the late New Order share shoots up to 23.0 per cent of all deaths and 23.5 per cent of all incidents.

Table 2
New Order and after
Collective violence in Indonesia (1990-2003)

Cut off points	Deaths				Incidents			
	Pre	%	Post	%	Pre	%	Post	%
31Dec-97	1,214	11.3%	9,544	88.7%	707	19.6%	2,901	80.4%
30 Apr-98	1,242	11.5%	9,516	88.5%	804	22.3%	2,804	77.7%
21May-98	2,473	23.0%	8,285	77.0%	848	23.5%	2,760	76.5%

The larger point should be obvious. Whichever perspective one adopts, the late New Order was simply not peaceful. Even the lowest, and the least plausible, estimate above -- 11.3 per cent of all deaths – records 1,214 deaths and 707 incidents.¹³ We should, in addition, note one more point. As Bertrand (2004) argues, if the post-1998 violence is in large measure, if not entirely, a legacy of the New Order, the question of the formal *share* of the New Order in the overall collective violence is less important than its *role* in

¹³ Although enough care has been taken to make our statistics as reflective of the realities as possible for the 1990-1997 period, we know that Indonesia’s newspapers have been remarkably free since the end of the New Order and they were less free before. Thus, one has to take seriously the possibility that despite our best efforts, our figures for 1990-97 could be an underestimate. Of course, the gap between the actual deaths and reported deaths is not likely to be large --for the big incidents have been carefully double-checked and it is in the nature of such statistics that bigger incidents tend typically to affect the aggregate figures substantially. But a gap is likely and the actual numbers for 1990-97 might be larger.

precipitating as well as perpetrating violence. If Bertrand is right, the violence of the New Order, analytically speaking, did not end with its formal demise in May 1998. Rather, its violent effects continued even after its death.

Disaggregating violence

Let us now look at some important break-ups of the overall picture. If we go by categories of violence – ethnocommunal, the state versus community, economic, and others – a striking finding emerges. Ethnocommunal violence accounts for only 17 per cent of all incidents of violence, but its share of deaths is almost 90 per cent. That essentially means that ethnocommunal form of group violence is not very common in Indonesia, but when it does take place, it is much more deadly than other forms of violence. The incidence of economic and the state versus community clashes is not far behind that of ethnocommunal strife, but the magnitude of deaths associated with them is a great deal smaller (Table 3).

Table 3
Categories of violence
Collective violence in Indonesia (1990-2003)

Category	Deaths	%	Incident	%	Incident with deaths	%
Ethno-Communal	9,612	89.3%	599	16.6%	409	39.4%
State - Community	105	1.0%	423	11.7%	55	5.3%
Economic	78	0.7%	444	12.3%	34	3.3%
Others	963	9.0%	2,142	59.4%	610	58.8%
Indonesia (14 provinces)	10,758	100.0%	3,608	100.0%	1,108	100%

Within the category of ethnocommunal violence, some further distributions are noteworthy. Inter-religious violence has caused the largest destruction of lives, followed closely by inter-ethnic conflict. The three biggest takers of lives in Indonesia are Muslim-Christian, Madurese-Dayak/Malay, and anti-Chinese violence respectively, suggesting that

these three have been the greatest cleavages of Indonesian society, at least since 1990 (Table 4).

Table 4
Distribution of ethno-communal violence (1990-2003)

	Deaths	%	Incidents	%
Ethno-Communal	9,612	100%	599	100%
- Ethnic	4,122	43%	140	23%
<i>Anti Chinese</i>	1,259	13%	32	5%
<i>Madurese vs Dayak/Malay</i>	2,764	29%	70	12%
<i>Ethnic-others</i>	99	1%	38	6%
- Religious (Muslims-Christians)	5,452	57%	433	72%
- Sectarian	38	0%	26	4%
<i>Intra Muslims</i>	38	0%	22	4%
<i>Intra Christians</i>	-	0%	3	1%

Two other patterns are noteworthy. While Madurese-Dayak riots, both their frequency and intensity, are not affected by the end of the Suharto era (Figure 3), the other two big cleavages show a contrasting pattern. There has been very little deadly anti-Chinese violence after the fall of Suharto in 1998 (Figure 4), a rather big incident in Selat Panjang, Riau, in February 2001, triggered by a gambling dispute, being the major exception.¹⁴ Contrariwise, as Figure 5 shows, most of the deadly Muslim-Christian strife has taken place after 1998.

¹⁴ Based on *Riau Post*, February 11, 2001, we can say that after a gambling dispute, many houses of the Chinese were burned and many Chinese killed. Our estimate is 16 deaths. Hundreds of Chinese fled to Karimun island. The city of Selat Panjang was dead for ten days due to the destruction caused.

