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This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

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Date:
Abstract

Since the fall of Communism, ethno-religious violence and ‘ethnic cleansing’ have become mainstay of news media reporting. Self-critical journalists increasingly question their professional role in exacerbating violent disintegration and ask how they can do journalism to assist the peaceful resolution of conflict.

Due to its own difficult journey to nationhood, fear of a disintegrating state has been central to Indonesia’s political development and something of a national pathology. This was particularly apparent during the political crisis in the late 1990s when the historical repression and manipulation of ethnic and religious difference returned to haunt the state at its moment of weakness. The communal bloodletting was most intense in its eastern periphery where the politically marginal, economically neglected province of Maluku exploded in religious hatred and war.

Communal enmity was poorly explained by the national print media centred in Jakarta. Focusing on the underlying political dynamics that triggered and prolonged group violence was mostly avoided. So the story of the Maluku conflagration became either an anodyne description of official views, without immediacy, depth, complexity and human context; or newspapers funnelled ‘primordialist’ war rhetoric from militants to their national audiences.

The disquiet Indonesian journalists felt at being professional chroniclers of their homeland’s violent disintegration or unwitting facilitators of its collapse has led to a re-thinking of professional responsibility and an ethical movement known as ‘peace journalism’. This thesis explores the political origins and production of ‘primordialism’ in media narratives on Maluku to understand the opportunities for and most effective trajectories of peace journalism in Indonesia.
This thesis begins with an overview of recent theoretical developments exploring communication as culture, particularly in the context of communications as a key part of the emerging global cultural economy that is having significant impact on media industries and markets in transitional societies. This discussion leads to consideration of issues around the communication of conflict, its cultural dimensions, the workings of media diplomacy and image politics, the portrayal of order and collapse and the cultural politics of conflict reporting.

Next the thesis seeks to understand news reporting of the events in Maluku by investigating the journalistic culture of post-New Order Indonesia in the context of the long road to relative media freedom in the country. It is instructive to see how the battles for free speech of the anti-colonial Perjuangan Press were integral to the nationalist cause and while the first post-colonial constitution guaranteed freedom of expression, the prerogatives of the state gradually came to dominate what became known as the Pancasila Press – a professional culture tied to state interests and largely subservient to Suharto’s New Order regime. While the constraining principles of developmental journalism fitted with the regime’s preferences, by the 1990s Indonesian journalists were developing a professional identity based in democratic ideology that provided opportunities to pursue greater media freedom.

The thesis goes on to explore the politics of violence, culture and national disintegration in Indonesia within centre-periphery power configurations. Attempts to manage and control peripheral regions from the political centre served to reproduce in Indonesia a cultural politics that sharpened opposing ethno-religious identities.

Between ethno-religious and political violence emerges the complex dynamics of specific stages of escalation – in Maluku and elsewhere – that make them turn violent.
In the Maluku case study, the thesis maps the province’s geometry of violence as one of a number of outbreaks that constituted a period of ‘transitional violence’. The political crisis at its centre empowered ethnic and religious elites in the province to assemble their various foot-soldiers in pursuit of the elites’ interests. As these localised contests intensified during the transition, long-practised techniques of state violence were transformed by the strategic logic of communal war, dictated by ethnic and religious polarisation and the localising of global discourses on ‘holy war’.

Close analysis of stories about Maluku in Jakarta dailies Kompas and Republika reveals popular discourses of distant suffering that fell back on unilinear narratives based on ethno-religious enmity. Religious enmity was presented as natural, inevitable and without end - a kind of primordialism-by-default that lacked explanatory power. The failure of media discourses to address shifting power relations between political elites in Jakarta and Maluku was a spectacular failure of journalism that did nothing to mobilise national opposition to the war nor national opinion in favour of a negotiated peace. On the contrary, it contributed to its significant escalation after May 2000. Despite their different origins and orientations, for long periods both newspapers analysed in this study produced storylines that reinforced the rhetorical logic of warmaking.

Finally, the issue that remains for professional journalists is how they can use communication networks to mobilise cultural resources (identity politics) towards development, democracy and peace. What are the principles of peace journalism that can guide communicators to make the best use of available resources, particularly in small-scale communities remote from the centre and vulnerable to civil strife?
These principles too may prove useful when applied to any transitional context where societies are seeking to break free of coercive political structures with new institutional arrangements still in flux.

Peace journalism offers a framework for dealing with professional dilemmas confronted by all media workers. Government policymakers might also consider these same principles when recommending communication infrastructure for peaceful development. Accordingly, given appropriate infrastructure and communication tools, communities are likely to benefit from establishing their own media outlets to protect themselves from disintegrative tendencies.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION 9

i) Journalism and violence
ii) Methodological issues
iii) Chapter outline
iv) From primordialism to peace journalism

CHAPTER 2
COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE 26

i) Communication-as-culture

ii) Globalism and media development
   • Communications & the global cultural economy
   • media industries and markets in transitional societies

iii) Communicating conflict
   • cultural dimensions of conflict
   • media diplomacy & image politics
   • order and collapse in media discourse
   • cultural politics & conflict reporting

CHAPTER 3
MEDIA FREEDOM & JOURNALISTIC CULTURE IN POST-NEW ORDER INDONESIA 61

i) The legacy of the Pancasila Press in Indonesia
   • From Supomo to Prabowo
   • From Perjuangan Press to Pancasila Press
ii) Democratic ideology among Indonesia journalists
- Developmentalism and democracy
- Development journalism
- Professional identity and democratic ideology

iii) Culture and freedom in the newsroom

CHAPTER 4
VIOLENCE, CULTURE & NATIONAL DISINTEGRATION IN INDONESIA

i) Political violence and the discourse of national disintegration
- Barbarism, sovereign violence and modernity
- War and the construction of ethnic identities

ii) Centre-periphery cultural politics in Indonesia 1998-2000
- Ethno-religious identities in the unitary state
- Religious identity in the regions
- Between ethno-religious and political violence

CHAPTER 5
CULTURE WARS AND REPORTING TABOOS IN INDONESIA: MALUKU

i) The Maluku Wars’ geometry of violence
ii) Faith and politics in the Maluku firestorm
iii) Localising global discourses on ‘holy war’
CHAPTER 6
FRAMING RELIGIOUS CONFLICT: PRIMORDIALISM
WRIT LARGE

i) The unnaming of combatants
ii) Reporting distant violence
iii) Security personnel and their media masks
iv) National news media and paramilitary mobilisation

CHAPTER 7
WAR AND PEACE JOURNALISM

i) War, identity, economy
ii) The underground press surfaces
iii) Pancasila Press goes ‘communal’
iv) Transitional media ethics
v) Reviving development communication
vi) Summary of conclusions

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APPENDICES
Appendix I

Appendix II

BIBLIOGRAPHY
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

If it were religion, up till now we wouldn’t meet with our Muslim friends. But we still try to meet and if conditions are calm, we meet and weep in each others’ arms. So it’s not religion.

- Novi Pinontoan, Suara Maluku newspaper, Ambon (2001)

i) Journalism and violence

At the end of the nineties and spilling into this century, an eastern region of Indonesia known as Maluku, 2400 kilometres from the capital Jakarta, suffered a civil war whose social devastation was unprecedented in that part of the archipelago.

Eight years after the subsidence of full-scale communal war in the Maluku provinces, there is still no agreement on how such a conflict should have been represented. If analysts still disagree, it is perhaps unfair to expect the news media in the chaotic interregnum of the late 1990s to have achieved an easy consensus. Even less certain is how their written words - conceived in the heat of their professional duties – might have influenced the climate of violence that spread like a living contagion across the 23,000 sq km archipelago.
Indeed, the scale of its \textit{inter-religious} hostility exceeded all other such catastrophes anywhere in Indonesia’s vast chain of islands throughout any stage of its long colonial and post-independence history. Having burst into the open in January 1999, by early 2000, 3000-4000 people are estimated to have died.\footnote{This does not include those deaths occasioned after the escalation of fighting caused by the arrival of armed paramilitaries (\textit{Laskar Jihad}) from Java and Sulawesi in June 2000.} Aditjondro (2001: 100) cites a casualty range of 4000-10,000 out of a 1997 population of 1.9 million; these include 500 drowned on the \textit{Cahaya Baru} which sank while carrying refugees in June 2000 from Halmahera to North Sulawesi.\footnote{National daily \textit{Kompas} (30 January 2000: 1) refers to the boat sunk as \textit{Cahaya Bahari} and cites 400 drownings.} In addition, 2000-4000 children (aged 7-12) were involved in raiding enemy villages and protecting their own. These \textit{Pasukan Agas} (sandfly troops) fought deadly battles on both sides (\textit{Tapak Ambon \\& Lerai} in Aditjondro 2001: 101).

These figures exceed the Aceh war (1989-1992), the ethnic pogroms in West Kalimantan (1997) and, excluding East Timor, represent the worst case of collective violence since the 1965-66 killings (van Klinken 2006: 130). By the end of 2000, the casualties reached 5000 with 500,000 (a quarter of the population) either forced to flee Maluku or otherwise internally displaced (CPI 2001). By March 2001, some estimates of the carnage were as high as 9000 deaths (\textit{Kompas} in Davis 2002: 13). Deaths were spread across the three (pre-October 1999)\footnote{Out of a single ‘Maluku’ province, a new province – North Maluku – was created at this time. The remaining Central Maluku and Southeast Maluku regencies retained the provincial name ‘Maluku’ but sub-provincial (\textit{kabupaten} or regencies; \textit{kecamatan} or subdistricts) boundaries were re-drawn (\textit{pemekaran}) in line with the new provincial status of North Maluku.} regencies: North Maluku (40%), Central Maluku (Seram, Ambon \\& Lease islands)(40%) and Southeast Maluku (20%)(Aditjondro 2001: 100). Inter-village slaughter in North Maluku alone saw 1600 killed in just 6 months to January 2000 (Sidel 2006: 182).
The principal hypothesis advanced by this study is that media workers – far from being disinterested purveyors of unproblematic truths – are implicated in the creation and spread of ideas and images that shape the political discourses which exacerbate violent conflict. This argument is prosecuted by systematically addressing a number of research questions, the principal one being as follows: how does a particular canon of journalism – news reporting from two influential national Indonesian dailies, Kompas and Republika - deal with the cultural dimensions of violent conflict during the first few years of the Maluku wars?4

The next chapter asks: is there a dynamic correspondence between the unfolding of media narratives about conflict and how that conflict plays out on the ground? And which paradigms are most useful for understanding this process?

In the context of violent disintegration in the Maluku archipelago at the turn of the century, Chapter Three traces the evolution of Indonesian press culture and asks: how well prepared were Indonesian journalists to report their country’s violent political transition in general and Maluku’s communal wars in particular?

Chapter Four takes an historical view of Indonesia’s complex genealogy of violence and looks for patterns in the way cultural identity has formed the basis for violent political mobilisation.

Chapter Five focuses on communication environments and asks what professional conditions that led media workers to feed them with narratives

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4 The plural is used to indicate the differences in outbreaks of violence and organised warfare occurring in different parts of Maluku and waged within different time frames; there is a general distinction between a war in the south (Ambon Island) and a war in the north (Ternate & Halmahera) but fighting was also prevalent in areas away from these centres.
that were compatible with the intensification and spread of communal violence along religious lines?

Chapter Six applies a discourse analysis to newspaper narratives during the early years of Maluku’s ‘transitional violence’ and details how news reporters employed storytelling conventions that produced ‘primordialist’ readings of this violence. Chapter Seven contains a related research question, namely, what kind of communication environments, professional routines and ethical practices underpin media reporting of violent conflict that does not aid its escalation?

This study’s first task is to identify the political discourses that served to inflame and prolong violent conflict in Maluku. It goes on to argue that when the explanatory power of a media storyline relies primarily on simplifications around cultural identity, the narrative can be said to be ‘primordialist’. This primordialism built into media texts, once circulated, can influence a range of actors engaged in a conflict, including the combatants themselves. The persistence of primordialist media narratives has provoked a kind of professional counter-culture called ‘peace journalism’. The latter is an attempt to impose an ethical discipline on the process of newsmaking that does not aid the escalation of violent conflict.

No working through of these issues in the context of Maluku during the period under study (1999-2000) is possible without an appreciation of how Indonesian media was produced and consumed up to that point. For example, what are the processes by which media messages are exchanged between media professionals and fashioned for public consumption? What do these messages mean to those creating them and to those for whom they are created? The project tackles these questions by focussing on media and journalistic culture in Indonesia and how it developed over the course of the 20th century. Maluku is then situated historically as a peripheral region within
a larger nation-building project as it shifted from colonial outpost to its particular function in the centre-periphery politics of the Indonesian republic. The project then chronicles Maluku’s descent into communal violence from 1999 to 2000 as just one instance of ‘transitional violence’ tied to those politics. The news reportage of Jakarta-based journalists is examined in detail with insights from interviews with local Malukan reporters and editors.

Finally, alternatives to primordialism offered by peace journalism are identified to discover how combustible political relations might be transformed by communicative processes.

ii) Methodological issues

This exploration requires a set of tools that reveals how violent conflict is communicated with special attention to the role of professional media workers. Any useful methodologies must call into question the primary informational role that journalists are assumed to perform and ask whether the nature of news work is better conceived of as solidifying political discourses whose social effects are not neutral. Can some of these discourses serve to promote psychological states that sharpen group solidarities? Are some media practices – in particular, the production of news - bearers of an autonomous politics, hardening group solidarities as a prelude to polarisation and physical strife?

Such questioning entails seeing journalistic work as both strategic and ritualistic: strategic because it productively mediates between the political classes and their mass publics, and ritualistic because its consumption actively re-creates audiences as ‘communities-in-anonymity’ (Anderson 1983: 35), thus linking the affirmation of shared beliefs with the capacity for collective action.
This study frames social order and the violent disintegration that often replaces it as dynamic outcomes of this mediating process. It is logical, therefore, to apply a forensic eye to the ‘artefacts’ of news work to discover the possible trigger points between media representations of group enmity and the actuality of violence and warfare among these same groups. This account – within the discipline of media and cultural studies – shares some characteristics with and borrows from methodologies of history, anthropology, political science, international relations and political economy.5

The two primary methods used to approach the principal research question are firstly, to examine the particular canon of journalism by evaluating the form and content of its daily reportage (see Appendix II). Secondly, this discourse analysis is supplemented by participant interviews with the Malukan news media, fresh from their reporting duties in the conflict’s battle zones. Much closer to the flames of battle, these extracts from the recorded accounts of Malukan news workers illuminate the communication environment with which all journalists were forced to grapple, including those based in Jakarta. Their observations have been incorporated throughout the study.6

The discourse analysis (of newspaper texts) converges with some of the ‘culturalist’ techniques used by anthropologists. To illustrate this convergence, the cultural scientific method (ethnographic fieldwork) confronts some of the same practical dilemmas faced by newspeople in their routine ‘fieldwork’. For example, a research landscape pock-marked with signs of violent disintegration presents to anthropologist and news reporter alike a severe lack of unbiased, first-hand accounts of the prelude to and circumstances surrounding such a landscape: “[W]e are left with partisan rumour and interpretations, which are often secondhand at best” (Bubandt 2001: 230).

5 As described in the next chapter, its bedrock principle is to regard the study of communication and culture as coterminous.
6 See, for example, Chapter Three, Section III.
One anthropologist surveying this landscape has stated that his purpose is not so much to discover what the ‘truth’ about the violence in Maluku is, but rather how a particular truth about ‘the violence in Maluku’ was established (Bubandt 2001: 231). The truth claims that are the subject of this study are those created by news workers – field reporters, their editors working within competitive media organisations based in the national capital. The way that two daily newspapers in Jakarta told the story of ‘tragedi Maluku’ is a product of how their reporters dealt with their professional detachment and geographic distance from the violence. This is achieved through a textual analysis of their published words.

Jakarta reporters were immersed in much the same chaotic virtual culture as local journalists in Ambon or Ternate. All of them had to negotiate the same confusing terrain with its partial, unsubstantiated accounts circulated on the Internet and in reports of rival media; and all were exposed, to varying degrees, to local information networks fired by hearsay, rumour and the political calculations of enemy groups. As one fact finding team described the communication environment:

[B]ombastic news without clear verification became the mainstay of reporting distributed by many local media.....Poor distribution and partition of Muslim and Christian areas further weakened access to diverse information sources for the general public....Journalists used rumour and gossip as their basis for reporting. Thus much reporting reflected the unsubstantiated gossip that was already circulating in the provinces, thereby reinforcing it and giving it added credibility (Institute for the Free Flow of Information 2004: 39).

Moreover, the overlapping mediaspheres connecting wars centred in both the north (Halmahera) and south (Ambon) to the political centre in Jakarta were filled with an over-production of inflammatory messages from so-called ‘tactical media’. The conflict saw their numbers explode and survive on limited
resources, serving purely propaganda purposes for one side or the other: many were shortlived but their degrading impact on the media landscape persisted (Institute for the Free Flow of Information 2004: 10).

So, this study’s method is likewise culturalist in the sense that it seeks to diagnose human meanings, not predict human behaviour. How journalists assign meaning to violent conflict is its primary focus.

iii) Chapter outline

**Chapter Two** is a review of the literature that provides a broad survey of methodological issues that underpin the later textual analysis. It places these issues in historical perspective and charts the rise of media industries within the global cultural economy of the last forty years. In the Indonesian context, the triumph of a non-liberal political culture shaped an emerging cultural politics within which the development of a press culture was confined. This set limits to how effectively media professionals were able to explain the political upheaval at the end of the New Order period.

The chapter argues that the creation of media messages does not operate as an external, autonomous force; rather the media draws on the discursive resources of a ‘language community’ from which the text derives its meaning. Conceptual maps of meaning embedded in the text can solidify into *languages of power*. What makes them powerful turns on the relative importance of form and content. Newsmaking is intrinsically entangled with a central dichotomy that anchors this study – between the ritual *form* of communication and the transmission of cultural *content* across geographic space.

Some analysts (Schlesinger 1991a: 161) insist that language and style (form) cannot so easily be separated from communicative content. It is precisely this
latter premise on which the textual analyses of the Jakarta dailies in Chapter Six depends. In addition to this qualitative research, a quantitative analysis of these same news texts is undertaken in the same chapter.

There is no intention to be hyper-critical of professional behaviour beset with myriad obstacles. **Chapter Three**, in fact, places Indonesian press culture in the context of its own history. As the trials of the *perjuangan* press in the long developmentalist period indicate, professional reversals of fortune can be imposed by brute state force. The prospects for professional culture to reconstitute itself in post-authoritarian conditions of relative social stability is the preoccupation of the final chapter. It may prove to be a helpful case study of universal dilemmas confronting all journalists whose societies are breaking free of coercive political structures but whose new institutional arrangements are still forming.

In one sense, this war was a peripheral one - not in the sense of being unimportant, but in terms of the marginal position Maluku inhabited within the orbit of power emanating from its centre. The circular dynamics of Indonesia’s centre-periphery relations and their recurring expressions of group violence over centuries are surveyed in **Chapter Four**. It uses an historical approach to move readers away from the notion that violence is an eruption of ancient hatreds rooted in the past, triggered by conscious acts of collective memory. Cultural identity and subjective belonging do play a part, the chapter argues, but such eruptions are more an expression of contemporary group interests and their interactions with the state and its political agendas. Collective violence instrumentalises selective memories of the past but is driven by images of the future – and how to realise them.
Chapter Five synthesises the preceding two chapters: the complex genealogy of violence and political change detailed in Chapter Four is consummated in the late New Order. When centralised state power weakens, new eruptions of political violence are released amid contending forces vying to seize the moment. New mobilising ideologies and the re-invention of old ones fill the mediasphere as journalists too seize the opportunity to shed the legacy of historical media taboos. This chapter surveys the making of a communication environment where ‘primordialist media narratives’ were privileged and solidified. It poses a related research question: what intersection of forces conditioned mainstream Indonesian press culture to favour these narrative forms as opposed to alternative textual strategies?

