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Gerry van Klinken

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The Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (ACPACS)
The University of Queensland, Brisbane. Qld. 4072. Australia.
Internet: www.uq.edu.au/acpacs
Telephone: +617 3365 1763
Facsimile: +617 3346 8796
E-mail contact: acpacs@uq.edu.au

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Abstract

Decentralising reforms in the period 1999-2001 were associated in some places with communal (religious and ethnic) warfare. The connection can be better understood with the techniques of resource mobilisation than with those looking for grievances. The former takes more interest in history and politics than in timeless hurts. A study of the conflict narratives shows that these episodes emerged as 'politics by other means' at a moment of opportunity following the collapse of the New Order in 1998. They were led by urban middle class elements in provincial towns outside Java that were particularly dependent on state subsidies. The history of these mainly administrative towns is entwined with that of state formation throughout the twentieth century. In the short term, a practical solution to these problems has been found in learning to make better local rules. In the longer term, they lie in building a substantive democracy in Indonesia, even at the risk of messy communitarian expressions of popular sovereignty.

Communal Conflict and Decentralisation in Indonesia

Gerry van Klinken

Introduction

Collective violence in Indonesia in the years 1996-2002 claimed an estimated 19,000 lives. About 9,000 of these died in secessionist violence in East Timor and Aceh, and 10,000 in other kinds of violence (Varshney, Panggabean and Tadjoeidin 2004). Ninety percent of the latter perished in a total of six long-running communal conflicts. They were closely related to the decentralising reforms in Indonesia at this time, as I hope to show. The remainder died in several short, localised episodes of urban rioting. Two types of violence not counted in these statistics also increased in this period. One includes vigilantism and youth brawls and has been called 'social violence'. This remains poorly understood and has been difficult to quantify nationally. It shades into criminal violence. Terrorism has also claimed several hundred lives, most notoriously in the first Bali bomb attack of 12 October 2002. Communal violence therefore claimed more victims than any other kind. Unlike secessionist violence and urban rioting, it has not been seen in Indonesia on this scale before (terrorism also reached new levels). Yet it has received less scholarly attention than other types of collective violence.

This paper is divided into four parts. It begins, first, by discussing two alternative approaches commonly used to analyse episodes of collective violence, one grievance-based, the other mobilisational. It argues that the latter approach, which draws on social movements theory, offers a better grip on what happened in Indonesia. It then shows, second, that the historical and political processes highlighted by this approach help us understand why decentralisation, which was a contentious reform in Indonesia, led to communal violence. In order to get there, however, we must not take too narrowly elitist a view of resource mobilisation, but must consider, third, the peculiar process of modernisation and state formation in Outer Island Indonesia in the longer term. Fourth, the paper closes by considering some broad policy implications of the argument developed above.

Two approaches

Among the many ways to dichotomise studies of violence (see the useful review in Horowitz 2001: 34-42), one is particularly appropriate for illuminating the relationship between collective violence and political

change. *Why Men Rebel* (1970) was Ted Gurr's statement of one side of this dichotomy. In tune with the behaviourism dominating political science at the time, he sought the sources of aggression that produced violent outbursts, and found them in relative deprivation. Gurr had no interest in how violent conflict was organised, but only in the emotions of the many who had a stake in its outcome. Grievances remain an appealing and widely used focus for research on the root causes of violent conflict. Frances Stewart recently offered a strong list of them: "Major root causes include political, economic, and social inequalities; extreme poverty; economic stagnation; poor government services; high unemployment; environmental degradation" (Stewart 2002).

The adjective 'mobilisational' that denotes the other side of the analytical dichotomy is shorthand for resource mobilisation, a structuralist innovation by Charles Tilly (1978), writing not long after Gurr. Its starting point was that the outcome of struggles is determined not so much by the grievances of the participants as by their ability to maximalise organisational resources. Grievances are far more common than revolutions that address them. They tend to fester until an organiser comes along. Consequently it is more profitable to emphasise organisers than grievances in studies of violent conflict. Later two other key concepts were added to the analytical armoury of resource mobilisation. Opportunity structure took an interest in the political context that determines when mobilisation is more likely to produce the desired outcome. Framing was about cultural perceptions in the minds of the participants, and how these can be changed by means of ideological work. The resulting social movements theory (Snow, Soule and Kriesi 2004) has also taken an interest in violent struggle, where it is now more often called

contentious politics (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001; Tilly 2003).