Figure 3
Madurese Vs Dayak/Malay violence (1990-2003)

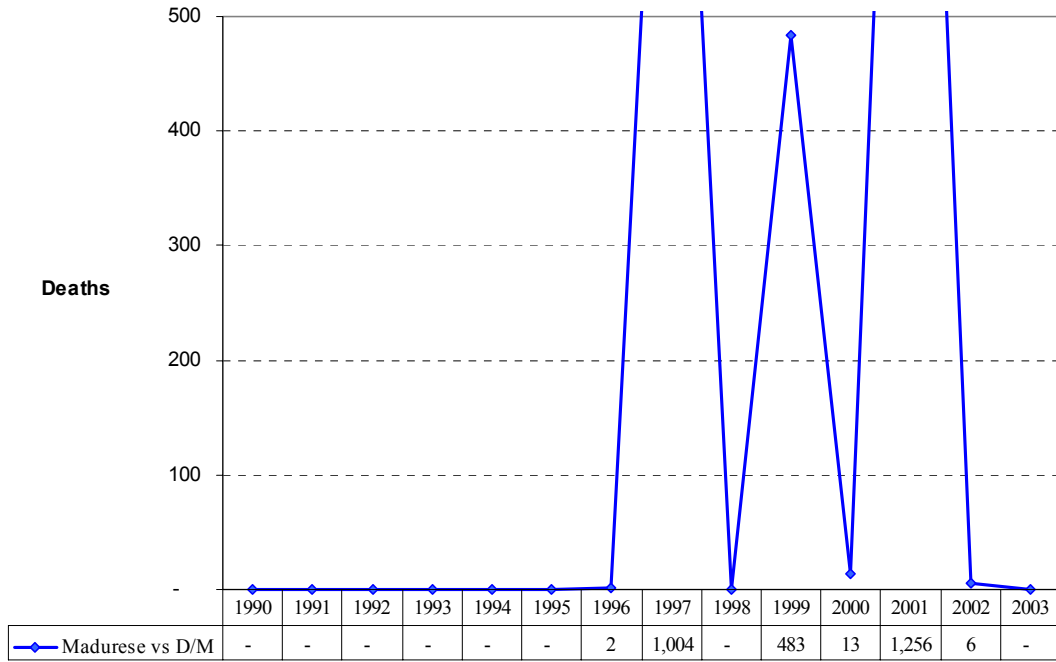


Figure 4
Anti Chinese violence (1990-2003)