Conditions of war, of course, limit the way journalists are able to do their job. In Maluku, this was partly a function of the way these information gatherers were dropped into conflict situations whose dynamics were circular rather than linear. The attribution of ethno-religious causes to violent conflict – commonplace in media discourse – is much more compatible with treating violence as a unilinear phenomenon.

Chapter Six studies news texts (see Appendix II) to appreciate how professional routines and newswriting conventions privilege these unilinear frames and are thus out-of-sync with how violence actually rises and falls. Are they also unsuited, this chapter asks, to covering deeper cultural conflict that often underpins the surface manifestations that are the subject of ‘factual’ reportage? Using coverage of the Maluku wars as its case study, Chapter Six explores how this process is managed by news reporters from two

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7 Violent phenomena work in stages that overlap one another: a conflict may theoretically pass from the overt-conflict stage to either the pre-conflict or post-conflict stages (ISAI 2004: 8). Conflict dynamics more resemble cycles than lines; a whole nomenclature has arisen to describe different points and processes within these cycles – stable peace, unstable peace, crisis, escalation, de-escalation, breakdown, stalemate, settlement, reconciliation, post-conflict reconstruction and so on (see ISAI 2004: FN 4).

8 Theoretical background to this argument is provided in Chapter Three, Section III.
broadsheets. The news content analysis concludes that despite their different origins and orientations, for long periods both papers produced storylines that reinforced the rhetorical logic of warmaking. For most of the period under study, this was achieved without direct recourse to the combatants themselves. Instead, the papers left such a vacuum of detailed, textured explanation in their reports that ‘primordialist media narratives’ filled the space.\(^9\)

The **final chapter** re-visits and updates the 1980s dilemma of the New World Information & Communications Order: how to formulate a communication strategy that empowers communities and the individuals in them to transcend their structural disadvantages within a world system that reproduces huge disparities of wealth, power and opportunity. The concluding chapter is optimistic about a revival of ‘development communication’ in transitional settings and proposes a way forward, with implications for educational strategies in media training. It outlines where professionally trained journalists fit into the communication networks of transitional societies. This approach, it is hoped, will clarify some of the professional dilemmas faced by all journalists, regardless of their operating environment or distance from centres of power. Wherever they are, media workers must develop “a more sophisticated and complex understanding of the public interest” (Schultz 1999: 263). This means a re-thinking of the nature of professional responsibility.

iv) From primordialism to peace journalism

Communal wars – because the action is ‘in the community’ - mask the disintegrative tendencies of unstable state institutions, the internal struggles within collapsing states and the political manipulations that destabilise centre-

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\(^9\) The recurrence in the media of unilinear assumptions about causation, combined with a reversion to apolitical, ‘cultural’ explanations of violent action will be referred to in this study as ‘primordialist media narratives’. A more detailed discussion of this concept is provided in Chapter Five, Section III.
periphery power configurations. As this study argues, when the story of a war is reduced to ‘ethnicity’ and ‘religion’, the news media tends to validate their own simplistic narratives, and in so doing, depoliticise it.

At the same time that incendiary provocations were circulating above the Maluku battlefield feeding the passions of religious foot-soldiers, Jakarta’s newspapers were actively stripping the conflict bare. Drained of its immediacy, depth, complexity and personalised human impact, reporters at the centre failed to bring war on the periphery closer to their readers.

Falling back on the professional certainties of ‘factual reporting’ and ‘neutrality’, their news reports produced a kind of minimalist writing model which achieved neither. This colourless, journalistic genre is described, in another context, by anthropologist Patricia Spyer.

Much like war watched from the sidelines, I suggest how the black and white language of such writing—bereft of the liquid, incandescent colors, shadows, messy contingencies and contexts describing the experience of those ‘actually in’ the war—facilitates a reading of the conflict in the starkest of terms. In the case of Maluku, it provides the language and thereby also the means for glossing over—under the readily available rubric of ‘religion’—a very complicated, fraught, mobile terrain made up of histories, grievances, friendships, alliances, long-standing rivalries, customs of trust and accountability, power structures, political economy, and, last but not least, the legacies of New Order cultural politics (Spyer 2006: 153).

Although this portrayal of ‘minimalist reporting’ is not a direct comment on the national news media under study, it might well have been. Paradoxically, this form of minimalism leads to a kind of ‘primordialism by default’. In their search for internal coherence, readers are left with impressions of religious enmity that are natural, inevitable and without end. In addition, they are left
intellectually unprepared for escalations, leaving them with few options but to interpret new eruptions as further proof of permanent division.

At these points of escalation – for example, December 1999 in North Maluku and following the entry of Laskar Jihad troops in April-May 2000 – minimalist writing techniques were exposed as inadequate but the forced changes played into the hands of the escalators, giving their war rhetoric unfiltered access to national audiences and polarising readers according to their primordial (religious) identity.

Primordialist ideas are described as those “of collective identity based on shared claims to blood, soil, or language” that “draw their affective force from the sentiments that bind small groups” (Appardurai 1996: 140).

A secondary hypothesis of this thesis is that culture is not a primordial relic to be shed by those wishing to advance to a higher stage of development, as modernists would have it. Rather, cultural resources have the capacity to be mobilised towards development ends – at any stage of development, for better or worse. When the mobilisation of cultural capital is organised as a coercive, top-down project, its homogenising tendencies are most likely to produce victimisation, community breakdown and social chaos.

Within this argument, culture is best understood as a communal resource that can be controlled and mobilised by the community for the benefit of the group. This places development goals in the realm of democratic consensus operating according to different scales of organisation. Individuals affiliate with political communities at different levels (communal, provincial, national) according to the principle of free association and informed self-interest. Group boundaries remain fluid but take shape consensually based on individual access to information networks, again under community control.
As the boundaries of group identities are neither inevitable nor permanent (Ricklefs 2000: 38), communication networks provide the means for keeping these identity formations fluid – a safeguard against polarization. However, communication tools are habitually harnessed as soft power to serve patrimonial relationships of power and dependency - as mechanisms of control, at global, regional and local levels. In an information climate of relative freedom, primary ties of deference and obligation can still take precedence over democratic communication.

As elaborated in Chapter Two, communication contains within it inherent mobilisational capacities that are cultural. Necessarily, all media communication functions by manipulating cultural identities to meet organisational and commercial ends. Some media systems – driven by imperatives tied to organisational scale and commercial need – mass-circulate information products that are ideally suited to building large-scale language communities. Centrally coordinated national print media, for example, are well placed to disseminate national development agendas. This is because of the structure of their distribution systems and their privileged access to national language communities. Such media operations unsurprisingly promote among their audiences a sense of national belonging and the celebration of its supporting cultural beliefs. And within the circular dynamics of order and collapse, they can serve as conduits for nationalist dogma.

These national information factories too have the capacity to mobilise cultural capital towards development ends. Their dominant information product – the news story – is suitable for informing and mobilising literate national audiences against threats to the national community, whether they are military, biological/health or existential moral dangers.

But their services are unlikely to have the same efficacy in communities suffering from or threatened by communal discord. This is the case for several reasons: national media may command little loyalty among provincial
audiences; the language and style of their one-size-fits-all product may have little appeal in local settings. In addition, its bureaucratic systems are likely to be ill-suited to assisting villagers to respond to local threats in a timely manner; and national media targeting urban elites with disposable income have little interest in investing resources in building an information infrastructure uniquely geared to servicing the diverse cultural communities of ‘remote’ provinces. Empirical support for the above rationale is provided by the detailed analysis of national daily news product in Chapter Six.

Re-thinking of journalistic practice can take place within training environments; but that is pointless if it is not also occurring naturally in the field where professional ethics emerge not by suppressing personal and social morality, but by extending it. Focusing on how journalists actually reconcile so-called ‘professional dilemmas’ under duress can yield sophisticated data like that embodied in this explanation by a 23-year-old reporter from Ambon.

I feel I commit a very big sin towards God if I offer something that is not in accord with the data in the field. Although we are Christian, we must establish balance when reporting the Muslim side. Because just one mistake can be fatal. We feel under pressure because the news we send out brings out the emotions in many people. We look for the best solution – how we can offer the news with an element of balance and professionalism, the code of ethics, where the news can be reassuring rather than provocative (Matakena 2001).

A professional orientation towards sources and story subjects needs to be aware that a language community may contain within it a discrete community of victims. The shared values of journalist and reader can lead to strains between professional and personal obligations and sympathies. Faced with a smouldering battlefield and a deadline to meet, journalists need to be trained to confront ethical contradictions when they inevitably rise to the surface.
If, for example, journalists are to retain their *esprit de corps* in relation to organised threats to professional freedom, what will be their ethical orientation to communities threatened or victimised by war? Instead of seeing victims as fodder for their formulaic human-interest stories, the thesis concludes, journalists need to position themselves within communication networks to provide an early warning system that defuses aggressive mobilisation. Internal ethical systems - which have been successful at steeling professional solidarity and providing cover for institutional self-interest - need to make room for a transitional media ethic, where ties of accountability are spelt out and their ethical foundations understood.

Such considerations owe much to a new paradigm - peace journalism. Its application to media cultures in Indonesia is sketched in the final chapter. A fertile area of journalism studies, peace journalism has strong prospects of further refining professional ideology, in particular, those aspects that are based on libertarian notions of press freedom. Libertarian values should, it is suggested, extend to the community subject to media representation: a community not at peace cannot properly enjoy freedom. And nor, it is argued, is it likely to take root.

The new ethical paradigm has the potential to drive the demand for intellectual skills among reporters, primarily around 'conflict analysis'. This will require the acquisition of a range of vocabularies and levels of literacy now familiar only to the few who work both at the frontiers of global journalism and are deeply connected to local politics.

Just as thirty years ago, the New World Information & Communications Order was a response to imbalances in global information trade, peace journalists must now come to terms with aggressive forms of rejection of modernity: the reinvention of values of collective belonging, racial and ethnic identity, national chauvinism and religious and moralistic revival (Hamelink 1997: 30). It is these motivating
ideologies – emerging partly from cultural globalisation – that have made possible all manner of crimes and atrocities. As Seaton argues:

The process of elaborating and allocating characteristics to groups of people defined as the enemy, and disseminating a view of them, is critical in the internal mobilization of opinion that is required to move populations towards war with each other (Seaton 1999: 45).

These beliefs are "social constructs, which need social institutions for their dissemination, institutions such as religious communities, schools, families, and - last but not least - the mass media" (Hamelink 1997: 32). The transformative power of communication at the local level and the central role of journalists as mediators and interpreters of conflict and order are canvassed in the final chapter. This will include ways these arguments can be operationalised in transitional media environments. It is this project’s modest hope that its clear preference for developing community controlled information networks in the Indonesian hinterlands will be considered by those entrusted with communication policy.
CHAPTER TWO  
COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE  

“There is nothing so coherent as a paranoid’s delusion or a swindler’s story.”
- Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures (1973)  

i) Communication-as-culture  

This chapter is a review of the significant academic literature that focuses on key theories in media & cultural studies, anthropology, economic development and international relations. The review is designed to address those debates in a manner that brings light to the principal research question stated in the previous chapter. Beyond this ‘review’, more thoroughgoing critiques are presented across the coming chapters pointing out the relevance of specific arguments to this question and where necessary, their shortcomings. For example, an extended review of Sidel’s important thesis on religious violence (2006) and Schlesinger’s work on media and identity (1991a) is presented in Chapter Five (pp204-7 & 251 respectively).  

This review extends to the next chapter, detailing how over more than a century an emergent press industry in Indonesia interacted with, resisted and was coopted by the dominant political culture. A review of sociological works on news cultures from non-Indonesian studies is included in Section III of that chapter (e.g. Tuchman 1978; Schiller 1981).
Any attempt to explore and make sense of an extended moment in the history of journalism begs an explanation of what brought the author to conceive of the topic in its stated form. No doubt the answer lies in subjective interests and preoccupations. To take Indonesian print news media from 1999 to 2000 is to choose a corridor in time when the unfinished business of Indonesian nation-building progressed in fits and starts - but progressed nonetheless.

Crisis and change brought with it winners and losers and analysts continue to disagree on the trajectory of the nationalist project and the nature of the transition. Is it a democratic one? Is there an end point? Will anyone know when the project is complete? (Budiman et al 1999; Anderson 1999; Luwarso & Hasibuan 2000; Lloyd & Smith 2001; Robison & Hadiz 2004).

American anthropologist Clifford Geertz wrote more than 30 years ago that it may be in the cultural particularities of people – in their oddities – that some of the most instructive revelations of what it is to be generically human are to be found. The search for what is distinctive rather than what is universal confounds the Enlightenment mission to reveal the human essence: we need to look for systematic relationships among diverse phenomena, Geertz argues, not for substantive identities among similar ones (1973: 44).

There are those (Windschuttle 2000 & 2002), on the other hand, who disparage the postmodernist trend, of which Geertz is an influential progenitor, as cultural and moral relativism. However, there are equally forthright academic positions in the opposite direction which see modernism as a factory for its own myth and dogma – “the myth of reason and the dogma of scientism” (Tehranian 1999: 30). James Carey is even more direct –
The scientific conceit is the presumption that living in scientific frames of reference is unequivocally superior to aesthetic, commonsensical, or religious ones. The debilitating effect of this conceit is the failure to understand the meaningful realms of discourse in terms of which people conduct their lives (1989: 66).

This project navigates this tense intellectual field but, for its purposes, does not find it fruitful to pit the universal scientific method against cultural science or the postmodern method. Its purpose is much less ambitious: to select those tools of analysis that stand the best chance of mapping an intellectual model for understanding how conflict is communicated.

The recurrent term ‘violent political transition’ is designed to catch a range of events that erupted in different places within the Indonesian archipelago during the crisis-ridden interregnum 1998-2000 from the fall of President Suharto till the first formally free and democratic elections and their aftermath.

However, the primary intent of the study is to examine how a particular canon of journalism – news reporting from two national Indonesian dailies - handles the cultural dimensions of violent conflict that erupted during this period. The case study of the Maluku wars – which is dealt with in Chapter Five and Six – is chosen not for the intensity of its violence (though it was intense and protracted) but rather for the way media coverage coalesced into discourses which took on symbolic lives of their own. These symbolic forms – confined in this work to the news genre – are of interest because they are a particular kind of artefact or model-for-reality (Geertz 1973: 93). How journalists create such a model through their routine news work and assign meaning to violent conflict is the primary focus of the study.
Theorists - including Geertz – have approached the problem by casting about for different frameworks. To interpret behaviour, he argues for a “theory of fictions” (Carey 1989: 63) or “symbolic action” (Geertz 1973: 10). His method is a semiotic one upon which is built the tradition of interpretative anthropology.

The adoption of a semiotic method (or discourse analysis) for what is essentially a study of journalism calls for some elaboration. Firstly, it accepts journalism as one form of symbolic action which is therefore cultural and necessarily public. Secondly, it endorses Carey’s conclusion that Geertz’s work represents “an increasingly precise and powerful theory of culture and one that progressively becomes a theory of communication” (Carey 1989: 40; also van Dijk 1977, Kress 1986, Fairclough 2001).

The anthropologist’s “theory of symbols and symbolic processes in their relation to social order” (40) focuses on the following theoretical problem that has been approached from different angles and disciplinary perspectives.

Ernest Gellner cites another anthropologist Radcliffe-Brown’s distinction between structure and culture to explore historical roots of nationalism (Gellner 1987: 10-11). The distinction mirrors the disciplinary histories of sociology and mass society on the one hand, and anthropology on the other. It also matches the traditional Marxist methodological distinction between base and superstructure.

Marxism’s materialist preoccupation with historical progress and change led it to focus on the conditions for replacing one social structure with another. However, the essence of this particular structural change is that in the course of it, “the role of culture itself in society changes profoundly”. Change does not bring about the replacement of one culture by another: “it is a matter of structural change, leading to a totally new way of using culture” (Gellner 1987: 13)(my emphasis).

It is the focus on the way culture comes to be used within any given set of (relatively stable) social boundaries that renders the theory of symbols amenable
for studying news as a symbolic, cultural form and newsmaking as a sense-making process.

The archetypal shift in the modern era accompanying nation-building and its cultural outlet in nationalism is from a traditional to a modern social structure. Both types of society are marked by very great complexity and size, but they differ radically in their implications for culture (Gellner 1987: 16-17).

Culture, which had once resembled the air men breathed, and of which they were seldom properly aware, suddenly becomes perceptible and significant. The wrong and alien culture becomes menacing (16).

In this transition, cultural and linguistic diversity are replaced by cultural homogeneity. This homogeneity becomes an overt and explicit tool of social and political cohesion. So, Gellner proclaims: “Let culture be worshipped directly in its own name. That is nationalism” (16).

British communication theorists Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall have criticised the way some (mass) communications studies have diverted attention away from “the forms, conventions, and practices of speech and writing” and isolated communications from literature, art and the contemporary ritual forms of religion, conversation and sport (Carey 1989: 40-42). Indeed, it is these expressive forms whose links to symbolic processes render them ‘public’ and available for use within a public sphere, however bounded (local, national, global). Moreover, these forms and conventions often find their way into the popular press via an aesthetic which breaks down the division between the serious and the frivolous. Sensational media often treats politics as drama, drops any pretence of balance, and communicates directly and deeply with the subjectivity of the readers (Martin-Barbero 1993: 57).

Geertz describes culture as "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their
knowledge about and attitudes towards life". "Sacred symbols", he says about religious belief, "function to synthesize a people's ethos - the tone, character and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood....their most comprehensive ideas of order" (Geertz 1973: 89).

In religious belief and practice a group's ethos is rendered *intellectually reasonable* by being shown to represent a way of life ideally adapted to the actual state of affairs the world view describes, while the world view is rendered *emotionally convincing* by being presented as an image of an actual state of affairs peculiarly well arranged to accommodate such a way of life. This confrontation and mutual confirmation has two fundamental effects. On the one hand, it objectivizes moral and aesthetic preferences by depicting them as the imposed conditions of life implicit in a world with a particular structure, as mere common sense given the unalterable shape of reality. On the other hand, it supports these received beliefs about the world's body by invoking deeply felt moral and aesthetic sentiments as experiential evidence for their truth (Geertz: 89-90). [my emphasis]

The internal coherence of belief is significant less for its truth-claims as its role in social cohesion, the flip-side of which is repulsing threats to social solidarity, or managing and restoring cohesive structures once they have splintered. It is conceivable, in this context, that culture in certain pure, 'symbolic' formulations might constitute a protection against the pervasiveness of some intrusive communicative forms, including global media.

But before recognising the impact of extra-national cultural influences, we need to introduce another binary concept - *material* culture and *normative* culture (Kamrava 1999: 8) – in order to add analytical flesh to the 'structure-culture' bones.
Material culture refers to prevailing technology, including communication technology; normative culture is the sum of customs, habits, beliefs, rituals, norms of socialisation. Such (normative) cultural values can themselves be either traditional or modern, coexist within any domestic polity or individual, change over time, have shallow or deep roots in local custom, die out or be revived. The 'traditional' can take the form of religious fundamentalism which can be either a grassroots revivalism (Indonesia; USA) or sanctioned and supported by the state (Iran).

A community can and often does will itself into existence without the help of a state, but it will strive to bring one into being in order to protect its cultural infrastructure (Gellner 1987: 17). All states draw on traditional cultural values to help define nationhood and have at their core "a reversion to an ideal previous state of existence when one’s identity was not corrupted by influences inimical to the original intent of the project of nationhood" (Kamrava 1999: 19). The assertion of such values can be purely nostalgic and mundane or it can, in an extreme form, lead to violence - an attempt to cleanse the imagined community of hostile and corrupting influences. This falling back on essentialist or primordial notions of identity with often violent consequences has been called 'new tribalism'. The news media’s role in framing and naturalising this primordialism will be examined in Chapter Six in relation to the Maluku conflict.

These dichotomies - material/normative, traditional/modern - are expressed at the level of both the global and the local. So, because so much scientific innovation originates in the West, global culture is often a package of Western know-how and values embedded in a bewildering array of cultural products transmitted via advanced distribution networks (Kamrava 1999: 14).