Grievance-based approaches lend themselves particularly well to large-N studies. A statistical approach is better at representing the grievances of the many who may sympathise with one side in a violent conflict, than at exposing the machinations of the few who organised it. Grievances are assumed to arise from measurable long-term inequalities in individual or group welfare. The Political Instability Task Force PITF (Bates et al. 2003) studies vulnerability to internal warfare by testing more than 1,300 political, demographic, economic, social, and environmental variables for all countries of the world during the period 1955–2002 (though it finds that only a handful of these will do the job in most cases). For example, the PITF found the risk of internal warfare rising substantially with high infant mortality, which is an indicator of social misery. Its case study on India showed that political violence increased with high unemployment and low literacy, that disaffected young males ran a bigger risk of involvement in violence, and that a history of violence was a good predictor of more of the same. Moderate to high ethnic diversity was also associated with a higher risk of internal ethnic warfare.

The PITF did not only model grievances. Its work on regime types showed it also had an interest in institutions and path-dependency. Mobilisational theorists would consider these under the headings resources and opportunities. Thus weakly democratic regimes on the cusp between autocracy and democracy were particularly vulnerable to internal warfare. So were regimes that oppressed their ethnic minorities, or countries with a history of internal warfare or whose neighbours were afflicted with violence. The PITF has coded path-dependency by, for example, looking at

regime transition or a history of internal warfare. However, it remains fair to say that large-N studies are poor at capturing movement. They leave causation and process in a black box. The approach essentialises categories that are in reality often fluid, such as ethnic identities whose salience can vary dramatically in the course of a conflict. The large-N study constructs its regression pairs by abstracting quantifiable elements from the work on processes by social scientists who have studied the qualitative dynamics of ethnic war. Its most useful function - and it is extremely useful - is to confirm or reject processes hypothesised elsewhere.¹

The insensitivity to time in statistical grievance-based approaches leaves them unable to see clearly why grievances may lie dormant for a long time only to explode at some precise moment. Arguably this does not matter. If we are able to point out which long-term macro social structures are associated with increased risk of internal warfare then, even without knowing when or precisely how such warfare might break out, action can be taken to ameliorate the grievances. This is effectively the argument adopted by Frances Stewart in her passionate plea for poverty relief programs designed specifically to address the group grievances that can lead to communal warfare (Stewart 2000, 2002; Stewart, Brown and Mancini 2005). She is fully aware that the group identities shaping politicised grievances - regional, ethnic, religious - are socially

constructed categories whose salience fluctuates over time. She knows that nothing happens until political leaders mobilise on the basis of these identities as part of their own competition for power. Yet in the final analysis, if I understand correctly, she regards the grievances as the most fundamental variable and one that is at least partly independent (2000:247).

The argument that relief programs to reduce group inequalities in the world's most vulnerable states are crucial for the long term health of the countries concerned as well as for global society is certainly persuasive. It is also laudable. But my argument here will be that timing and process do matter. If, as history shows, grievances only occasionally give rise to violent upheavals while festering beneath the surface the rest of the time, then a case can be made for focusing research effort on the political processes that actually produce those rare outbursts. If we can understand what happens in an episode of communal conflict we have shone a light into the troubling black box of the now so dominant large-N studies.

Indonesia's unusually abundant statistical data do offer enticing possibilities for correlation studies. But I think the considerations above help explain why large-N studies on violent conflict in Indonesia have so far yielded meagre results. Two studies of which I am aware are focused entirely on indicators for group grievances, with little attempt to study institutions and none to map path dependencies. Mancini (2005) confirmed that welfare indices like a low human development index and especially increased inequality between groups as measured in differential child mortality rates correlate positively with deadly communal violence at the district level. However, religious and

¹ Sometimes this theoretical under-determination leads to curious results. For example, when PITF established a correlation between political instability and lack of openness to international trade, the reader must wonder if there is really a cause and effect relationship between these two factors (and if so in what direction the causal arrow runs), or if instead this is perhaps an ideological construction on the part of the research team worth little more than the famous 'trousers kill because all soldiers wear trousers' correlation.

ethnic diversity show only weak correlations with violence, and vertical income inequalities (class) none at all. Broadly similar conclusions were reached by Barron et al (2004).² Certainly conflict participants were vocal about their identities at the time. The failure of the identities to show up in the correlations raises questions about the dynamic nature ('salience') of group identities that statisticians find uncomfortable. The failure to detect strongly polarised group identities underlying communal conflict is disturbing, since the conflict participants were certainly very vocal about those identities. The silence on the question of timing too, while not surprising in view of the method adopted, is perplexing. It reinforces an impression abroad in the global conflict resolution community that Indonesia is more or less permanently awash with communal violence. The raw data Mancini uses shows clearly that the communal violence peaked in the years 1999-2000 before declining again, but we see no discussion of why this may have been so.