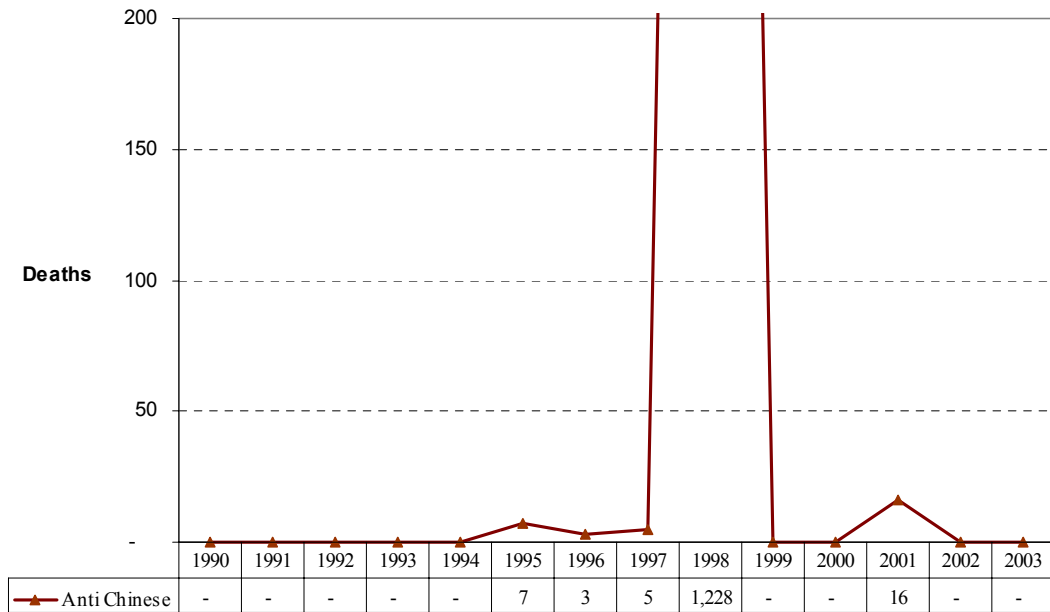
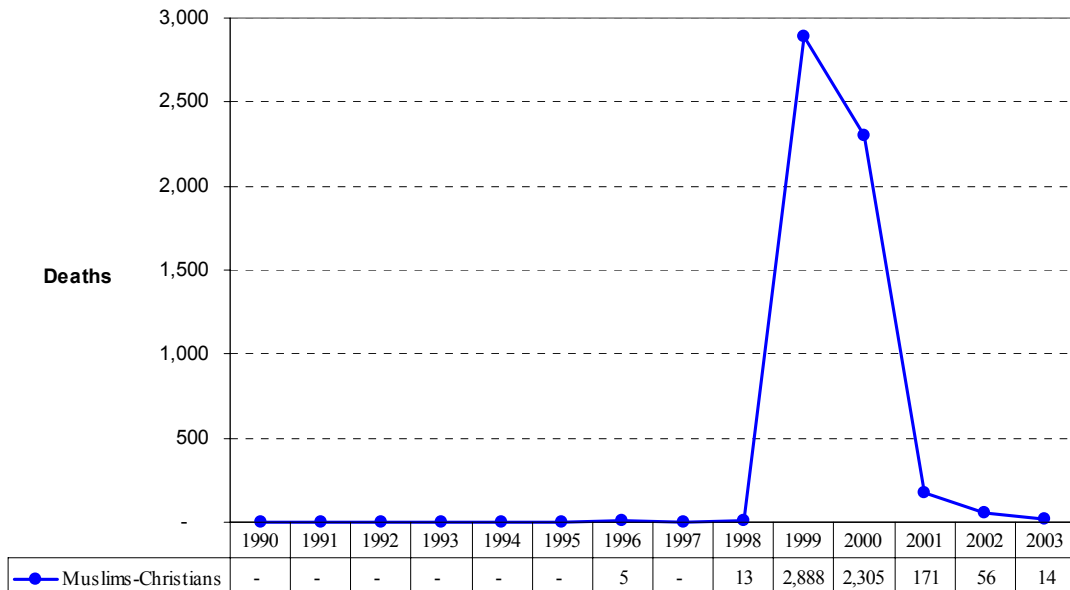


Figure 5
Muslim-Christian violence (1990-2003)



Did Muslim-Christian violence not exist at all before 1998? There were many Muslim-Christian clashes before 1998. They have been noted in the literature as well as in our database, especially the incidents in 1996-7 in Tasikmalaya (West Java), Banjarmasin (South Kalimantan), Situbondo (East Java), and Ujung Pandang (South Sulawesi).¹⁵ Friend also notes that during 1992-97, roughly 500 Churches, an average of 100 churches a year, were burned (Friend, 2003: 299). Muslim-Christian violence before 1998 led to very few deaths, but it inflicted a lot of damage to the buildings and properties, both private and public. After 1998, a significantly large loss of lives has been added to the destruction of buildings. Muslim-Christian violence, thus, is not a post-1998 phenomenon, beginning well before the end of the New Order. It has simply changed its form after 1998, becoming more fatal.

Whether or not Indonesia also had Muslim-Christian violence in the 1970s and 1980s remains unclear. Bertrand (2004) and Hefner (2000) suggest the possibility that its rise in the 1990s is linked to the embrace of Islam and Muslim intellectuals by Suharto in the late 1980s. In a similar fashion, one can say that while anti-Chinese violence has a

¹⁵ Mas'ood, Maksum and Soehadha (2000). This well-known research effort was led by Loekman Soetrisno at the Gajah Mada University, Yogyakarta.

long tradition in Indonesia (Coppel, 1983), its decline after May 1998 may well have something to do with the peculiar position occupied by the Chinese during the New Order.

Anderson (1990) notes that the New Order allowed the Chinese to flourish economically, but it politically marginalized them. We know from the larger comparative literature that such combinations of economic privilege and political marginality make a group extremely vulnerable: their riches are resented, but they have no political, legal or institutional protection when resentments against their riches rise (Chua, 2002). Structural ambivalences of this kind have often been associated with explosive violence in several parts of the world: other than the Chinese under the New Order, the Indians in East Africa in the 1960s and 1970s are a case in point. While it will be foolhardy to predict that anti-Chinese violence has come to an end, the possibility that the end of a political system that gave the Chinese such an ambivalent position in the structure of political power and economic privilege has something to do *with the recent decline* is sufficiently analytically intriguing to require further thought and reflection.¹⁶

Provincial distribution of violence

The provincial distribution of group violence in Indonesia has two notable features. First, in terms of deaths, as is well known, North Maluku, Maluku, DKI Jakarta, West and Central Kalimantan have been the worst provinces, but it is less well known that these are not the provinces with the highest number of incidents (Table 5A). Java has the highest number of incidents, mostly small. Java appears to have much more routine group violence than any other part of Indonesia.