That said, none of these cultural products – of which news is just one – could have come into being without the emergence of larger homogenizing cultural systems in the 17th century. Historian Ben Anderson argues that 18th century imaginative forms such as the novel and the newspaper were inconceivable
without the progressive erosion of pre-modern concepts of time (simultaneity) and the rise of temporal coincidence measured by clock and calendar (Anderson 1983: 25). Such changes allowed for stories that appear together to be juxtaposed arbitrarily by the reader so the linkages between them could be imagined.

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\text{[T]he obsolescence of the newspaper on the morrow of its printing...creates this extraordinary mass ceremony: the almost precisely simultaneous consumption ('imagining') of the newspaper-as-fiction.....each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion (35).}
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Anderson also documents how nationalist identities were built on the spread of literacy through the print production of select vernacular languages and capitalist modes of accumulation and distribution: "the most important thing about language is its capacity for generating imagined communities" (133). The very idea of 'nation' was "virtually inseparable from political consciousness" (135), regardless of other identities at play (for example, ethnic group). The creation of a self-conscious culture in many postcolonial states was media-assisted (e.g. radio in Latin America) and involved "transforming the political idea of nationhood into the daily experience and feeling of nationhood" (Martin-Barbero 1993: 51).

The study of culture can also be called the study of communication because what is being studied are “the ways in which experience is worked into understanding and then disseminated and celebrated” (Geertz 1964: 44). In this sense, ideologies belong to a culture’s “socially established structures of meaning” (12), functioning primarily not as truth or fabrication but as significant symbols, with the “capacity to be either true or false” (212).
This study is premised on an operational distinction between two metaphors: a 'transmission' view of communication (the extension of messages across geographic space) and a 'ritual' one (celebration of shared beliefs)(Carey 1989: 43). In the transmission view, the extension of messages across space is represented as an instrumental control mechanism. It is modernist and rationalist in its linearity and teleological in its social function.

'Ritual' communication, on the other hand, is predicated on pre-existing identities and beliefs that are affirmed through the practice of giving expression to those beliefs, thereby strengthening them. This expressive form is therefore 'celebratory' and indifferent to outcomes other than those that affirm the identity of a pre-existing group. Communicative practices that conform to the ritual model are cultural – in Carey’s terms, “the maintenance of society in time” (43).

Confusion and anger are universal outcomes of the way media technologies - as tools employed by group interests with economic goals - have ruptured the borders that hold together "communities of interpretation" (Said 1981: 33; Tomlinson 1999; Herman & McChesney 1997). With the expansion of messages delivered by these technologies, group identity and belonging are both re-affirmed and challenged: new identities are formed, co-existing with the old and leading to hybrid identities. In what is both a creative and destructive process, the modernist logic of technological expansion, innovation, replacement and control (the securing of markets) gives rise to a chaotic dynamism played out within a postmodern public sphere.

Sen and Hill (2000: 14) argue that globalisation marks a break with the media-imperialism paradigm (Bagdikian 1990; Hamelink 1994) in two ways: first, global extensions in time and space (interconnectedness) throw up meanings for media consumers that are not the intended consequences of media producers; second, the origins of media products originate from diverse production centres and not just the centres of hegemonic power. The latter reflects the success of some cultural industries which flourish within the national economies of developing
countries, often servicing diasporic audiences based on a common community language (Jacka 1992).

The media forms - technological and aesthetic - that convey these meanings do not always conform to modernist inevitabilities (such as free-markets-lead-to-democracy). Such messages carry ideologies that impact differentially depending on the levels of literacy and vocabularies of recipient audiences. Such postmodern capabilities embedded in the (non-linear) deep structure of the technology provide opportunities to create dialogue between different sectors of the national culture beyond the control functions of expanding markets and out of reach of the unifying symbols of national ideology.

However, the ability to identify meaning and explain why it is significant in the wider context of political and social order is what an interpretive science does best. Developing generalised laws through observed behaviour risks lapsing into seeing ideology and culture as pervasive powers, tenuously connected to action and weighing heavily on subjects denying the “functioning of autonomous minds” and reducing them to “trivial machines” (Carey 1989: 52).

ii) Globalism and media development

- **Communications and the global cultural economy**

In his study of the origins of nationalism, Ben Anderson remarks that modernity drove a wedge between cosmology and history (Anderson 1983: 36) and that this was fundamentally enabled by print capitalism. Where communications infrastructure was most developed, the modernist logic of expanding markets eventually reached relatively stable cultural systems. But this diffusion of technology, Tehranian argues, has been historically uneven such that at the end of the twentieth century the creative and destructive forces of globalisation had
undermined traditional sovereign boundaries and violated national borders by broadcasting foreign news, entertainment, educational, and advertising programs with impunity (Tehranian 1999: 60). Yet this paradigm of cultural/media imperialism disguises the twin forces blurring these boundaries and driving the exchange of meanings between cultures. These forces are often described in terms of "globalising the local" and "localizing the global" (61).

Behind the scenes, journalists cultivate their official sources and feed images and storylines back to the political sphere of public diplomacy (Malek 1997; Strobel 1997). Discord and confusion can lead to escalation of conflict where highly politicized symbols (a public slur; a burning flag) implicate media workers and reporters’ news accounts in the trajectory of violence at the grassroots. This was the case with East Timor in 1999 as divergent nationalist ideologies received their most ritualized mass ceremony in relentless daily news treatment of the slide into chaos. Media fragments are localized, combining with local discourses on victimhood, driving cross-border exchanges, inflaming inter-state rivalry and galvanizing audiences around themes of national injury. As with the Iran hostage crisis 20 years earlier, East Timor, too, became a media event on both sides with its autonomous political and commercial ratings playing a crucial role in the domestic politics of both nations (Tehranian 1999: 142).

Global media networks and empires are the mediums of exchange for "image politics and public diplomacy" added to "the traditional arsenals of power politics and secret diplomacy" (Tehranian 1999: 62). The networks have also spawned communities of NGOs using interactive technologies in the service of global civil society. Tehranian’s definition of communication has a similar feel to Geertz’s take on culture (meanings embodied in symbols): "[Communication]... is the process of exchange of meaning by verbal and nonverbal signs operating through cosmologies, cultures, contents, and conduits" (85). This consciously avoids a

10 Although the UN-supervised ballot was an international story, the cross-border media war was most intensely fought in the news reportage of the Australian and Indonesian media.
media-centred approach and is a critique of early writings of the 'development communication' school (Schramm 1964; Pye 1963) which "emphasized the media to the neglect of interpersonal and organizational networks of communication, including....the traditional and religious networks" (Tehranian 1999: 85).

Geertz asserts that "ideas....must be carried by powerful social groups to have powerful social effects" (1973: 314). As such, 'development communication’ as a school of thought was in decline by the mid 1980s trapped within competing Cold War ideologies.

Long before the entry of global computer networks, Raymond Williams wrote that "society is not only a network of political and economic arrangements" but also a "form of communication, through which experience is described, shared, modified, and preserved" (Williams 1962: 10-11). His observation was about Britain but 40 years on, such talk of 'shared experience' is heard less in purely national terms except from politicians.

While Williams noted that "all the new means of communication have been abused, for political control (as in propaganda), or for commercial profit (as in advertising)" (1962: 10), by the 1970s, such abuse was clearly a global phenomenon, at least for those post-colonial developing nations who saw the transnational 'sharing' experience as manifestly one-sided. An arm of the post-war instruments of peace and development, UNESCO, in its Mass Media Declaration advanced the idea that global media had a responsibility to international citizens to promote peace and human rights (Thomas 2000: 11), just two years before the MacBride Report spelt out the aspirations of a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO)(MacBride 1980).

Such ideals were designed to break or diminish the dependency of developing societies on news sources, program flows from the developed world, develop indigenous media production capabilities and oppose government control of outgoing news and information (Thomas 2000: 11). The NWICO ideal failed due
to opposition from the US who saw its regulatory agenda as contrary to freedom of the press and both the US and Britain withdrew financial support from UNESCO in 1984 (12). In addition, as a global 'communication rights' movement, development communication through the NWICO was retarded through its political association with the Non-Aligned Movement whose 'development news' wire service consisted almost entirely of dispatches from member state news agencies which fell under government control. (Fitzgerald 1990: 49)

Traditional politics and economics, as Williams called it in his book *Communications*, would prevail for another 30 years until the break-up of the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, as UNESCO's vision of a NWICO frosted over in a Cold War setting and its agenda co-opted by authoritarian and corrupt governments, other post-war multilateral bodies (World Bank, IMF) channelled funds generously to any government that opposed communism. But this largesse had a catch. According to one author, the prising open of developing economies and subsequent indebtedness and political subservience was a direct outcome of corrupt and collusive arrangements between foreign policy makers and private transnational agents ('economic hitmen') who facilitated these loans (Perkins 2004: 15).

Throughout the 20th century, all states, no matter what level of material development, political legitimacy or global integration, were part of the grand modernisation project that continues today. Different states took different paths in defending themselves in relation to the pancapitalist world order that sprung from European industrialism. Some of the pre-war fascist and communist states chose hypermodernisation to build economic fortresses against more advanced industrial economies. Others, like Indonesia and the Philippines, drove their development programs in an effort to emulate Western modernity through open markets. Iran under Khomeini chose countermodernisation, switching later to selective modernisation and participation in the world economy just as China did under Deng Xiaoping. This cautious third way was premised on fears of neo-colonialism
based on economic dependence and was buttressed by political dictatorship, as in post-war Korea.

The West, on the other hand, while commanding much of Third World modernisation through control of international finance, showed signs of backlash to modernity's often violent and dehumanising deadhand by selectively demodernising or opting for postmodernisation as a cultural revolt (Tehranian 1999: 89-90)

After the Cold War, revolts against modernity were manifest globally as assaults on the political legitimacy of nation-states. This often took the form of ethnic, religious or tribal groups de-stabilising the state (Balkans). Other groups sought to mobilise the state against minorities and sometimes the state went beyond active encouragement of violence (Hindu nationalists against Muslims in India). Either way, primordial hatreds were revived and often transmitted via the same post-modern, post-national channels of communication as were used by the disaffected in the hyperindustrialised West. Some became adept at globalising their ethno-religious causes to the point of winning military intervention (Albanian Kosovars)(Lynch 2001: 8-11).

In its late 20th century meaning, media globalisation involves the extension of messages in space and time to virtually all points on the globe. Such a discourse encompasses 'horizontal' physical reach and 'vertical' deepening of access to human databases of historical memory. By reshaping discursive practices, media globalisation plays a fundamental and pervasive role in defining power relations across military, diplomatic, educational and scientific fields. Global communications have indeed reshaped world production, trade and financing through their ability to exploit technological advances in telecommunications.

This form of globalism-in-ascendency has facilitated transfers of science, technology, information and ideas from the centres of power to the peripheries
but has also imposed "a new cultural hegemony through the 'soft power' of global news, entertainment, and advertising" (Nye 1990 in Tehranian 1999: 61). The novelty of this imposition is one of speed and intensity but its impact can be interpreted in different ways.

Some regard expanding media markets as a form of 'media imperialism' denying autonomy to recipient cultures and replicating communicative forms dominant in the centres of global culture, synonymous with Western culture. Edward Said, taking a long historical view, considers it a late modernist extension of 19th century European colonialism where, for example, "the Islamic world may be said to be learning about itself by means of images, histories, and information manufactured in the West" (Said 1981: 52).

However, the impacts on recipient cultures have been wildly uneven, not least due, in the post-war period, to divergent policy approaches to economic modernisation - the primary means of transferring the technology required for the exchange of cultural products. Such economic transformations drive the formation of socio-cultural identities - some resisting, some embracing modernism - within the context of nation-building. This creates national and group interest expectations and frustrations, driving social change (Thomas 2000: 14-15).

Open societies have been both an encouragement and consequence of the extension of new media forms into national public spheres. Yet so many national communities outside the centres of Western global power have resisted the modernist logic of ever-expanding media markets and uptake of new technology. They are skeptical of open markets serving national goals and question the universalistic pretensions of liberal democracy that is alleged to accompany them. For many, culture is a national asset to be protected from the flow of cultural products from abroad. This is reflected in the cultural politics of developing nations where states intervene to preserve some idea of cultural or national identity and to maintain power (Kamrava 1999: 104)
During the New Order period in Indonesia (1966-98), as elsewhere, the media was "a site of constant struggle between the homogenising tendencies of national cultural policy and the various parochial, regional, localised interests, histories and identities" (Sen & Hill 2000: 16-17; Liddle 1997). Cultural homogenisation was a nationalist project but not one that sealed itself off from the global economy. Rather it emerged as a by-product of economic modernisation policies which led to a distinctly Indonesian, non-liberal national culture.

Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) is another thoroughgoing study of ideology which created “a system of knowledge about the Orient” (6). Its central arguments about knowledge and power have been postmodernised since September 11. Representations of the East from the classical period of Anglo-French colonialism have in the media age been reinvented to deal with a de-centred, de-nationalised threat of violence from religious insurgents who propagate a virulent form of reverse racism for which ‘Occidentialism’ (Buruma & Margalit 2004) is but one convenient tag. The importance of Said’s scholarship is enlarged when dealing with media representations of Christian-Muslim violence, not in the West but in the peripheries orbiting Indonesia’s modern “exemplary center” (Geertz 1964: 222; Antlov 1995). Indeed, Said’s deconstruction of European depictions of the cultural East offers a foundational tool for this study’s analysis of media representations of violent conflict.

- *media industries and markets in transitional societies*

At this point, we return to the question of the relationship between the freedom of capital and the freedom of news and information in economically modernising, politically transitional nation-states. The question is critical to revealing the commonalities that transform an authoritarian state into a democratic one, and in particular, the role of a free and independent media in such a transition.
It took the Asian economic crisis in 1997 to concentrate the minds of World Bank staff and shift their thinking about the pre-conditions for achieving its core mission. After years of showering credit on those (many authoritarian) regimes that opposed Communism, the bank had a revelation: a free press was indeed a crucial ingredient of successful economic development.\(^{11}\) The shift highlights the lasting entanglement of free and open flows of information on the one hand, and capital/trade flows on the other. Shelton Gunaratne has sought to correlate aspects of export trade performance of different Asian national economies with a range of criteria which rates a country’s press freedom according to legal, political, economic and repressive restrictions on media content (1999: 200). He also considers the oriental 'culturalist' view that Western notions of press freedom are unsuited to Asian societies built, as they are, on their own core cultural values.

Countries which prescribe variations of the 'social responsibility' press model (like Malaysia, Singapore and New Order Indonesia) in counter-distinction to those embodying rights-based freedoms invoke national ideologies which themselves embody 'essentialist' elements of an official culture. According to Gunaratne, these ideologies have become pretexts for press restrictions in a national context rather than giving rise to any consensus on a collective Asian perspective of a free press (Gunaratne 1999: 208). He suggests such models are indistinguishable from authoritarian or communist ones.

Furthermore, he asserts the media subservience (his term) models reflect "various degrees of authoritarianism rather than a value system common to all Asians" (208). The pre-crisis economic success of the four Asian Tigers - Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore - are attributable to "exceptional conditions"

\(^{11}\) Take, for example, this quotation from the World Bank’s then director for East Asia and the Pacific: "The idea that a President of the World Bank and members of his staff would soon be going around saying that a free press is a central and crucial ingredient of successful economic development would have led to lively scenes in the boardroom. Yet today, that is precisely the sort of argument we are able to assert" (Schweitzer 1999).
under which they prospered including dependence on Japanese investment and aid hand-outs during the Cold War. Such reasoning de-emphasises a normative (Asian values) approach to explaining economic and political liberalisation. It is both materialist and historical and supports the proposition that in Asia's wildly uneven economic history, information flow tends to follow trade flow (220).

However, this general principle is called into question by a study of Singapore's media markets. Rodan's study of press policy (1998), which also includes Malaysia and Hong Kong, contradicts the view that expanding markets are a force for political liberalisation on which a democratic press depends. Through a combination of economic sanction, threats of civil legal action and draconian security laws, these countries have been able to create business environments where self-censorship is encouraged and is even a pre-requisite for media business success. It is no coincidence that the foreign press and their cross-border news flows have been targeted, especially coverage of the politics/business nexus in these countries.

Rodan's research is particularly apt not only because it casts doubt on conventional modernisation theory that has been in vogue since World War Two but also because many of the state policies he documents are reminiscent of New Order Indonesia with its subordination of civic freedoms to centralist development goals. Although Indonesia's transitional media policy has been highly liberal to date, there has been an intense political struggle among the Jakarta elite to determine the shape of re-regulation (Kitley 2000).

Gunaratne's study tallying a range of civil rights with economic performance indicators is founded on two analytic models: world system theory (Wallerstein 1979) and dependency theory (Frank 1975). The former is a theory of international relations that seeks to explain long-term cycles of global change (Gunaratne 1999: 217) and the latter was influential during the 1970s when some economists were preoccupied with explaining global disparities of wealth and poverty. Based on a concept of trade relations that positioned the underdeveloped
world (periphery) as economically dependent on the industrialised Western economies (core/centre), dependency theory in its purest form posited that chronic Third World underdevelopment, far from being a result of failure to embrace open markets and free trade, was the direct result of development and wealth generation in the advanced economies of the West.

Using "the core-periphery concepts of the dependency model" and the world system as the unit of analysis (217), Gunaratne concludes that based on trading performance in the global economy "a country's position in the world system affects its development and well-being" (218). Based on 1996-97 figures, the strong correlation between strong trade performance and a less restrictive press was confounded by Singapore and China and to a lesser extent, Malaysia (218). As with other data he presents comparing income with levels of literacy, urbanisation and the penetration of media infrastructure, this quantitative analysis cannot reveal the cause-and-effect dynamics at the micro level, nor how macro factors like Asian regional trade flow create centre-periphery dependency between and within national economies (212).

So we return to the dilemma of the NWICO: how to formulate a communication strategy that empowers communities and the individuals in them to transcend their structural disadvantages within a world system that reproduces huge disparities of wealth, power and opportunity.

A tentative first step might be to attempt to disentangle notions of 'freedom', 'rights' and 'values' from their ideological usages and apply the results to contending models of the press. As mentioned above (Gunaratne 1999: 206), the notion of press freedom that balances rights with 'social responsibility' differs only in degree from communist or authoritarian models and is indistinguishable in terms of the actual power of the state to control information.
The invocation of 'Asian values' has been de-constructed by various writers as a useful ideological construct against universalistic notions and demands for greater civic freedoms. Kelly (1998), Romano (2003), Gunaratne (1999), AJI (1994) have in different ways provided critiques of the culturalist positions put forward by different Asian leaders and scholars while stopping short of any thoroughgoing analysis of the cultural politics that might support them. While debunking the Bangkok Declaration (Kelly 1998: 5) which affirmed "equal emphasis to all categories of human rights" - economic, social, cultural, civil, political - as disingenuous, Kelly asserts that "Western ideas of freedom have been widely accepted in Asia, but have had radically different career paths depending on the local stock of concepts or practices onto which they have been grafted" (6).

So while Asia has no underlying unity or essence deeply shared across its geographic space, there are common linkages cross-cutting Asia along religious, philosophic and political lines. As many of these linkages also cross the Asia-Europe divide, Kelly finds it more useful to speak of 'Euasianism' rather than 'Orientalism' or 'Occidentalism' (7). We can speak of Said's notion of the West's construction of Islam in Orientalism as a definition of the Islamic Orient in terms of its opposition to the West, revealing little about the subject and stigmatising it as "dark, backward, mysterious to be dominated and exploited" (Ahmed 1999: 240). Conversely, we can view Asian values as a subjective self-assertion by those Asians who for whatever reason feel part of an 'Asian community'. Such identity formation can draw on opposition to Western-ness (Occidentalism) by those whose identities are simultaneously harmonised into their respective national ideologies such as Rukunegara in Malaysia (Gunaratne 1999: 206) or Pancasila in Indonesia (Antlov 2000).

But while these assertions of Asian values often disguise underlying political agendas anathema to democratic progress, they can also signal a mobilising appeal against the perceived onslaught of foreign interventions. Thus Asian values might also be construed as a self-protective ideal expressed in nationalistic terms "to safeguard national identity and cultural distinctiveness" (Xu in Gunaratne
against the unknown, little understood Western Other and its cultural exports.