A researcher using a mobilisational approach has things to say about both these puzzles. The reason why ethnic and religious diversity does not correlate strongly with violent conflict could be that these identities are not equally salient in every time and place. Perhaps conflict itself makes them salient. As for the timing, one thinks immediately of the multiple upheavals that occurred in those years. Politics and history are unavoidable. Indonesia had been ruled by an authoritarian regime for thirty years, headed by President Suharto, a retired general who has been compared with

Bismarck. By the mid-1990s an ageing Suharto was losing his powers. Then, by chance, came the Asia-wide currency collapse of late 1997. Political crisis followed not long afterwards, climaxing in Suharto's resignation in May 1998. Then in quick succession Indonesians saw the first democratic elections in June 1999, the secession of East Timor that October, and new decentralisation laws implemented in January 2001. In between were years of street protests, feverish reform proposals, and three new presidents. By July 2001 the accession of President Megawati signalled the end of *reformasi*. She embraced the military; a new ruling coalition had been formed.

Of all these interlinked processes between 1998 and 2001, I believe decentralisation was the most contentious from the point of view of communal violence. It is to this we must now turn, and we will adopt a mobilisational approach to do it.

Decentralisation and communal violence

When we plot the six major episodes of communal violence that claimed the most lives on a map, we realise why the result correlates so poorly with the map of the most often cited grievances. Communal violence occurred in the provinces of West Kalimantan (twice), Central Kalimantan, Central Sulawesi, Maluku (Ambon) and North Maluku. These were not hotbeds of economic grievances. They were not the most immiserated areas in Indonesia. By far the highest infant mortality occurs in the eastern provinces of West and East Nusa Tenggara. Nor were they the worst affected by the economic crisis that followed the Asian financial crisis. That affected Java badly, while many outer island areas actually benefited because their agricultural export products like cocoa brought windfall rupiah

² This dataset was somewhat problematic because it was based on responses to a couple of questions added to a routine questionnaire to village heads about government effectiveness, which led to under-reporting.

profits. Other grievance-based economic explanations on a more local level also fail to satisfy. Thus the suggestion that the West Kalimantan conflict could be linked to displacement of indigenous forest-dwellers by massive oil palm plantations fails because the Sambas area where the violence started lies to the north of the plantation zone. Even the much more sophisticated measures of group inequality centred around the notion of localised *relative* deprivation do not yield strong correlations, as we saw. Were the grievances perhaps cultural, caused by polarisation between ethnicities or religions due to immigration or conversion? They were not, as the statistical studies have shown. Provinces with more in-migrants than West and Central Kalimantan were quite peaceful - for example East Kalimantan. Provinces with as much religious diversity as Maluku or Central Sulawesi were also peaceful - such as North Sumatra.

The answer is not to abandon the notion of grievances, but to politicise them. This means firstly expanding it beyond the rather artificially 'societal' grievances discussed above to incorporate political ones as well, and secondly linking it to the dynamic processes by which violent conflict emerged. Identities and mobilisation are related but separate concepts. Identities themselves are never at war. Mobilisation makes wars. Let us do this by briefly sketching the narratives of each episode of communal conflict, looking only for the most important driving forces.

A key innovation in the mobilisational approach is a focus on organisations. Violent contentions pass through many different processes, and all of them involve a level of organisation (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001). Wars involving hundreds or thousands of fighters such as we observed in Indonesia cannot take place without

planning and organisation. Among these processes are escalation, mobilisation, identity formation, and actor formation.

- Escalation. Even if a conflict starts spontaneously among poorly educated, unemployed young men, it usually escalates into a widespread campaign around a single agenda only in the presence of brokers, who build ever-wider alliances to face the enemy.
- Mobilisation. Most people are too afraid or apathetic to get involved. It usually takes active recruitment by a dedicated organisation to change their minds.
- Identity formation. Normally unmobilised identities can only become salient quickly by means of organised propaganda.
- Actor formation. Collective actors emerge around organisations that engage in such a shocking repertoire of action that it attracts supporters and repels opponents to the movement.

We can observe these ethnic and religious organisations, whether well-established or ad hoc, open or clandestine, in most of the arenas of violent conflict in Indonesia. They often only became visible in the mass media when the conflict had been going for a couple of weeks. The following list briefly identifies the key organisations in each communal conflict arena. Of course there were far more players than this short list suggests, but I believe these were among the most important. Roughly in chronological order:

- West Kalimantan, 1997 episode. Dayaks expel Madurese farmers from Sambas and later other districts in a unilateral action lasting several weeks. Little is known about the initial organisation. In a second

violent phase, and after the violence ended, several Dayak groups acted as mediators, interpreters, and perhaps organisers of the violence. They included government-sponsored customary councils (*dewan adat*) at the district and the provincial levels, the provincial-level NGO Pancur Kasih, and groups attached to the Catholic Church.