Second, as Table 5B shows, of all provinces, Java also has the largest number of incidents falling in the “Others” category (69.9 %). The sheer size of a residual category in the Javanese case requires that we break up it and look what is inside. The three largest subcategories in terms of death and incidents are: Dukun Santet (killings of person(s) who allegedly practice *santet*/black magic), inter-village or inter-group (but intra-village) brawls, and vigilante killings (called “popular justice” killings in our database).

Indeed, if we wish to identify the routine forms of conflict in Java, another exercise seems to be necessary. We know that in terms of deaths, most ethnocommunal violence in

¹⁶ For the recent legal changes in the position of the Chinese in Indonesia, see Bertrand (2004: 46-7)

Java took place in one week in May 1998 and, therefore, to get normal patterns of violence, we may wish to leave out the May 1998 incidents of Jakarta and Solo altogether. We do so in Table 5C. Java's primary everyday conflicts are not ethnocommunal, but centered around Santet, inter group/village brawls and vigilante justice, accounting for 87 per cent of all deaths. Indeed, if we treat *santet* killings as part of vigilante (or "popular justice") violence – in that the person allegedly practicing black magic is killed by a group for bringing undue harm -- then the share of vigilantism is even higher.

Table 5A
Provincial distribution
Collective violence in Indonesia (1990-2003)

Province	Database II			
	Deaths	%	Incidents	%
North Maluku	2,794	25.0%	72	1.7%
Maluku	2,046	18.3%	332	7.8%
West Kalimantan	1,515	13.6%	78	1.8%
Jakarta	1,322	11.8%	178	4.2%
Central Kalimantan	1,284	11.5%	62	1.5%
Central Sulawesi	669	6.0%	101	2.4%
West Java	256	2.3%	871	20.4%
East Java	254	2.3%	655	15.3%
Central Java	165	1.5%	506	11.9%
South Sulawesi	118	1.1%	223	5.2%
West Nusatenggara	109	1.0%	198	4.6%
Riau	100	0.9%	165	3.9%
East Nusatenggara	89	0.8%	55	1.3%
Banten	37	0.3%	112	2.6%
Total 14 Provinces	10,758	96.4%	3,608	84.5%
Other 14 Provinces ^{*)}	402	3.6%	662	15.5%
Indonesia	11,160	100.0%	4,270	100.0%

Note: ^{*)} Figures for other 14 provinces in Database II (402 deaths and 662 incidents) are estimated using the same percentage of those in Database I.

Table 5B
Collective violence in Java (1990-2003)

Category	Deaths	%	Incidents	%
JAVA	2,034	100%	2,322	100%
Ethno-Communal	1,247	61.3%	54	2.3%
State – Community	54	2.7%	282	12.1%
Economic	24	1.2%	362	15.6%
Others	709	34.9%	1,624	69.9%
Others/Dukun Santet	256	12.6%	200	8.6%
Others/Inter-group or village brawls	176	8.7%	478	20.6%
Others/"Popular justice"	147	7.2%	448	19.3%

Table 5C
Collective violence in Java (1990-2003)
Excluding the May 1998 anti Chinese riots in Jakarta and Solo

Category	Deaths	%	Incidents	%
JAVA	813	100%	2,320	100%
Ethno-Communal	26	3%	52	2%
State - Community	54	7%	282	12%
Economic	24	3%	362	16%
Others	709	87%	1,624	70%
Others/Dukun santet	256	31%	200	9%
Others/Inter-group or village brawls	176	22%	478	21%
Others/"Popular justice"	147	18%	448	19%

Santet may be practiced in many parts of Indonesia, but the violence around it is mainly Javanese in our database (Table 6). Moreover, Java also has a very high proportion of the nation's vigilante violence and inter-group or inter-village brawls. Table 7 shows that Java's provinces (along with West Nusatenggara, and South Sulawesi) are the centers of vigilante violence. The same list holds for inter-village or inter-group brawls, with the further addition to Riau (Table 8).

In the existing accounts of group conflict in Java, the anti-Chinese violence and Muslim-Christian clashes, especially in 1995-7, have dominated the discussion. (Mas'ood et al, 2000). In Java, both of these conflicts, while fatal in a big way, are primarily *episodic* in nature, whereas *Santet*, vigilantism and inter-village and inter-group brawls are the *routine* forms of group violence. Why Java is an epicenter of such forms of violence is an intriguing question. It requires deeper investigation and analysis.