If the Bangkok Declaration's normative pitch is self-serving, is it possible that Western universalism might also be disingenuous - a convenient ideological construction? Every day journalists work at the permissible edges of law and ethics. They invoke professional ideology and implicitly Western values to assert the portability of media freedoms across cultural and national sovereign borders.

Any attempt to legitimise one's actions along universalist lines must be accompanied by scrutiny of the practices that universalist principles purports to uphold. In the media world, journalists work within certain self-imposed, organisational codes, legal constraints and accountability structures which allow aggrieved parties to seek redress against unethical practices. One precedent in the case of Indonesian journalists is the study by Romano (1998 & 2003) of how reporters during the repressive New Order period negotiated work practices by generating their own views of professional duty often in opposition to prevailing state-sanctioned ones.

All press system models are ideal constructs that seek to depict the relationship between the press and state. As nation-states enter new phases of their development, it is reasonable to assume the press-state nexus undergoes some kind of transformation and discovers new uses for its cultural infrastructure. It is not surprising that the Four Theories of the Press (Siebert et al 1956) – which posit that the mass media takes on the coloration of its host’s social and political structures (Kunczik 1988: 88) - is not adequate to explain the evolution of communication systems into the 21st century (Curran & Park 2000: 4-5).

In fact, the Four Theories were thoroughly revised in the US by a number of scholars including Hachten (1981 & 1992) and Altschull (1984). Hachten added a 'developmental' model which most closely describes the Pancasila Press in Indonesia. While in Asia and elsewhere cultural protectionists resist the
temptations of a free trade in ideas, much criticism and revision have modified the press models of American libertarianism to the point where 'social responsibility' paradigms are taken seriously in the West (Rosen 1994) and where freedom of expression is not "an inalienable natural right but an earned moral right, with obligations beyond self-interest" (Nordenstreng 1997: 108).

iii) Communicating conflict

- cultural dimensions of conflict

It is no coincidence media discourses mirror persistent intellectual traditions tied to modernization theory that attempt to explain both resistance to modernization and ethnic violence as irrational behaviour – behaviour which at various stages has been called primitivism, tribalism or primordialism.

Universalist assumptions behind the primordialist argument have been dismantled by Appardurai (1996: 140-49).\(^\text{12}\) In place of the view that the seeds of primordialist passions (including violent ones) have a temporal origin in a group’s distant collective past, he marshals a body of scholarship that stresses “the role of the imagination in politics” where “conceptions of the future play a far larger role than ideas of the past in group politics” (145). Furthermore, ethnic animosities, he argues, arise not ‘from within’ but are mobilized “by or in relation to the practices of the modern nation-state” (146-7); using French poststructuralist theory he summarizes that emotion is culturally constructed: “[B]odily techniques and affective dispositions often represent….the inscription upon bodily habit of disciplines of self-control and practices of group discipline, often tied up with the state and its interests” (148).

\(^\text{12}\) Primordialist ideas are described as those “of collective identity based on shared claims to blood, soil, or language” that “draw their affective force from the sentiments that bind small groups” (Appardurai 1996: 140).
In a similar vein, Hoben & Hefner (1991) have discredited a particular social-scientific conception of primordial identities that anchored modernization theories of the 1950s and 60s and which, they say, relied on “a misleading theoretical dichotomy between tradition and modernity” with primordial affinities firmly located in the realm of the former. An undifferentiated social order, a social structure that hindered individual reflexivity and excessive particularistic loyalties based on language, religion, region, race, ethnicity and custom were all seen as evidence of the incompatibility of traditionalism and rationality (19). Even pioneering anthropologists such as Clifford Geertz, they argue, failed to completely break from the modernization paradigm and as such were unable to recognize “how flexible, adaptive and ‘untraditional’ tradition often is” (23).

Rather than being a kind of social pathology of underdevelopment, primordial ties are universal human symbolic resources not confined to any stage of development. They are driven or intensified by practical self-interest to cope with calamity, war and other risks. They are adjusted, reshaped and invented largely where group interests fall within the orbit of political and economic contestation. Primordial sentiments flourish where traditional institutions, however modified, provide “a framework for communication and trust in countries where neither is assured by common culture or national institutions” (26).

Serious and sophisticated scholarship surveying the dynamic interplay between culture and social order has also come from international studies. Samuel Huntington’s ‘clash of civilisations’ (1996) is a case-in-point: “Culture and cultural identities....are shaping the patterns of cohesion, disintegration, and conflict in the post-Cold War world” (20).

Huntington rejects outright the globalist idea that “the spread of Western consumption patterns and popular culture around the world is creating a universal
civilization” (58) and the liberal, internationalist assumption that commerce promotes peace (67). Universal civilisation, he says, is Western ideology:

[A]t the end of the 20th century the concept of a universal civilization helps justify Western cultural dominance of other societies and the need for those societies to ape Western practices and institutions. Universalism is the ideology of the West for confrontations with non-Western cultures (66).

He cautions against confusing modernisation with Westernisation: "Non-Western societies can modernise and have modernised without abandoning their own cultures and adopting wholesale Western values, institutions and practices.” In addition, there is no convergence of cultures. Modernisation strengthens those cultures and reduces the relative power of the West (78).

Furthermore, democratisation promotes sectarian politics and conflicts with Westernization: “democracy is inherently a parochializing not a cosmopolitanizing process” (94).

Critics have taken aim at Huntington’s choice of civilisational conflict as the grand category that is re-ordering relations between states and will come to define conflict in the post-Cold War era. Hammond (1996) claims ‘civilisation’ as an analytical construct is too closely tied to religion. It is difficult, he says, to identify the extent to which political action is really tied to religious belief (137).

He also believes Huntington fails to make his case for the interaction of civilisational units as opposed to smaller entities like states, firms and cultures (148), situating his theory at too high a level of abstraction to have predictive power. Similarly, the ‘bloody borders’ thesis (Huntington 1996: 263-265) which says that Muslim societies are prone to violence, ties such propensities to a unitary civilisation, thus defining Islam not in terms of its essence but in terms of what is extreme and exceptional (Hammond 1996: 130).
Notwithstanding these critiques, Huntington does make some astute observations on cultural interaction and conflict over time. He observes the historical exchange of cultural values between civilisations and goes a step further than Kelly’s Euasianism concept by concluding that beyond the superficial exchange and mass consumption of imported cultural product, “recipient civilizations selectively borrow items from other civilizations and adapt, transform, and assimilate them so as to strengthen and ensure the survival of the core values or ‘paideuma’ of their culture” (Huntington 1996: 76 – FN 42). He cites China’s absorption of Buddhism, Indonesia’s (or Java’s) absorption and adoption of Hinduism and, conversely, China’s conscious resistance to Christian proselytising.

But none of this can be divorced from the historical experience of the societies in question where critical conjunctures propel societies in directions whose destinations remain indeterminate and contested within the structure-culture dynamic first formulated. Huntington’s bleak prognosis on democracy may turn out to be prescient but it is too soon to know. Similarly, his thesis remains an abstract one based on simplified categories that may turn out to be too simple.

The Cold War is not the direct parent of the ‘clash’ thesis, notes Hammond. Huntington’s theory is not a paradigm shift but an attempt to move from a more complex to a less complex theory (Hammond 1996: 147).

Such debates weigh heavily on communication theory when applied to solving the NWICO conundrum and providing a credible account of why it failed and under what circumstances might its goals be revived, albeit in a new technological era. Communication and development theorists may have to turn away from multilateral actors to the lessons of transitional democracies with a history of civil strife: the relationship of state-building to (consciously imagined) nation formation; the mobilisational power of cultural forces like religion (Bakti 2000b); the uses of culture by the state to meet modernization objectives; the communication structures employed to bring social capital into the process.
A useful reference for this study is Indonesia's predicament as it attempts to transform its civil society by reforming its state. A fuller account of the formation of the Indonesian state and its ruling ideology is canvassed in Chapter Three.

- media diplomacy & image politics

No doubt there are points of exchange where the flow of cultural product is decidedly one-way. Where few or no alternative channels exists, where the recipient culture lacks the technological means and literacy levels to imagine their communities in ways that strengthen their sense of belonging or ability to control social change, it could be said that such processes constitute cultural imperialism by default. However, this blurs the detail of what actually occurs in cultural exchanges where globalisation is often an invisible backdrop.

The processes of 'globalising the local' and 'localising the global' can be seen as discursive events in a continuum of exchange between local and global elements. For example, media images of the Afghan warriors become globalised within a "transnational public sphere" (Kitley & Mules 1998). The same images are localised by different audiences and re-configured and re-appropriated to give them a local interpretation. Of course, how meaning is re-assigned to these images will depend on prevailing communication channels and networks at the point of reception. But we can be fairly confident that this localisation process will somehow conform to the dominant discourse of the cultural politics of the time and place. The continuum creates media events of its own and feeds them back into the transnational sphere to be re-appropriated and fed back into national, regional and local mediaspheres.

Beginning at another point on the continuum, global or even regional news that popularises a conflict can have serious consequences in other parts of the globe. Reactions to the terror attacks in the US are an obvious example of the media as a
conduit for globalised conflict. Much earlier anti-Muslim riots in India were responsible for breathing new life into the nationalist BJP party in 1992 (Ahmed 1999: 244). The ethno-religious riots prompted violence against Hindu minorities in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Beneath the political opportunism that fuelled ethnic cleansing there are "layer upon layer of history and culture": Muslim separatism; the India-Pakistan wars; and depictions in Indian popular cinema of Hindu heroes that reinforce chauvinism by harking back to a mythical Hindu past (243).

The same processes of re-appropriation of discourses circulating within international and national centres of media power are clearly present during Indonesian post-authoritarian political transition. These discourses are fed back into local cultural/regional, religious and racial mediaspheres.

As earlier mentioned, part of the globalisation effect is the tendency for elites at all levels to harness soft power: their tools of persuasion and influence employ the mobilisational power of media images to extend control around diplomatic, geo-strategic, economic-security and political agendas. Here we can begin to lift the veil on the often hidden role of communicators in mobilising human energies for destructive or creative ends.

No more than at times of inter-cultural and inter-state crisis does media diplomacy become entangled with foreign policy. During the long, mostly unreported East Timor occupation and during its media zenith in September 1999, the trans-border mediaspheres in Australia and Indonesia momentarily became virtual battlefields. As events in East Timor rushed headlong towards violent resolution, these two nations crystalised in each others’ national consciousness as 'enemies'.

No analyst has yet thought to measure the profound ambiguity towards modernity for those frozen inside Cold War structures for half a century (Ahmed 1999: 238), or looked at sub-national and cross-national groupings and sought to correlate economic deprivation with the cultural geography of ethno-religious confrontation.
And so anger and confusion grow, not just from finding oneself on the peripheral edges of a dynamic economic powerhouse but also as a backlash to Machiavellian manipulations of identity politics. The latter is central to image politics and therefore to media diplomacy played out within national centre-periphery configurations, as well as on the global political stage.

Confusion and anger (as media effects) can be seen as logical outcomes of competition and discord among media discourses. If discourse is defined as "the symbolic processes of exchange of meaning to negotiate reality" (Tehranian 1999: 110), it's possible to construe it (discourse) as the transmission of both ideology and culture. That is to say, a media discourse can implant ideas/agendas that structurally re-affirm ways of seeing the world according to some external sets of interests (diplomatic, political, strategic). This positions journalists to privilege some forms of negotiated meaning over others. Professional ideology will condition these institutional practices. The rhetorical styles and strategies developed around specific communication formats have the capacity to influence communities. For example, one-way as opposed to two-way radio communication will privilege certain kinds of discourse; just as satellite TV beamed into new markets is not dependent on the print literacy of a target audience (Thomas 2000: 23).

In addition, the weaknesses of global news producers – in particular, their fallback on political caricatures that suit their mass distribution medium – can be exploited by media-savvy operatives whose campaigns rely on the sympathy of selected publics. So actors, including military strategists and politicians, are often adept at low-intensity information warfare and calculate how correspondents are likely to respond to their actions which can include event fabrications. How such events are depicted by media connected to key constituencies can turn the course of a conflict. For example, media diplomacy played a major part in managing the NATO invasion of Kosovo where accounts of refugee outflows were critical to maintaining public support for the military campaign (Lynch 2001: 17-19).
Another manifestation of anti-liberalism - militant Islam - has at times (for example, Maluku) played a central role in the unfolding of a crisis and has every prospect of doing so in the future. Since the US terror attacks, 'Islam versus the West' presents endless dramatic potential to mobilise audiences around grand ethnohistorical narratives. Following a parallel logic, the universalising control mechanisms of global communication have the greatest potential to foment violence against minorities and muddy the waters in relation to political transition. But does this require journalists to eschew religious narratives in their reports? And if they do, is this self-censorship?

Within national press circles in Jakarta, the secular newspapers (e.g. Kompas) tended to play down the religious dimensions of inter-group conflict in Maluku while those with an overtly Islamic identity (e.g. Republika) tended, at times, to talk them up (Qodari & Eriyanto 2000: 42). These tendencies will be elaborated on in Chapter Six.

- order and collapse in media discourse

When tensions between actors at the national centre and regional peripheries burst into open conflict, as they did at the end of the New Order, it was the newly de-regulated press that spread the message of local discontent and rising ethno-religious violence across the republic. Open conflict signalled both a new era of sub-national warfare between competing identities and political failure at elite centres of civilian and military power. Their failure was in managing the impact of the flow of media resulting from the post-New Order expansion of unregulated media markets on the one hand, and the weakening of institutions of political and cultural control on the other. Into this control vacuum, local solidarities, histories and identities found a voice as a response to their own confusion and anger. It is part of the postmodern condition.
Just as ‘peace journalism’ argues that the conventional stock of skills is failing field reporters, local and foreign, as they sweep through the postmodern conflict zones of disintegrating states, the ability of Western journalists to fathom the geo-political changes in the Muslim world has also been called into question.

Hamid Mowlana (2000) asserts that "the means of message distribution in Muslim countries is vastly different from that in the West" and that power maintenance relies on control of "the traditional channels of communication rather than over the mass media alone" (110). Further he contends that pro-Western formal democracies in the Muslim world (Turkey, Egypt) disguise a crisis of political legitimacy that is vulnerable to the forces of political Islam. In addition, the appearance of Western consumerism in these societies, he says, displays only surface homogenisation and hides "the fundamental values, attitudes and morals of the Islamic world" which remain intact (110).

The problem with this framework may be its Middle Eastern centredness. Muslims are themselves a globalised people. They are more numerous in Africa than the Middle East. There are more Muslims in Hindu India than Islamic Pakistan. Equally, this argument - that wants to see the revival of the NWICO with Islamic participation - overlooks the formation of hybrid identities which pluralises religious communities along regional, ethnic and sectarian lines. At the very least, the assumption that non-Islamic values will be subsumed within converging Islamic ones is yet unproven and currently being tested in the field in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In addition, it glosses over the cultural and theological variations of Islam most prominent in Indonesian history. The syncretic, traditionalist and modernist versions of Islam coexist and differ not only in cultural practices but scriptural interpretation. Politically and culturally, syncretic and traditionalist Muslims resist the more literal modernist school and its Middle Eastern cultural biases (Liddle 1997: 276; Bakti 2000b).
Kamrava’s materialist conception of culture contradicts Mowlana’s culturalist thesis by asserting that it is changes in the material culture that bring on the necessary ideological shifts that drive social change:

How deeply cultures converge or differ from one part of the globe to another is as much a product of scientific advancement and know-how as it is a result of state policies and agendas. There is no cultural universalism, no impending clash (Kamrava 1999: 10).

In doing so, he rejects as "culturally reductionist" (11) Huntington’s thesis that civilisational faultlines are re-ordering international relations. Culture may be one guiding force but there are many others - economics, balance-of-power considerations, inter-elite competition within the state, diplomatic alliances - that are derived from non-civilisational dynamics (Kamrava 1999: 11 & 13).

Huntington’s argument about civilisational conflict emerges as a peculiar inversion of the ‘cultural imperialism’ thesis advanced by Western and Third World theorists. The original paradigm (MacBride 1980), is a post-World War Two idea that persisted through the Cold War period to the point where now it describes Western hegemony in sovereign nations - often post-1945 independent states or post-Cold War newly democratising states (the so-called ‘third wave’) that emerged since the fall of the Soviet Union and the Berlin Wall. Huntington believes that in the emerging new world order since the fall of communism, it is the societies of the West that are in danger of being overrun or subordinated "to other economically and demographically more dynamic civilizations" (1996: 303). It is a call to strengthen and renew Western cultural values and civilisation.

The ‘cultural politics’ framework (Kamrava) and the opposing culturalist theses of Mowlana and Huntington distinguish themselves in their approach to the exchange of cultural values: the authenticity of such exchanges to defining identity; the primacy of some forms of identity over others and the ability of multiple identities to co-exist peacefully or otherwise. This is no doubt fertile ground for cultural
studies but for the purposes of this study, certain historical formations in
Indonesia have created the political conditions for different forms of identity
polarisation that have resulted in violent conflict. As Michael Ignatieff has written,
in a different context, about the dynamics of identity -

It is as if the nationalist myth – Serbs and Croats are racially distinct peoples with nothing in common – is struggling with this man's [Serb] lived experience that, really, not much distinguishes him from his Croat neighbors. The two planes of consciousness – the political and the personal – coexist but do not confront each other. Somewhere in him, there is a sliver of doubt that might lead to questioning and even refusal, but there are no newspapers, no radio stations, no alternative language in which he can frame his doubts and discover that others have doubts just like him. So the contradictions float around in his head.....Firing off a few rounds may be a way of resolving the tension. To hell with it, he may curse. They don't pay me to think. Let's keep it simple. Violence does that, at least: it keeps things simple (1998: 37).

Contemporary discourses on inter-group conflict refer to 'new racism' or 'new tribalism' to define some post-national social formations. Old racism, associated with Social Darwinism, posited biological difference that could lead to inferior races dying out. New racism, like the old, defines groups in terms of their physical attributes. However, races do not occupy a hierarchy. Instead, it suggests, "humans naturally bond together with others who are of their own 'kind' and that relations between such groups are naturally characterized by suspicion and hostility" (Ricklefs 2000: 33-34). Ricklefs regards Huntington's 'clash' as cultural stereotyping and involving abstracting Islam as a single civilisation.

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13 This echoes Huntington: "Relations between groups from different civilizations will be almost never close, usually cool and often hostile" (1996).
And yet this primordialism is exactly what Ignatieff found in the barnyards of eastern Croatia in the early 1990s. As a journalist travelling the war zones of Bosnia, Palestine, Afghanistan and Northern Ireland, he was forced to ask the question of how "neighbors once ignorant of the very idea that they belonged to opposing civilizations begin to think - and hate - in these terms" (1998: 36).

He traces this aggressive transformation of the self back to Freud's idea of The Narcissism of Minor Difference:

> A nationalist....takes 'minor differences' - indifferent in themselves - and transforms them into major differences. For this purpose, traditions are invented, a glorious past is gilded and refurbished for public consumption, and a people who might not have thought of themselves as a people at all suddenly begin to dream of themselves as a nation (51).

A fruitful line of inquiry for media researchers is to examine the extent to which members of communication elites are agents of power in turning minor differences into major ones, helping to re-work a person's identity where communities of fear are created out of communities of interest (Ignatieff 1998: 39). From East Timor to Ambon, have journalists reinforced the dynamics of polarisation or created narratives that connect the collapse of state power all the way to the rise of communal and nationalist paranoia in the villages of the periphery? (see Chapter Five)

- cultural politics & conflict reporting

What determines where we go culturally, who we identify with more closely and with whom we have less in common, our symbols, our tastes and preferences, all depend on the politics of culture, on how those in power indirectly influence or directly package and sell domestic and imported cultural products (Kamrava 1999: 11) [emphasis added]
All cultural expression is mediated and managed by the state via traditional and modern channels of communication. The spectre of global culture becoming a universalising and homogenising force leading to cultural convergence creates policy dilemmas for the state, mobilises oppositional movements (including ones based in the West) and engenders tensions in the mediasphere around questions of cultural identity. As Kamrava points out, this management of cultural identity is fundamentally a political one:

[T]he vitality of an indigenous culture, the popular currency of its more authentic versus less traditional aspects, and its overall synthesis with or rejection of global culture depend on what the state does and on its social, cultural and political agendas (9).