- West Kalimantan, 1999 episode. Malays expel more Madurese from various districts. The unilateral action was controlled by the Communication Forum of Malay Youth (FKPM), run by well-connected businessmen.
- Ambon, Maluku, early 1999 - late 2001. Christians versus Muslims. Muslims have the Task Force for Coping with 'Bloody Idul Fitri', based at the Al Fatah mosque in the heart of Ambon town. Headed by retired military officers, it coordinates a wide range of local mosque-based organisations. Christians have the Communications Assistance office based at the Maranatha Church, a few minutes walk from Al Fatah. Fighters belong to the youth movement of the Maluku Protestant Church (AM-GPM). Leading figures are active in the political party PDI-P.
- Central Sulawesi, 2000 episode. Christians versus Muslims in Poso district. Christians have a Crisis Centre based at the synod offices of the Central Sulawesi Christian Church (GKST), in Tentena south of Poso town. Muslims have the Poso Islamic Congregation's Forum for Consultation and Struggle, a coalition of Muslim political and religious organisations led by a

prominent religious organiser and based in Poso town.

- North Maluku, late 1999 - late 2001. In provincial capital Ternate, fighting is between Muslims associated with the sultan of Ternate, who led the local branch of the New Order political party Golkar, and Muslims opposed to him, often close to Muslim political parties such as PPP. Ethnic student organisations play a role too. North Maluku also has other arenas revolving around different organisations in other places.
- Central Kalimantan, early 2001. Dayaks expel almost all Madurese from the entire province in a unilateral action. The key organisation is the Central Kalimantan Institute for Dayak and Regional Social Consultation (LMMDD-KT), led by the former rector of the state university, who had been a candidate for governor.

These organisations were all based in towns - provincial or district capitals - in certain regions of the thinly populated islands beyond Java. All the people who ran them belonged to an urban (lower) middle class. They were religious leaders, parliamentarians, businessmen, bureaucrats, retired soldiers, academics, NGO activists, students. They were local notables, and all were politically involved. Indeed the violent events in which they played an (often simply defensive) role took place amidst major political changes. Without going into detail (which can be read in Klinken (2007)) I have sketched these events in the same format as above. The major contentious issue in each case is indicated at the beginning.

- West Kalimantan, 1997. Native district heads. Although the New Order had not yet collapsed, local

Dayak movements had been active in West and Central Kalimantan since the early 1990s to demand that districts be headed by local-born people, ie Dayaks. Dayak ideologues interpreted the violence as a Dayak protest against their bureaucratic marginalisation. The argument was persuasive, for after the violence ended the central government appointed many more Dayaks to these positions. Often this was achieved by dividing an existing district into two or more parts, thus creating more official positions.

- West Kalimantan, 1999. More native district heads. Malays, who had till then dominated the provincial bureaucracy but were shocked by the Dayak successes above, imitated the Dayak repertoire of ethnic cleansing against a powerless minority. The government responded with 'power-sharing' arrangements between Dayaks and Malays for the control of many districts. All over Indonesia, decentralisation was interpreted in terms of the rights of 'regional sons'.
- Ambon, Maluku, 1999 - 2001. Elections. The first democratic elections since 1955 took place in June 1999. Christians had felt increasingly marginalised in the bureaucracy by advancing Muslim representation. The reformist political party PDIP was in Ambon dominated by Christians. When PDIP won a significant victory in Ambon, Christians felt their fortunes were about to change for the better and this led to aggressive behaviour.
- Central Sulawesi, 2000. District head. As in Ambon, Christians had been increasingly marginalised by a rising Muslim generation in the bureaucracy. The political discourse

of the violence revolved around the religion of the new district head, who was elected in 1999, and that of the district secretary, who was appointed in 2000. District heads and secretaries were about to become more powerful under proposed decentralisation laws.

- North Maluku, 1999 - 2001. Governor. The Sultan of Ternate had lost his formal powers years earlier, but the promise of decentralisation rekindled his ambitions. He inserted himself aggressively into a campaign to have North Maluku excised from Maluku as a new province. His opponents rallied around the Sultan of the neighbouring island of Tidore. When the province became a reality, the campaigning coalition split into rival factions in the competition for governor.
- Central Kalimantan, 2001. Local autonomy. Dayaks within LMMDD-KT had failed twice in earlier campaigns for a 'regional son' provincial governor. In 2001, they also failed to dominate the newly autonomous district of Kotawaringin, which has timber wealth. Despite a vigorous campaign of ethnic cleansing along the West Kalimantan model, the organisation did not achieve signal successes. However, its key figures remained hopeful for a big break in the future.