Table 6
"Dukun santet" violence (1990-2003)
Provincial distribution

Province	Deaths	%	Incidents	%
West Java	118	45.7%	79	38.7%
East Java	94	36.4%	68	33.3%
Central Java	35	13.6%	42	20.6%
Banten	9	3.5%	11	5.4%
West Nusatenggara	1	0.4%	3	1.5%
South Sulawesi	1	0.4%	1	0.5%
Riau	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Jakarta	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
East Nusatenggara	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
West Kalimantan	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Central Kalimantan	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Central Sulawesi	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Maluku	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
North Maluku	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Total 14 Provinces	258	100.0%	204	100.0%

Table 7
"Popular justice" violence (1990-2003): Provincial distribution

Province	Deaths	%	Incidents	%
East Java	69	33.3%	153	28.2%
West Nusatenggara	38	18.4%	67	12.3%
West Java	21	10.1%	171	31.5%
Central Java	20	9.7%	58	10.7%
Jakarta	20	9.7%	26	4.8%
Banten	17	8.2%	40	7.4%
South Sulawesi	9	4.3%	11	2.0%
Riau	5	2.4%	4	0.7%
Central Kalimantan	4	1.9%	4	0.7%
Central Sulawesi	2	1.0%	3	0.6%
West Kalimantan	1	0.5%	1	0.2%
Maluku	1	0.5%	1	0.2%
East Nusatenggara	-	0.0%	4	0.7%
North Maluku	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Total 14 Provinces	207	100.0%	543	100.0%

Table 8
Inter-group or village brawls (1990-2003): Provincial distribution

Province	Deaths	%	Incidents	%
West Java	90	22.1%	249	24.2%
Central Java	58	14.3%	193	18.8%
South Sulawesi	46	11.3%	132	12.8%
West Nusatenggara	45	11.1%	63	6.1%
Jakarta	44	10.8%	99	9.6%
Riau	41	10.1%	87	8.5%
East Java	39	9.6%	118	11.5%
Maluku	22	5.4%	18	1.8%
East Nusatenggara	9	2.2%	17	1.7%
Central Sulawesi	4	1.0%	23	2.2%
Banten	3	0.7%	12	1.2%
North Maluku	3	0.7%	1	0.1%
Central Kalimantan	2	0.5%	9	0.9%
West Kalimantan	1	0.2%	7	0.7%
Total 14 Provinces	407	100.0%	1,028	100.0%

District level distribution of violence

Disaggregating the results further, and going down to the kabupaten/kota level, generates the most interesting and policy-relevant finding of this database. Fifteen *Kabupaten*, holding a mere 6.5 per cent of the population, have 85.5 per cent of all deaths (Table 9). Fatal group violence in Indonesia is thus highly locally concentrated. Smaller acts of violence may be widespread, as is true of many parts of the world, but large-scale collective violence is not. This result is consistent with data on group violence in several other parts of the world: Hindu-Muslim conflict in countries such as India (Varshney, 2002), racial violence in the US in the 1960s (Horowitz, 1983), or Protestant-Christian violence in Northern Ireland (Poole, 1990).

Table 9
Distribution by Kabupaten/Kota
Collective Violence in Indonesia (1990-2003)

	Kabupaten/Kota ^{*)}	Deaths		No of Incident		Population (2000)	
		Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
	INDONESIA	11,160	100.0%	4,270	100.0%	206,264,595	100.0%
	Total 14 Provinces	10,758	96.4%	3,608	84.5%	149,309,365	72.4%
1	Maluku Utara	2,410	21.6%	60	1.4%	432,295	0.2%
2	Jakarta (5 districts)	1,322	11.8%	178	4.2%	8,389,443	4.1%
3	Kotawaringin Timur	1,229	11.0%	24	0.6%	526,556	0.3%
4	Kota Ambon	1,097	9.8%	190	4.4%	190,511	0.1%
5	Poso	655	5.9%	32	0.7%	210,780	0.1%
6	Maluku Tengah	632	5.7%	115	2.7%	523,122	0.3%
7	Landak	455	4.1%	4	0.1%	556,684	0.3%
8	Sambas	428	3.8%	16	0.4%	454,449	0.2%
9	Pontianak	425	3.8%	8	0.2%	631,773	0.3%
10	Halmahera Tengah	311	2.8%	6	0.1%	147,509	0.1%
11	Maluku Tenggara	168	1.5%	12	0.3%	186,922	0.1%
12	Buru	149	1.3%	15	0.4%	111,385	0.1%
13	Bengkayang	132	1.2%	19	0.4%	328,379	0.2%
14	Kota Ternate	73	0.7%	6	0.1%	152,649	0.1%
15	Sanggau	59	0.5%	5	0.1%	508,676	0.2%
	Total 15 districts	9,545	85.5%	690	16.2%	13,351,133	6.5%
	Others	1,615	14.5%	3,580	83.8%	192,913,462	93.5%

^{*)} Refer to condition in 2000. Now, the districts of North Maluku, Halmahera Tengah, Maluku Tengah and Kotawaringin Timur have been split due to the formation of new districts.