In Indonesia, cultural/regional, religious and racial divisions have been at the centre of political conflict since independence. Failure to accommodate such conflicts were the trigger for the suspension of parliamentary democracy in the late 1950s (Feith 1962; Liddle 1997: 273). Attempts to build democratic institutions in the current period are likewise beset with new configurations of these same faultlines.

One of the most sensitive issues within the Indonesian polity since independence has been the Negara Islam question - the extent to which, if at all, Indonesia ought become an Islamic state. Notably, Kamrava names the region of the world with "the highest concentration of states that manipulate cultural values" as the Islamic Middle East. (1999: 108). This supports the view that the values most useful for consolidating political power are religious ones. He further asserts that "states' interactions with and manipulations of cultural values increase as their level of democracy decreases" (104). For most of Indonesia's New Order, Suharto assiduously suppressed Islam as a political force which partly accounts for its renewed virulence.
Similarly, in promoting an idealised organic state at one with its people, the New Order state actively suppressed open discussion of issues relating to ethnic (suku), religious (agama), racial (ras) or class (antar-golongan) tensions (Sen & Hill 2000: 12). This so-called SARA doctrine was a primary tool of official and unofficial censorship that left journalists ill-equipped to understand and report the complexities of cultural faultlines that burst violently into the open after the fall of Suharto. Were they the political manipulations of Suharto loyalists? Or military agents intent on destabilising or destroying the incumbent government? Or were they long suppressed local grievances released at the moment centralized authority weakened? Or did the opening of political structures provide a window for communal interests to settle scores and engineer their own ascendancy before the consolidation of new centre-periphery power arrangements? Or was Maluku a lethal playground for elite interests in Jakarta acted out by local powerblocs aligned to those interests?

In the ensuing analyses of newspaper reporting, the framing decisions of reporters and editors will be tested in the context of the transitional state's management of ethno-religious violence. It is important here not to ignore the media's role in creating the vocabularies around political violence. It was the ability of news organisations in the production centres in Jakarta to feed narratives back to the strife-torn regions about political responses of the elites that influenced the way victims and combatants saw their place in the conflict – and opportunities for resolving it.

Likewise, the professional constraints on journalists created friction between a reporter's professional and religious identities. Such was the case in Maluku where two newspapers with the same owner effectively split along religious lines (Prasodjo in Luwarso & Hasibuan 2000: 43; Spyer 2002: FN 16). Apart from cutting off access to vital sources, such media polarisation in extreme conditions of war, heightens expectations of violence, hardens group identities to the exclusion of the other and implicates media workers in the spiral of revenge.
“The early modern thesis that freedom of communication is a vehicle for certitude, absolute knowledge and the spread of a rational democratic consensus is obsolete. New justifications of the intimate relationship between 'liberty of the press' and democracy are needed.”


i) The legacy of the Pancasila Press in Indonesia

This chapter is concerned with the process of Indonesian nation-building: how an official Javanese culture fanned out across a vast and diverse archipelago and consolidated a distinctly Indonesian, non-liberal national culture, and how a press industry developed within, challenged and was incorporated into this overarching national culture.

The emergence of a press industry was integral to the way the nation took shape in the decades after independence in 1945. Such an historical analysis
is the foundation for explaining what kind of professional media culture emerged in the late 1990s in time to record the violent upheavals that followed the collapse of the New Order. An analysis of Indonesian print news media coverage of this period of violent transition is undertaken in Chapter Six.

- From Supomo to Prabowo\(^\text{14}\)

The intellectual architecture for ‘state sovereignty’ in Indonesia and the elevation of culture to a supreme position within it was formed from a bitter struggle over a number of decades. The Indonesian state took until the late 1960s to early 1970s to consolidate its legitimacy, achieved only after violent upheaval and the subjugation by the state of centres of resistance to its authority.

The key dates during the Sukarnoist ‘Old Order’ were the declaration of independence in 1945, constitutional changes in 1949-50, the constitutional debates of 1957, the declaration of martial law in 1957, and the reversion to the 1945 Constitution in 1959, marking the suspension of parliamentary democracy and the beginning of ‘Guided Democracy’.

After three years of occupation under the Japanese Imperial Army, Indonesia’s first constitution was drawn up in the final months before the Japanese surrender “in a confused and emergency situation” (Anderson 1999: 2); it was drafted by a committee composed of those nationalists who collaborated with and helped run the Japanese administration, including Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta (soon to be the first President and Vice-President of the new republic)(Bourchier 1997: 159). The committee was headed by a scholar of customary law, Raden Supomo, who received his legal education at Leiden University in the Netherlands.

\(^\text{14}\) This term is taken from the chapter title of Lindsey (2006).
The shape of the final draft was a victory for Supomo and his advocacy of the legal philosophy of integralism. *Negara integralistik* (the integralistic state) went to the heart of the true and proper relationship between state and society, rulers and ruled. It posited a spiritual unity between rulers and ruled, “society conceived of as an organic whole” (Bourchier 1997: 161; Lindsey 2001: 286).

The integralist state was less a reflection of society than its embodiment, but not just any society. It “mirrored the institutions and ethos of a (highly idealized) traditional village community in which there was no sense of separation between rulers and ruled” (Bourchier 1997: 162). The Indonesian nation therefore embodied the essential values of an indigenous village: *gotong royong*, variously translated as mutual assistance, community mindedness or “the collective bearing of burdens” (Geertz 1964: 225) and *kekeluargaan* (familyness).

The proper role of the state was not simply to regulate society but to encompass it, involving itself in all aspects of social life for the sake of the well-being of the whole – the whole family as it were (Bourchier 1999: 186).

Supomo opposed any inclusion in the constitution of rights that allowed individuals or groups to act against the state or apply checks on executive authority, on the grounds it would violate the principle of oneness between people and rulers, society and state. In one sense, his vision was a sign of the times when Japanese and German ruling philosophies were prominent in the propaganda of the occupying forces (Bourchier 1997: 161).

However, Supomo did not have it all his own way and the final draft included a clause safeguarding freedom of association and expression (Article 28),
supported by Hatta precisely because it was feared that the logic of integralism would produce an all-powerful state based on coercion, not law (163).

The intellectual inspirations of Supomo and other integralists can be traced to European ‘organic’ legal philosophy and political theory, most notably “German romantic, anti-liberal, anti-individualistic scholarship of the early nineteenth century” (Romano 2003: 1). In addition, elites, including the military, had pre-war exposure to Japanese nationalism with its corporatist, mass organizations for every sphere of life, and direct experience of and participation in the Japanese imperial administration 1942-45.

The constitution was a blueprint but the builders of the Indonesian nation confronted anything but a spiritual union between rulers and ruled. This was largely because post-independence politics was an intense contest for control of the state by a diverse array of political forces: abangan (nominal Muslim) nationalists, santri (strict) Muslims, communists, socialists, separatists in the outer islands and an army that saw itself as the guardian of the revolution.

In fact, the very basis of the Indonesian state remained problematic. The early years of the republic were blood-stained with Indonesian pitted against Indonesian: the killing of pro-Dutch ‘traitors’; the massacre of communists in 1947; the guerrilla war with Darul Islam in West Java; the crushing of PRRI/Pemesta regional rebellions in Sumatra in the late 1950s; security operations in Irian Jaya and the mass slaughter of communists following the failed Gestapu coup attempt in 196515 (Lindsey 2006: 19).

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15 This was also known as the 30 September 1965 Movement.
The rigidity of a constitution framed under wartime conditions was loosened at the end of the war of independence against the Dutch who had returned to reclaim their colony after the Japanese surrender. After the defeat of the Dutch, new rights were added in 1949-50, including the right to strike and demonstrate. The number of political parties exploded but a general election in 1955 did not stabilise the political landscape. Instead cleavages widened across the archipelago along ethnic and religious lines and within the military. The media reflected these political divisions with all newspapers owing their existence to political parties and organizations (Romano 2003: 7).

The period of intense political activity played out in parliamentary debates went into decline from 1956 and by 1959, President Sukarno had called an end to the liberal-democratic experiment and established ‘Guided Democracy’ under his political manifesto known as Manipol. The constituent assembly (parliament) was dissolved, most parties were banned, newspapers were required to pledge allegiance to the Manipol doctrine or be closed and power shifted decisively to the president and his officials (Romano 2003: 8). Most significantly, the republic reverted to the integralist 1945 constitution.

The winding back of political freedoms coincided with the reorganisation of society along corporatist lines, starting with parties, labour and the press. Journalists were told to oppose the counter-revolutionary evils of imperialism, liberalism and separatism (8).

Major splits in the bureaucracy began to widen as the anti-communist bloc known as the BPS - backed by the army - became increasingly alarmed at the communist PKI’s influence with Sukarno. Following the Gestapu coup attempt of September 1965, the massacre of leftists and the wiping out of the PKI, integralistic principles filled the ideological void, finetuned by Suharto under the name kekeluargaan and later negara integralistik (12).
The doctrine of *dwi fungsi*, the institutionalisation of military intervention in civil society (Antlov 1995: 38), derived from European organic philosophy, was central to the New Order’s ideology of bureaucratic and military guardianship and was used to rationalise state and military interference in all major socio-political institutions (Romano 2003: 15). It too relied on the glorification of communitarian ‘Indonesian’ culture harking back to the Hindu-Javanese tradition of the *satria* (noble warrior) (Antlov 1995: 38). This suited the bureaucratic class – descendents of Javanese *priyayi* (aristocracy) - and army elements threatened by democratic competition, many of whom were among the ranks of leading nationalists (Romano 2003: 7).

The process of building a centralised bureaucratic leviathan in a far-flung, largely rural archipelago was pre-conditioned not only on the geographic subjugation of competing centres of power but also on a thoroughgoing depoliticisation of society. As we shall see, this development model received financial, intellectual and diplomatic support from key foreign allies. But there was a more powerful indigenous metaphor of social order that could be harnessed towards the same ends. And such an appeal had the capacity to touch every member of Indonesia’s national community.

Integralist ideology in the late Sukarnoist and New Order periods drew not only on the romanticism of European thinkers but also on enduring motifs of indigenised Indonesian culture. The Indic concept of the ‘exemplary centre’ appealed to nation-builders because it allowed them to harmonise political change as uniquely suited to the customs and beliefs of age-old traditions.

Based on the ‘mandala’ as a symbol of universal order in Hindu and Buddhist mythology, the exemplary centre represented the highest form of traditional governance in the Javanese kingdoms of the fourth to fifteen centuries. The
centre was in fact the king’s palace, the capital: “the capital was not merely the nucleus, the engine, or the pivot of the state; it was the state” (Geertz 1964: 222).

The king’s court, as the epicentre of power, was “a microcosm of the supernatural order” (222), where “[s]piritual excellence and political eminence were fused” (223). This spiritual potency radiated in concentric circles and dissipated with distance from the centre.

Such configurations of power in Java at once persisted and were diluted with the arrival of Islam, which spread through trade, not through conquest, and were forced to adapt to Dutch colonial administrative systems in the nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. Bureaucratic positions were filled by the priyayi aristocracy across the East Indies, reconstituting Javanese centre-periphery political order “in a parody of traditional style to suit Dutch colonial needs” (Kingsbury 1997: 18).

This is what republican leaders inherited. Just as the nation was yet to be built, at the end of the Sukarno period, so too did the revolution remain unfinished. At this moment, Clifford Geertz observed:

The conceptual transition from the classic image of a polity as a concentrated center of pomp and power, alternately providing a cynosure for popular awe and lashing out militarily at competing centers, to one of a polity as a systematically organized national community has....not been completed. Indeed, it has been arrested and to some extent reversed (Geertz 1964: 224).
Those key tasks of re-casting the new nation in resonant symbols and mobilising disparate peasant populations into a shared identity was begun by Sukarno in 1945 in a speech where he introduced the concept of *Pancasila*. Drawing again on Indic form, it means ‘the Five Principles’ and served in the constitution as a definition of the ideological foundation of the nation:

- belief in the one Supreme God
- a just and civilised humanity
- the unity of Indonesia
- democracy led by the wisdom of deliberation of leaders
- social justice for all

This attempt to accommodate the diversity and internal contradictions of the former territories of the Dutch East Indies was a marriage of the modern with the traditional, the centre with the periphery, the Muslim with the Christian into a pluralistic, secular constitutionalism. But beginning with Sukarno’s subversion of constitutional democracy, when *Pancasila* went from “a language of consensus to a vocabulary of abuse” (Geertz 1964: 226) and the constitution reverted to its authoritarian origins, the five principles became part of “flamboyant symbol-mongering” (226). A president preoccupied with his own mystique and charisma and a watchdog army putting down plots and rebellions, Geertz suggests, was a modern attempt to revive the Javanese exemplary centre (226).

The destruction of the PKI and the emergence of General Suharto with army backing saw a shift in orientation away from the Non-Aligned Movement towards the United States, Europe and Japan, a centralised economy where the central government intervened decisively in local village affairs under the slogans of *pembangunan* (development) and *stabilitas politik* (political stability) (Antlov 1995: 35)

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16 There are various translations of the Five Principles; this one is adapted from the one in Antlov (1995: 37).
Such a system involved the creation of an entrepreneurial class at the local level with political and economic backing from Jakarta. Intensive farm mechanisation produced Indonesia’s version of the green revolution to the point where the nation was self-sufficient in rice by 1985. Apart from being agents of development, village elites were coopted as instruments of political stability and control (36; Bakti 2000d: 42-43).

The de-politicisation of the population was implemented nationwide and involved actively discouraging political activity in the countryside. The doctrine of *massa lepas* (floating mass) was a New Order cure for class consciousness which emphasised the spirit of consensus, *Pancasila* and *gotong royong* - collective pulling together for the sake of development (Antlov 1995: 36-37).

While anti-communist Indonesia was being showered with credit by the World Bank, foreign political scientists were warning that multi-party competition was unstable and predicting “totalitarian horrors as the outcome of widespread political participation” (MacIntyre 1971: 270). Meanwhile, many elements of integralistic philosophy matched the influential modernisation and political order paradigms of the time, as promoted by Daniel Bell, Seymour Martin Lipset and Samuel. P. Huntington (Romano 2003: 14).

The uses to which *Pancasila* was put changed over time according to the prevailing balance-of-power within the nascent state. While it provided a flexible common platform for competing political programs during the parliamentary era, it became under Suharto a “fully-fledged ideological justification of the ruling group” (Antlov 2000: 206; Geertz 1964: 225).

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17 See also Hadiz & Dhakidae (2005): “Rather than being the harbinger of liberal democratic values, economic technocracy, in the Indonesian case, became an integral part of the formation of increasingly powerful predatory alliances, cemented by the power of Soeharto himself and propped up by foreign assistance, oil booms and foreign investment” (14).
Despite *Pancasila* values supposedly rising organically from the Indonesian spirit, authorities felt the need to instil the principles through formal indoctrination. *Pancasila* promotion courses were compulsory from kindergarten to university. This cultural engineering reinforced the state’s vigilance against alternative (foreign) worldviews (Antlov 2000: 208).

But such ‘symbol-mongering’ did more-or-less serve a unifying, cohesive purpose across the *kampung* (villages) of Java and beyond. These symbols struck a chord among communities in ways which would have sounded dissonant in other cultural settings. In this way, Antlov argues the ruling beliefs that bind ruler and ruled cannot be dismissed as false consciousness. He describes a rehearsal in a village for Independence Day in 1996 as follows:

> The village headman held a speech about the achievements of the New Order, Golkar and President Suharto. Half way through the speech – under the blazing sun – his voice broke and he started to cry. The audience, a grade ten high school class, also cried when they were blessed with holy water by the headman. The sentiments thus evoked – of unity with the nation and the New Order – are hard to forget. Although they were obviously manipulated symbols, the show of feelings was genuine and long-lasting (2000: 209).

While the Indonesian media were subject to this dominant framework, they did not necessarily internalise these symbols in ways identical to the headman or school students. By virtue of their own status, social mobility and intellectual predispositions, they were exposed to other ideologies. But media workers – being from and of the society – live and breathe the same cultural patterns of meaning that overlay personal and professional communications.

The exercise of authority in Indonesia conforms to the moral states of equilibrium and social harmony. But moral codes differ depending on one’s
position within a structure of authority. This has led to the notion of perintah halus, or ‘gentle commands’ (Antlov 1995: 98). The powerful must develop self-reliance but commoners must be servile and amenable to guidance from their social superiors.

A father is the supreme figure of authority (98). Superior figures (father, teacher, headman) emanate power and command respect, loyalty, obedience and gratitude. The exercise of authority is not personal and does not require direct commands. Perintah halus are –

powerful orders that are veiled in soft words, asserted by seniority and accomplished by the force of respect. Because power should be hidden, a gentle command is considered much more effective than an express order (99).

As with the political convulsions in 1998, harsh displays of power (shooting of students) were interpreted in the Javanese context as the absence of or declining power (Anderson 1972: 19; Parry 2005: 83-170).

Leaders rise or fall independently of the ideological system. Politics, in this view, is based neither on ideology nor on pre-existing loyalties to individual leaders. It is founded on a religious vision of a rule that exists outside of time and space, and that eventually will lead to a perfect society (Antlov 1995: 101).

The hidden nature of power and its exercise through perintah halus was originally elaborated in a seminal study by Ben Anderson ‘The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture’ (1972). Closer to spiritual potency, it differs from Western ideas of (relational) power. Power is concrete, derived from a single homogeneous source, radiating from a centre and becoming weaker with distance from the centre (4-8). Power is neither legitimate nor illegitimate, and has no inherent moral implications (8).
Power is acquired through the concentration of energy, at a personal level through ascetic practices reflected in self-discipline (9). Power can be inherited from one’s forebears or acquired at the political level through mass public ceremony – rallies, speeches – which while being modern in form are imbued with traditional notions of conjuring and concentrating power in a leader (11).

It is impermanent and unstable (31). At a personal level, the loss of power is caused by *pamrih*, the indulgence of personal desires and prejudices (39). Loss of power is synonymous with its diffusion, marked by decay and disorder and the rise of competing centres of power. It is a metaphor for the structure of the state (exemplary centre), centre-periphery relationships and territorial sovereignty (22).

The final years of Sukarno’s Guided Democracy had been marked by centralised executive power and a contempt for the rule of law. While rejecting neither of these trends, Suharto’s New Order did move to formalise a hierarchy of laws from the constitution down. However, placing the flexible principles of *Pancasila* at the apex of national law allowed its state officials to side-step strict legalism by declaring anything legal if it was in accord with the spirit of *Pancasila* (Bourchier 1999: 193).

The *adat* (customary) legal scholars who saw the village structure as inspiration for national law rejected the impersonal, rational logic of positivist (Western-style) legal institutions, in favour of “a fluid and totalistic concept of authority” ruled by a diffuse paternalism based on the concept of the public good (194). The President wanted all the discretion afforded a traditional leader, but without the accountability. In practice, this meant meaningful political competition was not conducted within a national polity but
interpersonally, within elite circles in close proximity to the president (Hidayat 2002: 161).

The integralist 1945 constitution, argues Ben Anderson, would never have been restored in 1959 if not for “an opportunistic alliance between a power-hungry military and an increasingly authoritarian President Sukarno” (1999: 6). The accumulation of state power in the office of the president was bequeathed to General Suharto who set about shoring up this power by building a territorial system based on bureaucratic intervention in all social, economic and political spheres. Security forces and domestic intelligence networks were deeply implicated in this intervention which extended from the centre in Jakarta down to the smallest administrative unit at village level.

The fluid and totalistic concept of authority mentioned above subverted constitutionalism and entrenched the discretionary power of leaders to the point where written law counted for little (Bourchier 1999: 194). Supomo’s romantic union of state and people, in the context of violent challenges to claims on state authority, gave birth to a ‘state-as-guardian’, inseparable from a rakyat (people) who were perpetually under threat. The failure of law and the machinery of state was interpreted not as state failure but the work of saboteurs and traitors, a greater evil constructed by the state to justify its extra-legality (Lindsey 2001: 286).