It is not correct to say the communal violence was 'about' only one thing. Every episode, particularly the one in North Maluku, was fought at different levels by various groups each driven by a complex mix of motives. Even now much remains unclear beneath the barrage of propaganda and the calculated cover-ups practised by interested parties at various times. But I

believe it is correct to conclude that the violent conflicts were able to escalate as they did only because of the role played by leading urban middle class figures from each community. In each area we have evidence that rural folk were more concerned about land than communal identity or bureaucratic appointments. Yet they were unable to impress those concerns on the course of the conflict. The leading figures had political agendas of the kind sketched above. This turned the communal violence into a form of politics by other means. What were these agendas? All revolved around the widely anticipated decentralising reforms of those years. The central issue in each conflict, as far as they were voiced in the media and in policy forums, was communal control over local state offices whose powers had increased or were about to increase.

Political changes shaped the opportunity structure that led key organisers to decide to dig in their heels and risk violence at a certain moment. The history of decentralising reforms explains this opportunity structure to a great extent (see Aspinall and Fealy 2003; Schulte Nordholt and Klinken 2007; Turner et al. 2003). Decentralisation demands and politicised ethnicity are entwined by a long history of state formation. The state has been less rigid and centralised than is often thought, even at the height of the New Order. Indirect rule remains a useful conceptual lens through which to view centre-periphery relations even long after independence. Indonesia has no pre-colonial history of political unity - the archipelago was ruled by a patchwork of numerous small principalities. The Dutch initially brought them together by means of indirect rule and then built a centralised modern bureaucracy overarching them. However, the conservative Dutch always thought politics should be rooted in local customary practice rather than in modern

republicanism. Approaching their denouement under the 1942 Japanese invasion, Dutch colonials who did dare to contemplate a future independent Indonesia mostly had in mind an ethnic federation. They may have been willfully blind to the nationalist appeal, but the Dutch were not entirely wrong either. One of the most serious challenges to nation-building in its first years following the end of the national revolution in 1949 was the strength of local claimants to state power. Even today many of the territorial boundaries of the hundreds of existing districts carry traces of those pre-colonial kingdoms. The authoritarian turn following a military 'creeping coup' in 1965-66 strengthened the central state institutions. Nevertheless, as the New Order began to weaken from about 1990 (the so-called 'openness' period) fresh demands began to surface from various regions for greater autonomy. The main demand was for native governors and district heads. In Central Kalimantan in 1993, for example, an organisation of local notables campaigned openly for a 'regional son' governor to replace the ethnic Javanese governor.

At the best of times, Indonesia has had an 'open' opportunity structure, providing easy access to the political system for protest and establishment groups alike. Yet at the same time the state's capacity to act is limited (Kriesi 2004). In 1998 that opportunity structure opened up even more, almost to a revolutionary extent. When President Suharto was forced to resign amid massive demonstrations and rioting in Jakarta and other cities, the security forces lost all their wonted assertiveness. The government, now led by Suharto favourite and technology czar Habibie, was too weak to resist the widespread calls for reform. Everything seemed open to radical change. Hoping to forestall complete revolutionary breakdown, Habibie announced his eagerness for

vigorous improvements along two broad axes - democratisation and decentralisation. Democracy meant releasing political prisoners, prosecuting corruptors and human rights abusers, removing censorship and restrictions on association, and organising free and fair elections. Feverish electoral preparations were well underway by late 1998, and they were held in June 1999. The populist opposition party PDIP stood to gain most especially in Java from the general disgust with Suharto's party Golkar, but Islamic parties also had towering expectations.

Decentralisation was as popular outside Java as democracy was in Java. The three central elements of the reforms eventually written into law - empowering local parliaments to elect district heads, giving district heads greater budgetary powers, and returning more tax money to resource-rich areas - were widely discussed in the press as the best way to pre-empt separatism. Indeed secessionist movements in the three restive provinces of Aceh, Papua and East Timor seized the opportunity to raise their voices at this time. East Timor, with the strongest claim on international attention, won a UN-supervised referendum and a formal exit from Indonesia in October 1999. Exuberant autonomy movements all over the Outer Islands threatened to secede too if they were not given greater powers. A wide-ranging autonomy law was rushed through in 1999, and implemented in early 2001. Nearly everywhere outside Java people demanded that top bureaucratic positions should be held by 'regional sons' (*putra daerah*).