If we place the districtwise disaggregation above against the backdrop of Figure 2, two features of Indonesia's violence stand out: its remarkable geographical variation and its temporal concentration around the end of the New Order. This juxtaposition suggests an important conclusion. The notion of "critical junctures" – the decline and end of the New Order --is of great significance in terms of timing, but this systemic transformation did not produce collective violence everywhere. The violence had local theaters.

How the New Order upset a traditional local equilibrium of communities, rooted in *adat* forms of governance, in the process of installing uniform, all-Indonesia forms of local institutions; how migration altered local equilibria; whether different ethnic or religious communities are integrated or segregated in different local settings; how at the local level, patterns of local governance have vastly varied; how economic penetration of previously self-sufficient communities by external companies led to dramatically new results, marginalizing some communities and privileging others -- these are some of the local factors that call our attention. In our next paper, we will pay special attention to these local level issues.

Triggers

Let us finally turn to triggers of violence (Table 10A). Youth clashes have precipitated riots that took nearly 40% of all lives in violence since 1990. As a share of incidents, they also constitute the largest category. The result is the same, if we inquire into the greatest trigger for ethnocommunal violence, the most fatal form of group violence in Indonesia (Table 10B).

The youth may be the main participants in riots elsewhere as well, for example in India's Hindu-Muslim violence, but the typical triggers for Hindu-Muslim riots are desecrations of holy places (music before mosques; throwing pigs into mosques; killing of cows; police brutality; rapes or sexual crimes). In Indonesia, such events do not, or rarely, precipitate communal violence. Youth clashes – in villages, music concerts, schools, bars – can often lead to ethnocommunal rioting. Desecration of holy places or of cultural icons does not figure prominently.

Table 10A
Important triggers for collective violence in Indonesia (1990-2003)

Province	Killed		Incidents		Remarks
	Total	%	Total	%	
Youth/group clash or drunken brawls	4,056	38%	681	19%	Common in all provinces
Stoning houses	2,789	26%	68	2%	Refers to North Maluku
Demonstration (political)	1,268	12%	210	6%	Dominated by the incident of the May 98 riot in Jakarta with 1,188 deaths
Traffic accident	938	9%	234	6%	Mainly refers to Maluku
Destruction of clove plants	518	5%	73	2%	Refers to Maluku
The issue of <i>dukun santet</i>	261	2%	199	6%	Java specific
Murder	212	2%	43	1%	
Theft/robbery	172	2%	284	8%	Mainly in East and Central Java, West Nusatenggara
Land grabbing	77	1%	117	3%	Mainly in Riau, East and West Nusatenggara
Total (14 Prov)	10,758	100%	3,608	100%	

Table 10B
Important triggers for ethno-communal violence in Indonesia (1990-2003)

Triggers	Deaths		Incidents		Remarks
	Total	%	Total	%	
Youth/group clash or drunken brawls	3,856	40%	147	25%	Common in all provinces
Stoning houses	2,789	29%	68	11%	Refers to North Maluku
Demonstration (political)	1,225	13%	12	2%	Dominated by the incident of the May 98 riot in Jakarta with 1,188 deaths
Traffic accident	928	10%	208	35%	Refers to Maluku
Destruction of clove plants	518	5%	73	12%	Refers to Maluku
Murder	192	2%	6	1%	
others	155	2%	120	20%	
Total (14 Prov)	9,612	100%	599	100%	

Why youth clashes are so important in Indonesia may have some deeply rooted historical explanations (Anderson, 2001), but it is hard to imagine that a trigger like this one is so deeply rooted as to resist ameliorative interventions entirely. The key question for policy intervention is: Can something be done to absorb Indonesia's youth in more productive channels? Focusing sustained attention on this matter may be a highly significant use of intellectual energies and policy-relevant thinking.

A final point about triggers concerns how provincially specific sometimes triggers in Indonesia can be. While youth clashes in general may be provoke riots all over Indonesia, gambling predominates in Riau but not elsewhere; *santet*, as already indicated, is important in Java, not elsewhere; land grabbing in East Nusatenggara, not so much elsewhere.