[T]he state had to maintain constant vigilance (waspadai) on behalf of the people against the ‘subversive forces’ from ‘certain quarters of society’ that threatened the safety and order of the state. These imagined forces – which were often equated with crime or communism but remained vaguely defined as ‘certain quarters’ (pihak tertentu) – served an important political function as legitimisation for the maintenance of a rationalist form of ‘political paranoia’ (Bubandt 2005: 282).
Lindsey has examined how the New Order state’s “constant and official state of precariously” led it to establish alongside formal structures a parallel ‘secret’ state through which the real (commercial) business and administration of the state was done (2001: 288). The essential criminality of this state enterprise he describes as a kind of gangsterism writ large, where state agents ran and enforced the extraction of illegal rents within a hierarchy of institutional and freelance standover men.

With the state as the “ultimate illicit rent-seeker” and following the familiar patron-client model, political and business elites hired organised gangs (preman) through military intermediaries. Preman competed horizontally for territory protected by state officials (including police and military) and extorted rents (japrem) from their allotted franchise. Funds flowed vertically into the pockets of gang bosses and state officials. Similarly, military-backed youth groups could be employed to carry out acts of political or industrial thuggery with impunity under the same patron-client structure. Pemuda Pancasila (Pancasila Youth) performed these duties throughout the New Order in between its rent-collection activities (Ryter 1998; Lindsey 2001: 291). Thus, violence and criminality were normalised as state practice (Wilson, I. D. 2006: 266).

But such unofficial criminal networks were not the invention of the New Order. They have deep roots in the revolutionary struggle when nationalist guerillas formed and commanded civilian militias. This close collusion in the war of independence against the Dutch reappeared in the New Order where ‘the military working closely with the people’ was seen as “a source of inspiration” for the territorial defence system and dwi fungsi: a military role in both security and socio-political affairs (Sinaga 1989: 32).

The legitimacy of military-civilian collaboration in the post-independence period flows logically from the 1945 constitution that saw no need for a civil legal sphere to regulate relations between state and private citizens (Lindsey
such groups enforced the sovereign will of the state and were duly rewarded. But the political economy of *premanisme* functioned to allow the urban poor to share in the wealth generated within a repressive, low-wage economy (291).

That such a system where the state was a fundamentally violent and criminal player should degrade and fragment after the fall of its chief patron is no surprise. Suharto’s demise in 1998 led to intense competition for those revenue streams that lost their patronage in the political vacuum. But also, as Lindsey argues, brutal vigilantism against *preman* who had lost their state protection soon exploded. This was accompanied by a profound public cynicism that state-sponsored criminality, from the former first family to senior political and military henchman right down to the street thugs, would go unpunished (293).18

This was the legacy of decades of shielding state institutions from damage inflicted by its officials in their name rather than going after violent criminals, whether they be state agents or not (Lindsey 2006: 23).

There were many grotesque displays of the New Order state’s pre-eminent lawless power (the 1983 Petrus killings of street criminals; East Timor atrocities). Elite military units have long been at the forefront of clandestine state violence: *Kopassus* (special forces) became the pioneer and exemplar for every kind of atrocity. Rapes, tortures, executions were ‘normal’ (Anderson 1999: 9). In the months leading to Suharto’s fall, Kopassus’s former commander and the president’s son-in-law, Prabowo Subianto, was implicated in the abduction and torture of political dissidents. He defended himself as a patriot protecting the fatherland from those intent on destroying the state (Lindsey 2006: 26-27).

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18 Refer also to Chapter Four Section II ‘Between ethno-religious and political violence’.
Thus the transformation of Supomo’s integralist unity of state and society into a government of gangsters, hired extortionists and industrial thugs was complete. All that was needed was the benevolent father figure to be replaced by the wicked stepfather: Suharto (30), and one could add, his malevolent son-in-law, Prabowo.

The drive to marry modern ideas of economic development with ambitions of a pre-modern absolutist state produced a hybrid regime which was from the inside ‘uniquely Indonesian’ but from a twentieth century perspective had much in common with both pre-war European and post-colonial state-building. The utopian ‘village republic’ inherited a state bureaucracy which retained much of the structure and composition of the one that had run the colony. For the New Order, the indivisibility of interests – between minorities and majorities, core and periphery, workers and bosses, military and civilian – was preserved in the foundation document, its chief designer – Supomo – even using the term totaliter (totalitarian) to describe its vision. From the mid-1980s, in order to renew the integralist imperative, “Supomo’s 1945 argument, minus the references to Germany, Japan, and totalitarianism….had] been adopted almost as a canon” (Bourchier 1997: 164).

• From Perjuangan Press to Pancasila Press

The inseparability of Indonesian press development and its nationalist struggle (perjuangan) coincides with the genesis of Indonesian nationalism at the beginning of the twentieth century. It was the spoken language (vernacular) press that developed a dialectical relationship with the stirring of

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19 In the 1930s, 90% of those who ran the colonial administration were ‘native’ officials (Anderson 1999: 2).
‘Indonesian’ political consciousness and aspirations for social advancement. According to Adam, by 1911, the political unity of all the indigenous peoples under Dutch East Indies rule was the pre-eminent message of native publications (1995: 159).

Although some Eurasian, Chinese or Dutch-edited publications were published in the *lingua franca* Malay language, they were swept aside by demand for a burgeoning native press based on an explicitly political Indonesian identity. The first successful indigenous sponsored and edited newspaper was born in 1907, published by R.M. Tirto Adhi Soerjo. Also in Malay, the paper was “the prototype of political journalism” (Dhakidae 1991: 35).

The colony’s first paper was a short-lived Dutch language publication in 1745 (35, FN 15), the next one not appearing till 50 years later (Harsono 2000: 78-79). Publications developed from the nineteenth century along colonial racial divisions and according to a chronology based on social hierarchy: first, the Dutch sponsored and edited papers, followed by the Chinese and finally the indigenous period just mentioned (Dhakidae 1991: 35, FN 15). In the early decades of the twentieth century, the nationalist idea was known by the Malay word ‘pergerakan’, or ‘movement’ and was inseparable from the manner in which the press industry evolved.

The driving forces behind this final wave were linked to a growing native intelligentsia who benefited from changes to Dutch colonial policy, most notably, the Ethical Policy in 1901 which was more favourable to the growth of an indigenous press (Adam 1995: 179). However, it was the social tensions building in the colony that gave impetus to an indigenous reading public.

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20 Although the Indonesian nation was not formed until 1945, the idea took root at this time. The first use of the term was in Dutch ‘Indonesische’ by a print house in 1913 (Adam 1995: 176)
A Muslim trading organization with a mass, non-elite membership – *Sarekat Islam* – expanded rapidly from its inception in 1912. It soon assumed a socio-religious identity and voice against the Dutch administrative order and the domination of economic life by Dutch and Chinese interests. In addition, it campaigned against intensified Dutch efforts to Christianise the Javanese (161-62). Another mass Muslim organization – *Muhammadiyah* – was born in 1912 with a mission to spread Muslim education.

In the same year, the Indies Party was formed which stood for the nationalist idea but stressed secularism and inter-racial unity (164-65). Its founder, Douwes Dekker, a Eurasian, sought to build alliances with native intellectuals and published a newspaper, which attacked, among other things, the segregated nature of colonial education. He and his colleagues were arrested and exiled to the Netherlands (167).

The pursuit of indigenous business advancement by *Sarekat Islam* caused clashes with ethnic Chinese traders in a number of cities in Java. Its educational and commercial agendas were the public face of a movement for native social advancement that was essentially nationalist in character. A number of existing publications popularised its struggle and gave voice to its campaigns, for example, against Christian proselytising. But it moved quickly to set up its own press organs across Java.

These newspapers aired common grievances of the Javanese peasantry and assumed a class-conscious position against the colonial privileges afforded the *priyayi* and for liberation from feudal practices (172-73). Other privileges opposed were the granting of monopoly rights to Chinese traders when brokering international commodity trade, thus restricting indigenous traders to the domestic market (Bakti 2000c: 26)

Despite the Colonial Ethical Policy, repressive measures against an increasingly radical press were available to the colonial government both
through its press law and its criminal code, which were used to exile the three Indies Party members for “formenting hatred towards the government” (Adam 1995: 175). Newspaper pioneer Tirto Adhi Soerjo was repeatedly imprisoned by the Dutch for his writings (Harsono 2000: 79).

The uptake of Malay language newspapers was facilitated by the fact that Malay was the official colonial language in communication with native Indonesians (Adam 1995: 180). As Adam puts it: “By 1913 the vernacular press in the Dutch East Indies was no longer a monolithic industry. The birth of an Indonesian national consciousness had almost simultaneously produced an authentic indigenous press serving as the mouthpiece of the pioneer nationalists” (176).

A crystallising moment for the nascent nationalist movement was a conference of youth in 1928 which defined the struggle in terms of ‘one homeland, one nation, one language’ (Hill 1994: 26); news and politics were entwined and the market for news came to closely resemble the literate politically active public (Dhakidae 1991: 38).

The early perjuangan press, however, was hamstrung by colonial legal restrictions, most notably the hate-sowing articles (haatzaai artikelen) and a press act that allowed for banning of publications and detention and jailing of journalists (Hill 1994: 26); Indonesian journalists were later instrumental in the “propaganda war” that saw the birth of the new nation after the Declaration of Independence (1945) and the subsequent defeat of Dutch loyalists in 1949 (27).

Ironically, the haatzaai artikelen were retained by the first two post-independence governments and used as a weapon of media repression. The press licensing system introduced by the Japanese occupation forces (1942-
45) was also emulated by these governments, most punitively by the New Order (Harsono 2000: 79-80).

After national liberation, the role of the press was still one of ‘struggle’ but this time in the context of a competitive political system and democratic parliament, with each publication finding a point on the political spectrum from which to promote the agenda of its patron political party. Press publications grew from 75 in 1949 to 457 by the time of Indonesia’s first general elections in 1955 (Hill 1994: 28).

By 1956, a communist party (PKI) affiliated newspaper *Harian Rakyat* had the largest circulation, in proportion to its large membership (29) but by the time Sukarno declared martial law in 1957, repression – including jailings and bans – intensified. Such attacks occurred at a highwater mark of newspaper circulation (30). Despite active suppression and closures during this period of creeping authoritarianism, there were still, by 1964, 609 publications in existence in the republic (30).

The reduction in the number of political parties within Sukarno’s narrowing political spectrum produced a concentration of power in the hands of those party bosses whose organizations survived his purges. The rapid corporatisation that characterised the period of Guided Democracy was played out in the press as their status as clients of party patrons tied them even more closely to this constricted political landscape.

The government formalised this client-patron structure in early 1965 by passing a regulation requiring that every newspaper needed to be officially endorsed by a political party or mass organization (including the armed forces) which would be responsible for editorial content. (Dhakidae 1991: 55; Hill 1994: 29).
Thus, the seeds of the *Pancasila* press of the New Order were sown in the preceding Suharnoist period, a time when the unfinished revolution (*perjuangan*) was consolidated through creeping centralism, declining pluralism and the binding of press content and market survival to political-military patronage.

With the wholesale slaughter of leftists following the crushing of the Gestapu coup, the press system in which leftist parties had been dominant was destroyed; the purge of the bureaucracy went hand-in-glove with a purge of journalists with only army sponsored newspapers surviving (Dhakidae 1991: 55-57)

The market for political press declined with the new authoritarian regime and the requirement for protector-patron party affiliation was repealed, in line with the New Order policy of depoliticisation of the society, including the press (59). But in the first ten years of the New Order, the newspaper market was transformed as much by market and technological forces as by the heavy hand of the state.

In the 1950s before martial law, Sukarnoism had pursued an economic nationalist agenda involving state subsidies to indigenous businesses, including the print media. Known as Indonesianisation, the policy regulated the import of printing presses and newsprint but with martial law, it was these businesses that were forced to close along with their political party patrons.

With the introduction of new print technology from the late 1960s, many smaller, poorer publishers could not compete and were wiped out, with regional papers most seriously hit. More progressive companies that had invested in technology, like *Kompas* (Catholic) and *Sinar Harapan* (Protestant), flourished. The expansion of the press industry became tied more closely with the general economy and state development objectives,
and driven by advertising without competition from electronic media. From the 1950s to the 1970s, the newspaper business was transformed from one based on political competition to business competition (144).

In a climate of centrally enforced depoliticisation, the tradition of politically partisan journalism was doomed as its economic supports became unviable. Critical technological change was underwritten and controlled by key government departments, allowing generalist newspapers to extend to “larger depoliticised readerships” cross-cutting religion, ethnicity and political creeds (149).

However, the political traditions of pers perjuangan did not die quietly; in important ways, their stubborn survival reveals much about their later reemergence after 1998, albeit under different political conditions.

*Merdeka* was one such publication born out of the revolution. The paper was synonymous with its founding editor, B.M Diah. It was remarkable for surviving the colonial, independence war, parliamentary, Guided Democracy and New Order periods. Diah was a right-wing nationalist who saw the press as a weapon of the (nationalist) perjuangan. Having survived Sukarno’s earlier press purges, which he supported, he was a key figure in a coalition of anti-communist newspapers that were eventually banned by Sukarno in 1964. He was rewarded by the New Order with diplomatic postings and a stint as Information Minister. However, he was not a compliant crony and used his paper to attack what he saw as New Order neglect of prihumi (indigenous) businessmen (152-55).

The second example of the resilience of the perjuangan press in a hostile climate was *Pedoman* under the editorship of Rosihan Anwar. His paper has the distinction of being shut down by both the Sukarno and Suharto regimes.
Aligned in the 1950s with the Indonesian Socialist Party, he ran aground during Guided Democracy when all papers were forced to pledge allegiance to Suharno’s political program or be closed down. Although he capitulated, *Pedoman* was nonetheless banned.

Anwar fashioned himself as a democrat in the face of authoritarian state power. The paper was shut down again in 1974, along with 11 others. According to Dhakidae, these two newspapermen combined journalism and politics in different ways: for Diah, the press was a means to achieve power and use to work with those in power; for Anwar, journalism was an intellectual pursuit to engage deeply with politics (158-60).

The third *perjuangan* press character was Moctar Lubis whose newspaper *Indonesia Raya* was born in 1949. It too was a media tool in pursuit of nationalist goals, but one dedicated to the public interest and criticising the government when it deviated. Its first period was the 1950s when it pioneered hard-hitting exposé political journalism. Lubis was a victim of Sukarno’s crackdown and after losing control of the paper was imprisoned until 1966. He resumed publishing in his characteristic style in 1968, this time monitoring the business culture of the New Order’s military-bureaucratic state. *Indonesia Raya* was eventually purged in the mass bannings of 1974.

As the press desperately attempted to fill the oppositional void created by the decline of parties, *Indonesia Raya* embarked on some famous investigations into “the silent takeover of the state economy by its bureaucrats” involving corrupt state enterprises which were vehicles for well-placed generals to amass personal business empires (171-79).

The exposés prompted a backlash from army-backed papers, accusing *Indonesia Raya* of aiding and abetting foreign companies. The public
discourse concentrated attention on the role of the press and whose interests it represents, and to what extent state interests define the public interest (184-85). Although his paper was not tied to any political party, Lubis was accused of pursuing a partisan political agenda: in the climate of the time, politics was defined as ‘partisanship’ and being professional was defined as ‘non-partisan’ (191, FN138).

A government report confirming the corruption uncovered by *Indonesia Raya* was leaked to the daily *Sinar Harapan*. This caused confusion within press ranks about whether publishing the leak was breaching professional ethics. According to Dhakidae, the newspaper was judged as guilty because it did not have the capacity to interpret the president’s mind, thus planting the seeds of self-censorship (211).

Heryanto & Adi (2001) have argued that the changing dynamic between the Indonesian press and state power has been largely an outcome of industrialisation, both in the broader economy and specifically the print media economy. They define the transition of media during the New Order as moving from “an idealist force of truth-seeker constantly subjected to state repression to an increasingly autonomous, professionally managed, and essentially self-serving industry” (328).

While this is a broad-brush simplification, it captures the collision between persistent, historical streams of aspirational politics and a state-enabled environment for corporate growth and the emergence of press empires. Out of this sometimes smooth, sometimes chaotic dialectic is born Indonesian media professionalism.

This section sketches the growth of key press empires and some key conflicts that shaped their growth and ultimate survival.
The newspaper that went on to become the largest circulation daily in Southeast Asia was a child of the Indonesian Catholic Party. *Kompas Daily* was established in a climate of competing influences on the increasingly autocratic Sukarno. Pitted against the (communist) PKI and its network of papers, *Kompas’s* establishment took advantage of the demise of a number of rightist papers associated with the anti-communist bloc, *Badan Pendukung Soekarnoisme* (Committee for the Restoration of Sukarnoism). Under the leadership of its party bosses, the day-to-day operations fell to two journalists: Jacob Oetama and Auwjong Peng Koen. Its mission was, unremarkably, to advance *perjuangan*, and to use journalism to eliminate injustice (Dhakidae 1991: 243).

On the question of ethnic control and ownership, it was largely Javanese Catholic; it received management support from a Chinese publisher and used some of its personnel. Its co-founder - Auwjong – was not seen as representing Chinese interests, and in any event, Oetama argued the newspaper was committed to breaking down ethnic and religious barriers, something reflected in its mixed workforce (248).

*Kompas* was a pioneer of the Indonesian press business and enjoyed rising circulation – 100,000 per day by the early 1970s. The flag of political partisanship was carried by Auwjong Peng Koen whose forthright, opinionated writing style became known as ‘biting journalism’. However, it was under Oetama’s editorial leadership that this style was tempered in the face of “the intensity of the increasing inroads of the state into the world of journalism” (253).

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21 This name, known as BPS, needs to be seen through ideological lens; in historical perspective, it was more accurately a movement for the *destruction* of Sukarnoism.
It was during this time of bureaucratic intervention into the economy that another ‘empire’ publication was created. *Tempo* magazine was unlike those founded on religious principles with explicitly political missions (Kompas & Sinar Harapan). Founded in 1971, it provided a new voice and style of writing in a climate where “public political discourse was dominated by the new military regime who were confronted by a heavy antagonism exerted by liberal students, vocal intellectuals and academics” (256).

The magazine got off the ground through a deal with well-connected Jakarta-based capitalists. Its founding editor, Goenawan Mohamad, said *Tempo* was inspired by *Time* magazine and sought to avoid sloganistic language, militancy, partisanship and lack of humour (256). In his first editorial, he spelt it out:

> We believe that the responsibility of the press is not to spread prejudices, but the opposite, to eliminate them, not to plant the seeds of hatred, but to communicate mutual understanding (Mohamad in Dhakidae 1991: 263)

The magazine would avoid the journalism of ‘cursing and cynicism’ but also servile journalism through a new philosophy of language, which it believed had been demeaned by the principles of political journalism. But this political economy of language, Dhakidae argues, brought with it trade-offs. It brought the magazine closer to the bureaucratic bourgeoisie and accepted a depoliticisation of journalism in return for its linguistic and literary freedom:

> Its politics of new language was on the march reaching excessive form in a ceaseless hunt for style at the expense of substance. Its excessive use of impersonal forms fit its politics of depoliticisation to the expense of clarity…. Depoliticisation and impersonality were risk eliminating devices needed for financial and economic gains (265).
Born out of a purely professional motivation, by 1974, Tempo’s success at winning urban middle class readers was such that it no longer required the support of the bureaucratic capital on which it was founded. A new company was formed (Grafiti Pers) whereby workers would hold a 50% share in the operation. This was a significant shift in the status of these media producers from journalist-worker to journalist-owner (266-68).

For society and press alike, the process of depoliticisation was a deceptive one. The corralling of organised politics in the early seventies into three state sanctioned parties (which were prevented from operating as parties) did not so much eliminate politics as shift its centres of discourse to other sites. Hence the press, notwithstanding the repressive political infrastructure, remained critical purveyors of class aspirations, resistance and ideological contestation.