So how are these decentralisation politics related to violence, and why did it have to happen in these five areas? The second question is easier to answer than the first. The narratives of communal violence point to a single conclusion: control over the

bureaucracy was important enough for the urban middle class in those places to go to war over it. Curious as it seems, since it says nothing about ethnicity or religion, the conclusion is inescapable. But why in these towns and not others? Is there some way of measuring *how* important the bureaucracy is to urban middle classes around Indonesia? There is. If we crudely estimate the urban working population by counting non-agricultural workers, and then calculate how many of these non-agricultural workers are civil servants, the resulting ratio would be the indicator we need. Table 1 (see p.10) is the result (district-level data would be better but I only have provincial data). In all provinces in Java and Bali (except Jakarta and Jogjakarta) the ratio falls below the national average, while in all the Outer Islands it is higher. The provinces where communal violence occurred all lie outside Java and are at the upper end of the spectrum. Although this does not explain everything, because some with even higher ratios like Bengkulu were peaceful, it does suggest we are on to something. A fifth to a third of the urban working populations in the provinces where violence occurred worked directly for the government. That is not counting all those others, mainly building contractors, who are indirectly on the government payroll as well. The dominance of government in many Outer Island towns is obvious to anyone who walks down their main streets, reads local newspapers or listens to coffee shop talk.

But what about the first question: how does an urban dependence on the civil service produce communal violence at a moment of political opportunity? If we can answer this we will have the expanded, politicised notion of grievances we were looking for. The answer is familiar to Africanists who have described how clientelism delivers state services to particular social solidarities in

societies governed by crumbling formal states (Bayart 1993). Indonesianists, too, were long used to deploying notions of clientelism to explain political party patronage and elite factionalism (many examples in the original paper by Eisenstadt 1973 were taken from Indonesia). It is therefore surprising that researchers did not immediately identify this process when communal violence occurred in Outer Island towns after 1998.

Table 1: Proportion of civil servants to non-agricultural workers (%), 1990 [B]

Central Java	7.5
East Java	7.8
West Java	8.7
Bali	10.0
Indonesia	11.5
Lampung	12.0
Jogjakarta	12.4
East Kalimantan	14.1
North Sumatra	14.4
Jakarta	14.5
West Nusa Tenggara	14.8
South Sumatra	14.8
South Kalimantan	15.5
Riau	17.8
South Sulawesi	18.5
West Kalimantan	19.1
West Sumatra	20.3
Central Kalimantan	20.7
Aceh	20.7
Jambi	21.8
North Sulawesi	22.8
East Nusa Tenggara	24.3
Irian Jaya	29.3
Central Sulawesi	31.8
South East Sulawesi	32.2
Maluku	33.1
Bengkulu	45.2
East Timor	134.2

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Indonesia, Jakarta: BPS (annual).

One reason is simply that we lack recent studies on provincial towns (while those on middle class lifestyles in big cities tend to

emphasise modern individuation rather than clientelism, eg. (Leeuwen 2005)). Another is that economists studying Indonesia have long been reluctant to investigate rent-seeking practices, despite widespread journalistic evidence for it, while legal experts have only just begun to write solid studies on corruption. However, the extent of all three interlinked phenomena - clientelism, rent-seeking and corruption - and their connection with communal violence is becoming clear from detailed case studies now appearing. For example Lorraine Aragon's chapter on the Central Sulawesi violence (2007) concludes that "decentralisation has less to do with good governance than revised incentives for seeking political rents from natural resources". She describes how local government executives need political support in order to maintain their authority with limited means, and they have to raise much of their own budget. Weakness compels them to form competitive local ethnic coalitions with business partners based on an ethic of trust.

Modernisation and state formation in the Outer Islands

The figures in Table 1 on state dependency among the provincial urban workforce outside Java require historical contextualisation. Otherwise the distribution of these vulnerable areas will seem arbitrary.³ Why did these particular towns develop an urban economy so dependent on a weak state? The answer lies in the entwined histories of state formation, urbanisation and social formation particularly outside Java, where half of Indonesia's population live.

Indonesia has about 200 towns with populations between 50,000 and half a

³ The next section draws on my (Klinken 2007).

million. Nearly half of them are located outside Java. About 80% of the country's population lives within the sphere of influence of a provincial town. The great majority of these towns first became truly urban in the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. They sprang up in step with the Pax Neerlandica, which spread throughout the archipelago from small bases in the course of the nineteenth century, first through military conquest, then by administration and trade. Rutz (1987: Map II) plots towns on a map according to their date of birth. The map is a veritable history of state formation. Most of the oldest towns in the archipelago (53 of 89 established before 1700 CE) are in Java. The new towns in the period 1700 - 1900 are mostly located in the Outer Islands (89 of 133). They closely followed the pacification campaigns of the nineteenth century, popping up in the hinterland of the major river mouth harbours such as Banjarmasin and Palembang. In the twentieth century the new towns spread rapidly into the interior of the big islands Sumatra, Kalimantan and Sulawesi. Of the 106 new towns, 97 were in the Outer Islands.