V. Conclusion

By way of conclusion, let us recapitulate the three larger conclusions of our database. First, to call the late New Order a peaceful period in Indonesia's recent history is essentially incorrect, and the longing to recover the peace of the New Order can only be called a search for the peace of the graveyard. The New Order was at its heart an intrinsically violent system. The state used violence with impunity to impose stability. Second, contrary to popular conceptions, collective violence in Indonesia is not widespread. Group violence has high local concentrations. The fall of the New Order did lead to high degrees of violence, but many parts of the country were left untouched. The dogs that did not bark simply escaped the attention of the press, the activists and the intelligentsia, distorting the picture of violence considerably. For an adequate understanding of group violence in Indonesia, attention should be paid not simply to the national level factors, such as the changing fortunes of the New Order and the changing political dynamics at the national level, but also to local-level factors. Indeed, peaceful towns may have a lot of new policy ideas to offer. Finally, youth clashes are the single most important trigger, or spark, for group violence in Indonesia. Policies that can utilize the energies of the youth in a more constructive way are likely to reduce the incidence of group violence significantly in Indonesia.

ADDITIONAL TABLES

Below are additional tables (Table 11 – 14) extracted from the database. These tables are not specifically mentioned in the text of this paper, but will be discussed in future publications.

Table 11
Anti Chinese violence in Indonesia (1990-2003): Provincial distribution

Province	Deaths	%	Incidents	%	Incidents with deaths	%
Jakarta	1,188	94.4%	1	3.1%	1	11.1%
Central Java	35	2.8%	12	37.5%	2	22.2%
Riau	23	1.8%	3	9.4%	2	22.2%
West Java	6	0.5%	9	28.1%	2	22.2%
South Sulawesi	5	0.4%	1	3.1%	1	11.1%
West Nusatenggara	2	0.2%	2	6.3%	1	11.1%
East Java	-	0.0%	4	12.5%	-	0.0%
Banten	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
East Nusatenggara	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
West Kalimantan	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Central Kalimantan	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Central Sulawesi	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Maluku	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
North Maluku	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Indonesia (14 Prov)	1,259	100.0%	32	100.0%	9	100.0%

Table 12
Madurese vs Dayak/Malay violence in Indonesia (1990-2003)
Provincial distribution

Province	Deaths	%	Incidents	%	Incidents with deaths	%
West Kalimantan	1,502	54.3%	47	67.1%	35	63.6%
Central Kalimantan	1,260	45.6%	22	31.4%	19	34.5%
East Java	2	0.1%	1	1.4%	1	1.8%
Riau	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Jakarta	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Banten	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
West Java	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Central Java	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
West Nusatenggara	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
East Nusatenggara	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Central Sulawesi	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
South Sulawesi	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Maluku	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
North Maluku	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Indonesia (14 Prov)	2,764	100.0%	70	100.0%	55	100.0%

Table 13
Muslim - Christian violence in Indonesia (1990-2003)
Provincial distribution

Province	Deaths	%	Incidents	%	Incidents with deaths	%
North Maluku	2,756	50.6%	67	15.5%	64	20.3%
Maluku	2,023	37.1%	307	70.9%	232	73.4%
Central Sulawesi	654	12.0%	31	7.2%	16	5.1%
Jakarta	6	0.1%	1	0.2%	1	0.3%
East Java	5	0.1%	6	1.4%	1	0.3%
West Nusatenggara	5	0.1%	4	0.9%	1	0.3%
South Sulawesi	3	0.1%	7	1.6%	1	0.3%
Riau	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Banten	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
West Java	-	0.0%	6	1.4%	-	0.0%
Central Java	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
East Nusatenggara	-	0.0%	4	0.9%	-	0.0%
West Kalimantan	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Central Kalimantan	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Indonesia (14 Prov)	5452	100.0%	433	100.0%	316	100.0%

Table 14
Rural - URBAN distribution: Social Violence in Indonesia (1990-2003)