Heryanto & Adi (2001) have argued that attempts by the ruling military-bureaucratic elite to coopt or repress the press were a recognition of its power to mobilise public opinion (331). This itself recognised the growing strength of a professional class with special links to the intelligentsia and a literate bourgeoisie. Despite greater formal autonomy during the period of open political competition during the 1950s, Tickell asserts the press was just as undemocratic during this period as during the New Order period of formal media subordination. This was because the old-style 50s press was a tool of political mobilisation in a population with low literacy and unfamiliar use of the national language. Advancing literacy and language skills made the press a far more potent medium in the 1990s by allowing much greater scope to participate in and deliberate on matters of vital interest to the polity (Tickell in Heryanto & Adi 2001: 330).

The basis for this formal subordination was a licensing system that forced media companies to obtain two permits (publishing and printing) from the
Department of Information and from a parallel military administration respectively. Licences could specify the type of content the publication was allowed to carry (Hill 1994: 35).

Two examples from the seventies provide insight into these dynamics between the press and sites of resistance against the state, a symbiosis that over time in Indonesia has driven the shift from *perjuangan* to *Pancasila* press ideologies.

The ‘Malari incident’ at the beginning of 1974 was sparked by the visits of two prominent representatives of investor nations, the Japanese prime minister and the leader of a multinational group made up of Western donors.

Some papers of the ‘political journalism’ tradition were stridently anti-Western and opposed World Bank policies as detrimental to indigenous entrepreneurs and producers. The ‘non-political’ newspapers such as *Kompas* supported the alliance with Western capital but were critical of loan implementation.

The debate in the press and on campuses culminated in a demonstration against the Japanese prime minister that turned violent and led to widespread destruction (Dhakidae 1991: 293). This occurred amidst a backdrop of intrigue and elite tensions over a politician-general’s (Sumitro) manoeuvres against Suharto’s leadership.

The outcome saw a crackdown not only on campus activism but also on the press, with nine newspaper and four magazine licences revoked (Dhakidae 1991: 296) for ‘disturbing law and order’ and ‘weakening the pillars of the state’ (299). These included *Pedoman* and *Indonesia Raya*, whose reporters were blacklisted from joining other publications (Hill 1994: 38).

The second transformative ‘crisis’ event for the press industry occurred four years later and involved the usual suspects. After the 1974 bannings and the
shafting of a number of politician-generals, power was increasingly concentrated in the office of the president and cabinet. This occurred in the context of growing inequality and economic grievance. The issue of corruption was again coming to a head in the press, feeding off increasingly radical student protests.

On this occasion, however, the industrialised press companies took a more radical approach, by aligning themselves more closely with the students. Press attention focused on the unholy business alliances between a privileged group of Chinese entrepreneurs, foreign investors and Suharto’s circle of family and government cronies.

Newspaper coverage polarised into two camps – Kompas, Sinar Harapan and Tempo against the pro-government army-sponsored papers. The deadlock was broken when troops stormed campuses, made mass arrests and slapped temporary bans on seven newspapers, including Kompas and Sinar Harapan (Dhakidae 1991: 313). The clashes triggered a new campus policy designed to crack down on political activism and nobble the campus press (Hill 1994: 39)

It was an example of the government’s lawless power and involved the offending papers being forced to sign a pledge before resuming publication. To add to the humiliation, Suharto presided over a ceremony celebrating the glorious spirit of pers perjuangan. But as Dhakidae observes, the waning spirit of the perjuangan press had momentarily been reawakened (Dhakidae 1991: 322). At the mercy of the state’s coercive power, the ‘struggle’ was transformed into a struggle for survival which financial autonomy alone could not deliver. It was a decisive defeat for political journalism and a victory for the familial ‘partnership’ that would define the Pancasila press in the ensuing years.
The grand sweep of *Pancasila* as a guiding philosophy in the hands of New Order functionaries provided an overarching rationale for media cooption, both of the smooth and brutal kind. But the pressures of propriety and cultural conformity translated to professional relationships between editor and source. Such interactions are profoundly mediated by cultural protocols for which ‘*Pancasila*’ pillars of state provided ideological cover.

It is a universal constant of media practice for journalists to negotiate the precarious triangle of relationships that keeps faith with both audience and sources. However, the Indonesian editor walks a minefield rather than a tightrope when steering an editorial course. Nono Anwar Makarim, a former editor of *Harian Kami* which was banned in 1974, notes that webs of social and professional contacts are entwined and impose non-negotiable norms of reciprocity.

[T]o refuse an offer of a favor is extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible, if one is committed to remaining within the web of intricate social relationships. The refusal or acceptance of a favor determines one’s identity, one’s extent of cohesion with the prevailing social fabric. The extension of a gift or a favor is first and foremost a token of kindness, affection and respect; its acceptance a matter of courtesy and breeding (Makarim 1978: 261).

Javanese mores impose a duty of circumspection on those who wish to criticise (261) and forthright clarity of language is constrained where “symbols, signals, and half-messages count as the largest transmission of ideas and feelings” (263). Nor can the editor escape the Javanese mould of father figure to his loyal dependents (reporters)(264).

The Indonesian editor treads a line between his position as a member of a privilege elite and his obligations to a multicommunal structure – ethnic, national, religious. He must field competing claims from pressure groups that
they represent the true *masyarakat* (community): “each cultural mainstream fashions itself [as] the true Indonesian community oppressed by an ill-willed minority” (266).

Enduring political currents in Indonesia flow from grand historical faultlines of which the *abangan-santri* confrontation is the most enduring. *Abangan* Muslim refers to those who adopted Islam as their nominal religion and blended it with traditional indigenous beliefs and rituals. *Santri* Muslims, on the other hand, follow a strict Islam marked by doctrinal purity based on adherence to Qur’anic scripture. The latter have historically taken the form of radical or reformist movements and at times waged guerrilla wars against the secular state such as the *Darul Islam* movement in the 1950s.

Journalists must therefore interpret the nuances of political discourse. As Makarim notes, an appeal to ‘*Pancasila’* is often code for a more inclusive *abangan* nationalist posture against *santri* interests pursuing policy programs based on the doctrine of *Negara Islam* (Islamic state). Similarly, an Indonesian reporter must be attuned to signals from politicians espousing extreme nationalist or xenophobic positions. This usually indicates intra-elite conflict between factions within the bureaucracy vying for mass support (267-8).

The government has always encouraged the press to identify as ‘insiders’ - nation-builders in partnership with the Javanese version of the corporate state. As such, they enjoy special privileges of status and access. In return, they must exercise social responsibility, that is, to support and promote the carrying out of the social responsibility of the state (269).

This is the more accurate definition of the *Pancasila* press system, often cited by its proponents as ‘free and responsible’. While it may possess peculiarly Indonesian features derived from Javanese cultural hegemony, its contours owe a more general debt to Asian approaches to state and nation, and as I
will argue, the state’s policing of the boundaries of national identity to ensure its own survival.

Edward Sinaga (1989), a New Order press regulator, has described the *Pancasila* press system as “an original system that is born out of the historical experience of Indonesia in relation to national and international events” (38). The key tenet of a ‘free and responsible press’ he contrasts with a totalitarian system (responsibility without freedom) and a Western liberal-democratic one which “emphasised freedom without responsibility” (35).

Indonesia’s aversion for the liberal-democratic press model, he argues, is a direct result of its historical experience during the period of constitutional democracy (1945-1959) which was marked by “political instability and chaos which almost tore the country apart” (35). The need for a unifying ideology encompassing the press is based on the inherent diversity of the young nation – geographic, ethnic, linguistic and religious. This diversity, Sinaga believes, encourages “the proliferation of disintegrative and separatist movements”, common during the Sukarnoist period (34).

In authentic integralist language, he describes freedom and responsibility as “interwoven or intertwined”, the balance between the two being determined by “the conscience of the press, of society and of the government” (35). If the conscience of the press falters, the void can be filled by the government, as the leaked corruption report obtained by *Sinar Harapan* aptly demonstrates.

The purpose of achieving such a balance is, in the *Pancasila* press system, tied directly to national development goals. The press does not operate outside the national system as “an observer, a critic, or a controller of the Indonesian system” (34-35) but is a subsystem of it. Its credibility can only be
measured by the extent of its contribution to the overall national development effort (39).

Despite its claims to uniqueness, the *Pancasila* press system bears striking resemblance to a number of other media systems prevalent in developing-country contexts. Some scholars have even argued that the ‘social responsibility’ model differs from totalitarian ones only in its rhetorical presentation (Gunaratne 1999: 208).

Likewise, non-liberal configurations of the press and society are explained in terms of “the integrative function of the media” and “social cohesion at any cost” born of the historical trauma of communalism and fragile race relations (Mehra 1989: 7). Even those Southeast Asian media that have adopted liberal precepts (Thailand and the Philippines) assume developmentalist nuances, such as partnering the government in information campaigns (8). While these national presses have emerged with independent monitoring roles after the fall of dictatorships, Mehra contends that commonly in Southeast Asia the press has brought state repression on itself by its “irresponsibility, licentiousness, corruption, commercialism, partisanship, and sensationalism” (8).

Again, using the argument that liberal precepts are unsuitable for media in diverse, fragile societies with a history of communalism, Sinaga (1989) cites a number of reporting taboos which the government consistently warned the Indonesian media to heed. Such coverage would include tendentious or sensational reporting of issues that are –

- *Suku* (ethnic)
- *Agama* (religious)
- *Ras* (racial)
- *Antar-golongan* (inter-group)\(^{22}\)

\(^{22}\) A New Order euphemism generally interpreted to mean ‘class conflicts’; SARA policy is also discussed at the end of Chapter Two.
Known by the acronym SARA, New Order leaders believed that such reporting could inflame the passions of the masses and lead to chaos and political instability (34). Reporting of race riots could be banned outright on the grounds that publicising the violence could spread it (Romano 2003: 45).

Such cases were more safely avoided if only to escape the prospect of misreading the president’s mind about what might pass as tendentious or sensational. Such caution inevitably affects the style of language and imposes literacies on readers to ‘read between the lines’ (Hill 1994: 45-46; Hidayat 2002: 164-5). The policy was, however, loaded with internal contradictions:

The inconsistency of the SARA policy was revealing as the government, while asking people to keep their eyes shut with regard to any ethnic, class and religious conflicts, introduced various verbal markers of difference in the society, including the term ‘native’ and ‘non-native’, and routinely practised official discriminations (Budianta 2000: 120).

This occurred at a time when some pillars of Pancasila democracy were being resurrected and repositioned at the forefront of public communication. From being a central doctrine at the birth of the nation, integralist philosophy went missing for almost 40 years and re-emerged in New Order public discourse in the 1980s, “retrieved from history and adopted as a central tenet of Pancasila orthodoxy” (Bourchier 1997: 165).

The nature of these general prohibitions and warnings distanced reporters from the very real professional dilemmas of how to frame the cultural and class dimensions of SARA stories. However, in a state that effectively outlawed any political mobilisation around these themes, the Pancasila press

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23 Significantly, the policy emanated from a military, not a civilian office. The edict was issued in 1987 by the commander for security and order, Sudomo (see Budianta 2000: 120).
were expected to support the closure of the public sphere for the sake of ‘social cohesion’ and ‘stability’. The legacy of such taboos on professional practice in the violent post-Suharto period is the subject of Chapter Five.

The snuffing out of the rising flames of the *perjuangan* press in the confrontations of 1974 and 1978 ushered in a period of pragmatism and a consolidation of the three main press empires. Their diversification from single flagship papers showed “a capacity for independent accumulation in an industry fraught with political and financial risks” (Hill 1994: 82).

The Kompas-Gramedia Group, according to Hill, showed itself more than any other to be prepared to operate within the constraints set by the New Order (84). The conglomerate had interests including book publishing, printing, travel, hotels, insurance and advertising (84). Since the late 1980s, the expansion of its publication stable through buyouts and management deals gave it access to a number of regional city markets plus a proliferation of specialist publications (85).

*Tempo* magazine and its parent company Grafiti Pers dominated the magazine market from 1982. Like *Kompas*, it moved into book publishing and expanded its range of magazines. It suffered a staff revolt in 1986 which led to the defection of a number of its workers who formed the rival weekly, *Editor*. Its most successful diversification was the takeover of a company in 1982 that ran the *Jawa Pos*, based in Surabaya, Indonesia’s second largest city. Within 10 years, it became the third largest selling daily. This regional paper then launched its own stable of smaller regionals, including *Suara Maluku* in Ambon (90).

Another important press empire was the Surya Persindo Group run by a former Golkar activist with close links to the military, Surya Paloh. In the late 1980s, he acquired an existing daily, *Media Indonesia*, which was quickly turned around. Paloh launched an aggressive regional strategy which saw
Surya Persindo take control of ten regional publications. This accelerated the collapse of independent regionals, which struggled to survive without financial backing from a large capital city conglomerate (94-95). 24

In 1992, Paloh was involved in relaunching a Jakarta weekly called DeTik whose forthright political style benefited from the relative political openness (keterbukaan) of this period. According to Hill, its commercial success showed that well-targeted investigative political reporting was viable and this injected “a spirit of political risk-taking” back into the Pancasila press since the bannings of the 1970s (97).

This risk-taking can be seen as an acknowledgement by editors that despite the threat of arbitrary closure, there had been a diffusion of power in the 1990s and there was a greater chance of ministerial power being challenged in the courts. Bolder editorial positions were thus a rational strategy by editors to roll back the limits of acceptable coverage and contribute to political openness (155-56).

Keterbukaan, however, came to an abrupt end in June 1994 with the banning of three weeklies - Tempo, Editor and DeTik – which all questioned the propriety of key New Order powerbrokers, including members of the president’s family. Most notable was open coverage of splits within cabinet over the purchase price of 39 naval ships from the former East Germany (41).

Hill describes the bans as anachronistic: “The strategy of mass bans, used twice in the 1970s, when applied so clumsily in the liberal 1990s betrayed a leader increasingly out of touch with his country’s changing society” (42). Unlike the 1970s, the bans themselves triggered widespread public protests that lasted for months and placed freedom of speech firmly on the political agenda of the urban middle classes. Some of the criticism came from military

24 One measure of press ownership concentration was 10 media conglomerates holding 100 out of 260 publication licences in 1992 (Wibisono in Hidayat 2002: 161).
spokespeople signalling a schism between civilian and military elements, with civilian ministers gaining the ear of the president.

The shutdowns also spawned an underground movement based around the newly-formed Aliansi Jurnalis Independen (Alliance of Independent Journalists), which had its own clandestine (illegal) publication, Independen.\textsuperscript{25} The state-sanctioned Indonesian Journalists Association (PWI) took it upon itself to make sure members of the new rival organization were denied employment (Heryanto & Adi 2001: 333; Romano 2003: 90-91).

\textit{Tempo} filed a lawsuit against the government. The government responded by promising to re-issue its licence but under a new management and shareholder structure. Some of the staff accepted a government offer of re-employment with a new publication named \textit{Gatra}, modelled as it was on \textit{Tempo} and funded by a Suharto crony and timber baron, Bob Hasan.

In a number of ways, Heryanto and Adi argue, the 1994 bans had an economic significance, beyond what was present in earlier acts of media repression. The bans, for example, split the \textit{Tempo} staff between those radicalised by what was widely seen as a heavy handed overreaction and those first-generation beneficiaries of New Order industrialisation. The attempt to fill \textit{Tempo}’s shoes in the marketplace with a look-alike publication can also be seen as an economic takeover at a time when numerous crony capitalists had discovered the media was a good investment for reasons of both financial and political advantage (Heryanto & Adi 2001: 336-37; Hill 1994: 103-4).

The ideals of \textit{pers perjuangan} persisted after the rise of press empires in the 1980s precisely because of (not in spite of) state repression. This period of compliant \textit{Pancasila} press, however, coincided with the period in which media

\textsuperscript{25} See Chapter 5, Section III
capital was institutionalised. Some media companies grew to such an extent that they could no longer be controlled by repression and could draw on the support of a literate urban middle class and even elements of ruling civilian and military elites (Heryanto & Adi 2001: 332).

The unpopular press bans of 1994 were effectively resisted not through the winning back of licences but by hastening the fragmenting of elite solidarity and unmasking the disintegrative core at the centre of the New Order exemplary state. Instead of radiating power, there was discord in the ruling elite. The organic unity at the heart of Suharto’s coercive state, and at the heart of government-press relations, was the myth.

ii) democratic ideology among journalists in Indonesia

- Developmentalism and democracy

Last century, post-colonial states embraced modernity and its development ethos in different ways. Since international isolation was hardly an option, post-war newly emerging independent states tended to fall under the sphere of influence of one of the Cold War powers.

Those pre-war fascist and communist states that chose hypermodernisation to ‘catch up’ with the more advanced industrial economies used highly centralised and often coercive command economics to transform semi-rural backwaters into industrial fortresses. Others, like Indonesia and the Philippines, embraced modernity no less ruthlessly. Centralised state authority paved the way for an open economy through land evictions and the destruction of domestic political enemies (Farid 2005a).
With access to vast donor funds, bureaucratic intermediaries and their chosen entrepreneurs enriched themselves. During the Suharto period, it is estimated about one third of the US$30 billion lent to Indonesia by the World Bank was stolen (Winters 2002a: 102). This gross corruption and accumulated debt was a focus for periodic resistance and protest throughout the New Order, often brutally put down, and culminating in the monetary crisis of 1997 and subsequent collapse of Suharto’s domestic power base and international backers.

Similarly, the ‘open-markets’ approach to turn Indonesia into an industrial and commodities powerhouse came with strings attached. Economic lines of access led to political indebtedness. Domestic crony capitalism was supplemented with corrupt and collusive arrangements between the ruling elite, foreign governments and agents for transnational capital facilitating large foreign loans that could never be repaid (Perkins 2004: 15).

The resulting collapse of the Asian economic miracle, most heavily felt in Indonesia, forced the World Bank and Western development agencies generally to re-direct their attention to the opacity at the heart of economic decisionmaking. The World Bank discovered that information was an essential weapon against poverty. Open and transparent information flow became a prerequisite for sound development economics (Schweitzer 1999).

An endemic technocratic blindspot had been exposed. Trade and finance could not be treated separately from political and legal processes. A related challenge was thrown down to the orthodoxy of modernization theories that disconnected economic development from political liberalization. At the same time, notwithstanding the lessons of the 1997 meltdown, a number of Asian ‘tiger’ economies had demonstrated that rapid growth and industrial progress could occur within opaque and undemocratic political systems.

It was in recognition of these apparent compatibilities that the ‘Asian
values’ paradigm surfaced as an alternative to Western liberalism and its underlying models of social and economic progress. The Asian political model - variously cited as ‘Asian democracy’ (Antlov & Ngo 2000b), ‘Asian-style democracy’ (Hood 1998), ‘soft authoritarianism’ (Fukuyama 1992), ‘authoritarian-benevolent’ (Kunczik 1988: 85) - ironically eschews an organic approach to development and in fact, assigns a different historical dynamic to economic and political spheres: “the quest for development precedes the quest for political democracy” (Antlov & Ngo 2000b: 6).26

Such a system asserts a high degree of political autonomy from popular pressure and democratic politics. This gives the state the capacity to implement economic reform programs that allow for rapid industrialisation. The autonomy and capacity are derived from the authoritarian nature of East Asian states. Adversarial politics, therefore, is unsuitable to developing Asian societies (6).

However, the political economy of colonial states which pursued laissez faire trade policies achieved rapid growth in, for example, Hong Kong without reference to so-called Asian political models. Rather than overthrow their colonial overlords, the polity traded political sovereignty for economic rewards and political protection from communist China (7-8).