Indonesia continued to urbanise (and deagrarianise) throughout the twentieth century, in step with worldwide trends. The Outer Islands were about three decades behind Java in the level of urbanisation they had reached by the late 1990s. But the speed at which deagrarianisation and urbanisation were taking place appears in recent decades to have been higher outside than in Java, although the data is not very reliable due to changing definitions. By 1998 55% of workers in Indonesia said they no longer worked mainly in agriculture - up 30% on the average during the 1970s and '80s. But in the Outer Island province of West Kalimantan, for example, only 38% of workers were non-agricultural in 1998, yet that was a 55% rise on the 1970s and '80s.

Outer Island areas generally saw more rapid deagrarianisation, but starting from a lower base, as shown in the first column of Table 2 (the data for Maluku is probably erroneous).

Table 2: Vulnerability to ethnic conflict

	Increase in non-ag. workers 1970s/80s to 1990s [D]	Ratio civil servants to non-ag. workers (%), 1990 [B]	Vulnerability index [V = DxB]
C. Java	1.30	7.5	10
E. Java	1.40	7.8	11
W. Java	1.36	8.7	12
Bali	1.42	10.0	14
Jakarta	1.01	14.5	15
Lampung	1.25	12.0	15
Indonesia	1.30	11.5	15
Jogja	1.39	12.4	17
S Kalt	1.14	15.5	18
E Kalt	1.31	14.1	18
S. Sum	1.26	14.8	19
N. Sum	1.31	14.4	19
W. Nusa T	1.29	14.8	19
S Sul	1.13	18.5	21
Riau	1.30	17.8	23
N Sul	1.19	22.8	27
Jambi	1.26	21.8	27
W. Sum	1.38	20.3	28
W Kalt	1.55	19.1	30
Aceh	1.45	20.7	30
C Kalt	1.78	20.7	37
E. Nusa T	1.54	24.3	37
Maluku	1.13	33.1	37
C Sul	1.68	31.8	53
SE Sul	1.77	32.2	57
Bengkulu	1.65	45.2	75

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Indonesia, Jakarta: BPS (annual). (East Timor and Irian Jaya sometimes no data)

This suggests an additional source of political instability in Outer Islands towns. Rapid deagrarianisation is an unsettling process. An influx of people looking for accommodation, work and services by making use of clientelistic networks in relatively small towns puts pressure on

already weak state institutions. Indeed, if we multiply the ratio of civil servants to non-agricultural workers (indicating state dependency) with the increase in non-agricultural workers (indicating rate of social change), we obtain an index that turns out to be high for all the provinces where communal violence occurred in the post-1998 transition. This is not the whole story - provinces like Southeast Sulawesi and Bengkulu have an even higher index, for reasons that are not yet clear.⁴ But the figures are suggestive.

The core activity in most of these towns was government administration, as well as trade facilitated by improved transport infrastructure. Indonesia never had significant industry until after the mid-1960s under the New Order, and even then the factories were mainly in Java. Thus the economy of Outer Island towns revolved around the state, trade, and agriculture.

The most prestigious jobs were tied to the state. In colonial times the top administrative positions were held by the Dutch, with Indo-Europeans holding second tier positions. Discipline was tight. But when the Japanese defeated the Dutch in 1942 they elevated large numbers of indigenous Indonesians to the vacated administrative positions. Upon independence this class of people came to dominate provincial politics. The powerful political party PNI, for example, depended entirely on their support. At the same time the state lost the discipline it once had. A disastrous loss of tax revenue, coupled with a form of state socialism in the 1950s, for the

⁴ It could be that these places are indeed more vulnerable, and should be watched carefully next time there is a political crisis. Or it could be there is something else at work. For example, the level of urbanisation in Bengkulu and Southeast Sulawesi is low, so perhaps the towns have not yet reached a certain size threshold to start showing the kind of urban volatility we saw in the five areas in question.

first time produced the corrupt patronage politics that also came to characterise many other newly independent 'soft states', to use Myrdal's term. This was to resurface after 1998, when the centre was again weak.

Throughout the twentieth century, and particularly after the oil boom of the early 1970s, the bureaucracy expanded more rapidly than the population. Fears in Jakarta of rebellion in the regions of the kind that had occurred in 1957 led the New Order to pump large amounts of money into the Outer Island regions for development purposes. This money helped improve millions of lives through better communication, education and health services. At the same time it was a political instrument to buy support for the centre among the key urban middle classes. Much more important than the crude use of military repression, its effectiveness could be seen in consistently higher Golkar votes outside Java than in Java throughout the New Order and until the present time. Too often researchers have taken nationalist rhetoric at face value when the real ties that bind are of a more material nature. The central government seems to have known this all along.

In short, the argument in this section has been that state subsidies intended to modernise society had created a rapidly growing provincial urban society disproportionately dependent on the money from above. These people were skilful at misappropriating the cash as a bargaining chip in a constant game of threatened disloyalty, and well used to redistributing the benefits along the clientelistic circuits that lay behind the formalities.