Province	Total		Deaths				Number of Incidents (Icd)			
	Deaths	Incidents	Rural	%	Urban	%	Rural	%	Urban	%
1 Riau	100	165	14	14.0%	86	86.0%	23	13.9%	142	86.1%
2 Jakarta	1,322	178	-	0.0%	1,322	100.0%	-	0.0%	178	100.0%
3 Banten	37	112	22	59.5%	15	40.5%	39	34.8%	73	65.2%
4 West Java	256	871	157	61.3%	99	38.7%	365	41.9%	506	58.1%
5 Central Java	165	506	104	63.0%	61	37.0%	376	74.3%	130	25.7%
6 East Java	254	655	190	74.8%	64	25.2%	264	40.3%	391	59.7%
7 West Nusatenggara	109	198	85	78.0%	24	22.0%	132	66.7%	66	33.3%
8 East Nusatenggara	89	55	73	82.0%	16	18.0%	29	52.7%	26	47.3%
9 West Kalimantan	1,515	78	1,435	94.7%	80	5.3%	42	53.8%	36	46.2%
10 Central Kalimantan	1,284	62	249	19.4%	1,035	80.6%	40	64.5%	22	35.5%
11 Central Sulawesi	669	101	495	74.0%	174	26.0%	41	40.6%	60	59.4%
12 South Sulawesi	118	223	79	66.9%	39	33.1%	63	28.3%	160	71.7%
13 Maluku	2,046	332	989	48.3%	1,057	51.7%	154	46.4%	178	53.6%
14 North Maluku	2,794	72	2,686	96.1%	108	3.9%	65	90.3%	7	9.7%
Total 14 Provinces	10,758	3,608	6,578	61.1%	4,180	38.9%	1,633	45.3%	1,975	54.7%

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<i>Fajar</i>	(Makassar)
<i>Jawa Pos</i>	(Surabaya)
<i>Kalteng Pos</i>	(Palangkaraya)
<i>Kompas</i>	(Jakarta)
<i>Lombok Post</i>	(Mataram)
<i>Pedoman Rakyat</i>	(Makassar)
<i>Pikiran Rakyat</i>	(Bandung)
<i>Pontianak Post</i>	(Pontianak)
<i>Pos Kupang</i>	(Kupang)
<i>Radar Sulteng</i>	(Palu)
<i>Riau Post</i>	(Pekan Baru)
<i>Sijori post</i>	(Batam)
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Appendix 1. Template for recording each collective violence incident

Record :

Province :

Kab.\Kota :

Sub district :

Coding issues :

Village :

Neighbourhood :

Rural\Urban :

Date :

Killed :

Arrests :

Houses :

Source :

Coding issues 2 :

Duration in days:

Injured :

Shops :

Public buildings:

Source date :

Category :

Coding issues 3 :

Sub category 1 :

Sub category 2 :

Reported Cause :

Local precipitating event :

Militia involvement :

Related to migration issue :

Link with outside event :

Types of arms used :

Coding issues 4 :

Security reaction

Fire shots :

Arrests made :

Prosecution :

Conviction :

Coding issues 4 :

Policing arrangement

Police deployed :

Army deployed :

Other security forces deployed :

Narrative:

Operational definitions used

An incident

An incident is recorded according to where and when it happened. The location of an incident is determined, if possible, right down to the lowest level of administrative region, i.e. village. Such level of detail is not always possible. Thus, for all incidents, the database, at the very least, identifies the district where an incident took place and for most incidents, we identify the sub-district level as well. If two incidents at one place are separated by more than 24 hours, they are recorded as two incidents.

Trigger/local precipitating event

A trigger is a specific event that happened just before an incident of group/collective violence took place: for example, a youth clash, a demonstration, theft, a traffic accident, land grabbing, etc.

Reported causes

This is basically a grouping of all triggers into the following categories: political, economic, public rituals, desecrations, criminal, and others.

Appendix 2. Categories of collective violence

1. Ethno Communal

Sub Category 1

- *Ethno Communal\Ethnic* etc.)
- *Ethno Communal\Religious*
- *Ethno Communal\Sectarian*

Sub Category 2

- (Anti Chinese, Madurese – Dayak, Madurese – Malay,
- (Muslim-Christians, etc.)
- (Intra Muslims, Intra Christians, etc.)

2. Separatist

3. State – Community

4. Economic

Sub category 1

- *Economic\Land base*
- *Economic\Industrial relation*
- *Economic\Natural Resources*
- *Economic\Others*

5. Others

Sub Category 1

- *Others\Dukun Santet*
- *Others\Political parties and factions*
- *Others\Inter group/village brawls*
- *Others\Terrorist Violence*
- *Others\”Popular Justice”*
- *Others\Between State Agencies*
- *Others\Others*

Appendix 3. Research assistants for collective violence database in Indonesia

No	Research assistants	Area coverage
1	Rully Syumanda	Riau
2	Retno Astrini	Jakarta
3	Asep Mulyana	Banten West Java
4	Ismono	Central Java
5	Agustinus Rahardjo	East Java
6	Sulistiyono	West Nusatenggara
7	Yolanda Nggarung	East Nusatenggara
8	Hasan Subhi	West Kalimantan
9	Andreas Saputra	Central Kalimantan
10	Andi Faisal Alwi	Central Sulawesi
11	Ance Taihutu	
12	Andi M. Akhmar	South Sulawesi
13	M. Gazali Zakaria	Maluku
14	Karel Tuhehay	North Maluku