What is to be done?

Decentralisation and democratisation set in motion competition between communal

coalitions in provincial towns long dominated by shadow state activities. The analysis has focused on historical and political processes of modernisation - especially urbanisation, state formation, developmentalism, and clientelism - rather than on apolitical grievances. Communal conflict is best portrayed as local politics by other means in a situation where state institutions were vulnerable, and not as the anomic breakdown of social relations in a situation of intolerable injustices. In this final section we consider some policy implications. Just as the problems are seen to be political, so the solutions have to be political. They revolve around the dynamics of a political crisis. The graph of fatal casualties rose in step with the regime crisis that culminated in 1998, and fell again once a new ruling coalition was in place. The communal violence of these years shows many similarities with those of previous regimes crises - in 1965-66, and in 1945-49.

At the simplest level, the violence was resolved by learning to make better rules. The troubles coincided with a period of great uncertainty about rules. The decentralisation law of 1999 left a great deal unclear. This gave an opening to conflict entrepreneurs, who sensed the opportunity of seizing the main chance for their own communal segment at the expense of others. Although government responses were generally weak, rules were gradually clarified in the course of 1999-2000, pragmatic decisions were made, and these measures eventually brought peace. In no case did a conflict entrepreneur actually achieve lasting power - all were sidelined, although few were prosecuted. People learn. This is a valuable lesson.

At another level, the structural legacies of the history of development in the Outer Islands summarised in Tables 1 and 2 remain

in place. These particular places do remain vulnerable. No short term panaceas exist. Long term commitments to clean and effective government, including democratic transparency and social justice, must be the indicated route all over the country and not just in Jakarta.

At a more fundamental level still, the problems that emerged in these areas are national problems. The discourse about religion, ethnicity and citizenship frequently showed as many disturbing signs of pugnacious intolerance beyond the arena of immediate conflict as within it. The techniques of communal mobilisation found to be effective in these six episodes are not quickly unlearned. Indeed, the ethnic cleansing applied against Madurese by ethnic Dayaks in West Kalimantan in 1997 were imitated twice - once by Malays in 1999, and again by Dayaks in 2001. Indonesia's anticommunist pogroms of the 1960s had dealt a fatal blow to a democratic culture that might have offered more resistance to communal fanaticism than it did in 1999-2000.

At the most fundamental level, the violent episodes raise a question that has been at the heart of Indonesian politics throughout the twentieth century and until the present day: Can the people be trusted with democracy? Partha Chatterjee in his book *The Politics of the Governed* (2004) confronts the phenomenon, common in most of the postcolonial world, of 'subaltern citizens' who have never known the blessings of good governance but who wish to participate in popular politics because they believe in the sovereignty of the people. When they do participate it is in communitarian ways. Ethnic mobilisation is part of that, to the dismay of the modernising elites committed to the formal rules of parliamentary democracy. The communitarian politics of

the governed play out largely beyond the bounds of 'civil society' and the formal institutions of the state, yet they are surprisingly popular at the local level. One way to respond to this, the one chosen by the New Order, is to wall in the protected zones of bourgeois civil society and suspend the modernisation project for everyone else. This cynical option entails increasing violence. The excluded subalterns will no longer accept that popular sovereignty does not apply to them.

The other response, according to Chatterjee (2004:50), is worth quoting at some length because it applies as well to Indonesia as it does to India. It

'attempts to steer [the project of enlightenment] through the thicket of contestations in what I have called political society. It takes seriously the functions of direction and leadership of a vanguard, but accepts that the legal arm of the state in a country like India cannot reach into a vast range of social practices that continue to be regulated by other beliefs and administered by other authorities. But it also knows that those dark zones are being penetrated by the welfare functions of modern governmental practices, producing those effects on claims and representation that I have called the urge for democratization. This is the zone in which the project of democratic modernity has to operate - slowly, painfully, unsurely.'

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About the Author

Gerry van Klinken (1952) is research fellow with the KITLV/Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, working mainly on the history of Indonesian local politics. In a previous life he was a physicist, teaching at universities in Malaysia and Indonesia for thirteen years. Since earning his PhD in Indonesian history (Griffith University, 1996) he has taught and researched at universities in Australia, Indonesia and the Netherlands. He began editing Inside Indonesia magazine in 1996 and remains on its board. In 2002-04 he was research consultant to the East Timor commission for reception, truth and reconciliation. Other Indonesianist research interests have been human rights, ethnicity, post-authoritarian transition, and historical memory. His most recent book is *Communal Violence and Democratization in Indonesia: Small Town Wars*, London: Routledge, 2007.