Asian-style democracy and its media offspring (e.g. the Pancasila press system) have also been advanced as a defensive manoeuvre against Western political thought. By citing the paternalistic nature of Asian political culture, critics have regarded the Asian democratic trajectory as an unlikely one (Pye in Antlov & Ngo 2000b: 8). To defend themselves and their bases of power, Asian governments have made virtues out of these political necessities and asserted a culturalist view of politics, namely, that the uniquely ‘Asian’ form

26 This gradualist approach has been prominently put by Fareed Zakaria in Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad. But the idea of ‘deferred democracy’ has also been criticised as a tactic for putting off political liberalisation (see Diamond 2003; Carothers 2007).
(or forms) of democracy sets it apart from Western prescriptions (9), and in the view of some, renders it superior.\textsuperscript{27}

The argument’s ideological basis is revealed when the Asian democracy position descends into a kind of Asian ‘Orientalism’ (Occidentialism), that is, an assertion of universal ‘Asian’ values against pervasive Western doctrines of political liberalism:

By denying liberal democracy as the only desirable form of modern government, proponents of Asian democracy avoid falling prey to the claim that the inferiority of Asian culture is a hindrance to political modernization (Antlov & Ngo 2000b: 9).

The resulting ‘clash-of-universalisms’ obscures the dynamic processes of political change that occur across Asia and globally within cultures that are diverse, not uniform. Cultural plurality here applies horizontally, incorporating foreign norms and ideas and vertically, between traditional and modern structures.

Similarly, the culturalist framework glides over the actual historical conditions of crisis and change. Arguably, it was a centralised strong state, captured by a single ethnic majority, that catapulted Sri Lanka into political violence. Further consolidation of that control led to the breakdown of the trias politica (separation of powers), an even stronger state and deepening ethnic conflict.

In Indonesia and Malaysia, the authoritarian nature of the state-building process can be traced to self-protection against organised ethnic, religious and regional grievance (12). While this has demonstrated an obsession with

\textsuperscript{27} This chauvinist version of the ‘Asian values’ proposition is attributed to Singapore’s Lee Kuan Yew by Steven Hood. He asserts that the arguments as to why Asian values are culturally unique are intellectually weak and concludes: “East Asian authoritarians are no different from leaders in other regions of the world who call for the suspension of democracy or claim to have found a better alternative that suits their individual countries” (Hood 1998: 861).
'oneness' and centralised political control, which may have a cultural basis (e.g. the Javanese idea of power), state formation is better explained as negotiated cultural politics in a given time and place rather than unique (e.g. Asian) cultural values.

So too with the development of middle classes within newly industrialising Asian states. The European bourgeoisie grew not from its claim on political liberty *per se* but out of a desire to limit state interference in its economic activities. Business elites in Asia (and elsewhere) do not see the state as a threat in the same way, and have in fact, entered into partnerships with the state in return for patronage. In Indonesia, the armed forces that grew out of its liberation struggle, have colluded with civilian bureaucrats to apply their coercive function in pursuit of business empires that receive political protection.

In this way, liberalisation policies do not necessarily result in greater political freedom and pinning democratic hopes on empowered and enriched middle classes in Southeast Asia may yet prove futile (Rodan 1998; Antlov & Ngo 2000b: 14; Robison & Hadiz 2005).

Whether during periods of dictatorship or constitutional democracy, an open economy for these states has also meant the rapid concentration of economic power in the hands of a relatively small elite, often separated from the general population by their non-indigenous ethnic identity and working in collusion with indigenous politicians.

Amy Chua (2004: 147-158) in her book *World on fire: how exporting free market democracy breeds ethnic hatred and global instability*, draws a comparison between a number of post-colonial states that found favour with global markets on the back of empowered majorities pushed to breaking point. The general pattern is a period of national euphoria post-independence where popular governments (often democratic) pursue economic nationalist
policies, indigenization of national assets and land reform. Following this comes a period of autocracy where popular leaders or army generals avoid or rig popular elections and enter into collusive arrangements with a market-dominant ethnic minority.

This minority uses its capital, skills and international contacts to control economic activity under the protection of its political patrons. She calls this “high-gear autocratic crony capitalism” (154). Whether it is the Lebanese in Sierra Leone, Indians in Kenya or the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia or the Philippines, market-dominant minorities have been seen by World Bank and IMF lenders as progressive brokers for global ‘free-market’ integration and as leeches and economic criminals by indigenous majorities.

The rising backlash from the disenfranchised majority is met with states of emergency and internal repression, if not martial law. The above collusion makes the incumbent political class obscenely wealthy along with their chosen minority business partners. Resentment builds and to the extent that democratisation is successful, it constitutes a backlash against the foreign technocrats and the local market-dominant elites that promote and benefit from de-regulatory trade policies.

At this point, with the regime under siege, to control inflation, the IMF requires that subsidies to the general public be cut, sending the price of basic goods skyrocketing, further enraging the masses who call for the overthrow of the autocrat and supplanting of the now vulnerable entrepreneurial minority. Such resentment often has a democratic outlet but is rarely peaceful: “in many countries throughout the non-Western world, the two major components of globalization—markets and democracy—are on a collision course” (161-62).

Not by coincidence, the Philippines and Indonesia fit this scenario neatly. Chua’s analysis suggests that modernisation very often progresses when
political power coalesces in the hands of investment friendly, rent-seeking autocrats who intervene in economic life in order to entrench that power. Cross-border capital flows give the appearance of a functioning free market, but domestically, wealth generation by a market-dominant minority is guaranteed by state policy and kicked back to the ruling elite who dispenses largesse to their political allies. To the extent that popular resentment forces democratic change, that change is unlikely to be bloodless.

Notwithstanding the World Bank’s new found prescriptions for good political governance and market transparency, economic transformation is most often achieved undemocratically to the exclusion of social interests (Antlov 2000: 7).

This has an obvious bearing on the prospects for peaceful social change and the role of the media in communicating development and its attendant conflicts. The key channels of communication are between majorities and elite minorities, especially those that control the organs of state, cultural industries or intellectual centres. Communication between geographically dispersed majority communities could also be critical.

In Suharto’s New Order, depoliticisation and developmentalism went hand-in-glove. So too in the late 1990s did political implosion stalk monetary collapse. External controls (IMF) were imposed when decay was far advanced and the World Bank’s developmentalism had also failed because while high growth rates were sustained for a number of decades, economic disparity grew unchecked.

Crony capitalism was also a neat fit with the developmentalist approach because it assumed a certain strata or group needed to be enriched before the benefits of growth could ‘trickle down’ to the general population (Bakti 2000d: 39).
If the World Bank could now in hindsight see that ‘information is an essential weapon against poverty’, post-crisis development communication could be equally critical in managing the political transitions that have so frequently delivered disintegration rather than some higher stage of democratic development.

- **Development journalism**

The New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) was an attempted paradigm shift against the logic of global capitalist expansion in the 1970s and 80s (MacBride 1980). Led by the Non-Aligned states, the NWICO asserted that global communication was unfairly organised, both in its flow (one-way) and in the distribution of hardware and infrastructures, in favour of the West (Lewis 2005: 7).

However, the Cold War was an unlikely epoch for the NWICO to flourish as cross-border information markets conformed to the asymmetry of trade relations. In addition, totalitarian and Non-Aligned states subscribed explicitly to information control as a weapon of nation-building and secret diplomacy. In any event, the NWICO’s financial backers withdrew their support (Thomas 2000: 12; Lewis 2005: 7).

The postwar model of state-building included centralised national news agencies in easy reach of meddling bureaucrats, producing positive ‘development news’ for the masses and government press releases for foreign consumption. They saw their dual role as one of censorship and distribution of information (Kunczik 1988: 86). This was hardly a model to ignite a new information order. While member states of the Non-Aligned Movement (which met in Indonesia in 1955) could at least claim some political distance from Cold War hostilities, its news agencies were under government control
(Fitzgerald 1990: 49). In this way, organised resistance at the periphery to the bombardment of cultural product from the global centre was a mismatch, pitting narrow state propaganda against pervasive cultural imperialism.

Orthodox modernisation theory saw the erosion of traditional institutions as an inevitable result of Western technological progress. The influence of Schramm (1964) and Pye (1963) helped promote the idea that communication technology transfer gave rise to Western professional models where journalism helped implant the ‘virus of modernity’, thus creating “modern personalities” (Kunczik 1988: 86).

But earnest nation-builders of the Non-Aligned Movement were simply applying the same technocratic control mechanisms to information that economic experts had applied to the task of ‘free-market’, ‘trickle-down’ development. In fact, modernisation theories saw information as just another instrument in the technocratic arsenal to be applied towards development goals.

However, in the 1970s, this mechanistic approach came under challenge from dependency theorists such as Frank (1975) with Galtung arguing that Western professionalism led journalists in developing countries to reflect news values appropriate to the development model favoured by investor nations in the West. This serviced the critical modernising forces, namely, urban middle class consumers and political elites (in Kunczik 1988: 87). Development journalism in this context was seen as a corrective to the information imbalance that left the majority of rural people ignored and without a voice.

However, such ‘development’ news values were far from monolithic or uniform across developing societies, not least because the framing process was controlled by different social forces. The grassroots movement in the Philippines is contrasted with Indonesia’s Pancasila press (up to 1998), which in turn bears strong resemblance to African journalism under neo-patrimonial
states (Kunczik 1988: 89). Sometimes the post-colonial cause of national integration and forging national identities proceeded within a neo-liberal compact with international capital (as in New Order Indonesia) and at other times, as a culturally protectionist defence against ‘cultural imperialism’.

Whatever the ideology, top-down developmentalist strategies for information distribution applied the same instrumental control mechanisms symptomatic of the ‘transmission’ model of communication: the expansion and capture of geographic markets through the linear transmission of messages (Carey 1989: 43). Its modernist logic pays no heed to how a society, quite apart from its economic and political structures, constitutes a web of communication, through which experience is described, shared, modified, and preserved (Williams 1962: 10-11). Unlike the linear model’s undifferentiated units decoding messages uniformly, the latter makes communication experiential, differentiated by primordial identity, where recipients are also participants.

It was only after its political defeat and the thawing of the Cold War that the NWICO spawned a ‘civil-society’ movement that sought to connect issues of lop-sided international media flows with local struggles in community media. In postcommunist Eastern Europe where the state was in retreat, local media-savvy networks competed with foreign capital over the evolving shape of the public sphere (Lewis 2005: 9-10). The state still had a role to regulate the exchange of cultural product but investment needs usually ensured global capital had safe inbound passage. But according to Lewis & Booth, this had a direct impact on communication initiatives at the local level.

Local interventions in support of indigenous cultural production fail unless the imbalance in the world cultural market is also addressed (Lewis & Booth in Lewis 2005: 8).
The top-down approach to communicating development in Indonesia took a number of foreign ideas and grafted them onto its development policy. Strategies such as ‘diffusion of innovation’ and ‘social marketing’ led to collusion between private (foreign) companies (e.g. drug and chemical) and the government in marketing selected products (contraceptives; agricultural inputs) that recipients did not necessarily understand or support. Bakti notes that this form of communication helped create rural elites. Grassroots resistance was often overcome through the imposition of force (Bakti 2000d: 38-39). When reformists urged the government to move away from this ‘passive-recipient’ model, any community participation often led to leaders being bought off or coopted (42-43).

As the reach of electronic media became more widely deployed in the regions, development communicators began to recognise the interpretive power of recipients in determining the success of a given program. However, the response was to try to minimise the extent to which recipients could appropriate the message and reorient it according to their own demands and preferences. This was achieved through stripping the message of extraneous ‘noises’, that is, silencing “socio-cultural and religious interference” through any means including “physical and psychological force” and “material, emotional and spiritual attraction”. These communicative manipulations Bakti describes as “victimizing audiences” (44-45) and fit the developmentalist premise that economic growth plus the removal of traditional socio-cultural barriers leads automatically to development (39; Romano 2003: 38-39). Significantly, they also draw a connection between centre-periphery communicative forms and state-sanctioned violence.

As the press’s role was to work with the government to serve society (Sinaga 1989: 36), the Pancasila press was positioned as the state’s partner in development. Positive news was the mainstay of this kind of development journalism and a necessary corrective to the foreign press’s preoccupation
with negative news, so often seen as either irrelevant or distorted (Romano 2003: 41).

Such positive coverage could explore negative events without crossing the line that separates useful news from that which causes unrest. Development journalism thus “encompasses a strong sense of responsibility for the consequences of news reports” (Romano 2003: 41). Because responsibility is a normative concept, its potential to assume an ethical equivalence with state policy was ever-present. If a Pancasila press editor’s own sense of responsibility faltered, the government or its agents could step in, citing the broad guidelines of state policy which are ratified by parliament every five years (Sinaga 1989: 35).

Likewise, the Chinese version of development journalism sees journalism as a bridge between the party and the masses and simultaneously the party’s mouthpiece and the people’s mouthpiece (Kunczik 1988: 91). It is likely this lack of differentiation that leads Gunaratne to see ‘social responsibility’ press models as indistinguishable from authoritarian or communist ones (1999: 208).

Given the diversity and disagreement over development paths and divergence in socio-cultural media environments, a universal development press model is a lost cause. The paradigm encompasses a variety of press roles - government handmaiden, an educational medium, technology transfer, a bottom-up participatory force, a form of advocacy or even emancipation (Romano 2003: 42).

Definitions of development journalism can draw on professional credos in relation to routine practice, for example, an ‘objective’ orientation to the facts as opposed to socially-engaged, participative journalism (Kunczik 1988: 61-
62). However, as Kunczik points out, commitment and neutrality are not mutually exclusive. Alternatively, the paradigm is sketched teleologically: development journalism exists to the extent that it strives for and/or meets certain longer-term social objectives usually associated with national development. These objectives are generally defined in terms of economic transformation, social equality and fulfilment of human potential (83-84).

Not out of coincidence, such definitions converge with government policy rhetoric to the point where some scholars distinguish between ‘development’ and ‘developmental’ journalism where the latter is narrowly defined as the dissemination of government views (84). This notion has been parodied as ‘envelopmental’ journalism, particularly in the context of Asian press systems. In these and other contexts (e.g. Africa), development journalism has become an excuse for censorship and the glorification of dictatorial rule and personality cults (Kunczik 1988: 94).

Others still have tied the notion explicitly to methodologies designed to achieve social emancipation (Quebral in Kunczik 1988: 85). However, these formulations slide easily between, on the one hand, the press-as-government handmaiden and on the other, the political mission of emancipation at odds with prevailing power arrangements. Both pre-suppose that professional practices are above all control mechanisms directed by pre-ordained (national) political programs.

Development journalism assumes that development is a positive, desirable objective and that the mass media can do much to foster it. Only very rarely, though, does it ask who sets the objectives and who decides what a positive contribution is (Kunczik 1988: 85).
As the preceding discussion of Indonesian nation-building indicates, it is precisely these questions which are contested by social interests through the routine mediation of professional media workers. Functionalist conceptions of the development journalism paradigm are therefore limited because they illuminate neither the dynamics of professional autonomy (or deny it altogether) nor the process of ideological formation among journalists within a given media tradition.

If we try to analyse a piece of ‘development’ news in terms of its contribution (or capacity to contribute) to development (however defined), we are dealing only with drawing connections between observable outcomes and their antecedent causes; we cannot see its communication as “an ordered system of meaningful symbols” (Carey 1989: 55) tied to the framing conventions, beliefs and motivations of its professional producers. Nor can we examine how such conventions, beliefs and motivations feed the cultural system in which news is experienced. Such tools are not adequate for a workable account of professional media cultures in transitional societies.

Instead, in the context of our case study in Chapters Five and Six, we need a more dynamic model that can examine the interactive flow of messages that orders the media system as these messages circulate within the public sphere. Such a model is both historical and recognises that media traditions have their own internal dynamic and influence each other at points of cross-border intersection and collision.

Much professional media development - in Indonesia and elsewhere - has been driven by historical moments of intersection and collision between liberal and patrimonial norms of journalism. Such moments have propelled press traditions along their own unique paths towards professionalisation. The journey thus travelled has much bearing on journalists’ orientations towards
narratives on politics (domestic and abroad) and their sometimes violent aftermaths.

- *Professional identity and democratic ideology*

In the last chapter, relying on Carey (1989) and supported by Geertz (1973), it was asserted that media and journalism were forms of symbolic action and as such, cultural practices. They constitute forms of communication that are necessarily public. This ‘public’ nature of communication is central to the dynamic dichotomy between state and civil society as formulated in Jurgen Habermas’s concept of the public sphere (1989). He saw the opening of a space between state and civil society emerging from competitive market capitalism in eighteenth-century Europe. Such a space was essentially created by the ascendancy of a politically-empowered middle class which put in place a network of ‘public’ institutions, including newspapers, which gave form and meaning to the term ‘public opinion’ (Garnham 1986: 40).

The public sphere was marked by detachment from clerical and state power and could function through the support of private economic interests. It was “a space for a rational and universalistic politics”: universalistic because it was in principle open to all citizens, and rational in the sense it was not a contest between private interests but carried on under rules of rational discourse. Under this concept, the ends of such discourse were ‘the public good’ and the democratic state embodied the public good to the extent that it acted as a guarantor of the public sphere through law (40-42).

Public communication lies at the heart of the democratic process; the citizens require, if their equal access to the vote is to have any substantial meaning, equal access also to sources of information and
equal opportunities to participate in the debates from which political decisions rightly flow (Garnham 1986: 37).

But, as Habermas acknowledged himself, such a space could be distorted by the tendency towards monopoly capitalism leading to unequal access and control over the sphere and direct interference by private and state interests against the spirit of rational discourse (41). A functioning public sphere, however, idealistically assumes complete knowledge on the part of citizens. This idealism is shared by classical economic theory which is relied on by the liberal theory of a free press (44).

The utopia of the early modern public sphere was marked by a press that was, in fact, “of a limited-circulation, harassed and deeply corrupt” (Keane 1991: 35). Like developmentalist ideas about information flow and its effects, Habermas’s theory does not deal with the politics of mediation as systemic sources of distortion. This includes not just audience literacy but also the social power and interests of information-brokers, such as political workers/politicians and journalists (Garnham 1986: 44-45).

The origins of democratic ideology among journalists can be traced to the rise of a free press in eighteenth-century Western Europe. Challenge to absolutist states was strongest here and press freedom was a powerful idea in the English Revolution, articulated in John Milton’s *Areopagitica* in 1643 and victorious in the defeat of regulation that led to the first daily newspaper in 1702 (Keane 1991: 9).

But, according to Keane, simplistic notions of freedom of the press need to be replaced by the more complex and differentiated concept of ‘freedom of communication’. The semiotics of mediated communications is analogous to the dilemmas in democratic theory over representative government and
political agency. Both discourses (democratic politics and media communication) were concerned not with civic freedom as an end in itself but fundamentally with the issue of freedom and institutional order.

The early modern assumption that communications media creates the intimacy and directness of the [Greek] polis neglected the problem of how freedom of communication among citizens could be institutionalised peacefully in a dispersed, complex civil society (41).

Liberty of the press, in this sense, was an early modern expression of democratic ideology. It married the classical belief in direct communication between ruler and ruled with market-based media, where the market was a ‘free space’ where ideas circulated: “an enclave of honesty, truth and integrity in a despotic world of secrecy, scheming and arrogance” (45).

The assumption of a free press also carries the secondary meaning of ‘independent’ or ‘autonomous’ and implicitly rejects the ‘free and responsible’ ascription deployed by patrimonialists. Independence in this context refers less to freedom of communication and more to institutional media freedom: freedom from other centres of institutional power. Such a notion has been crucial to professionalisation and the self-conscious construction of journalistic identity and status. This self-positioning of journalism as a surveyor of power providing oversight of institutional behaviour is well entrenched in liberal-democratic societies and influential in many non-liberal and transitional states.

However, Stockwell cites a need to look “beyond the surveillance inherent in notions of the fourth estate” to the role journalists play in the deliberative processes that makes democracy work (1999: 39). Such a shift from a political or oppositional role for journalists to a discursive one emphasises
how journalistic work, by engaging citizens, facilitates “the resolution of political conflict through open and uncoerced discussion of an issue with the aim of arriving at an agreed judgment” (40). In this sense, journalists position themselves less to assume the mantle of an autonomous political force and instead pursue their craft to enable citizens’ connections with the discursive spaces where real debate is occurring over political contests that matter.

The early modern thesis that freedom of communication is a vehicle for certitude, absolute knowledge and the spread of a rational democratic consensus is obsolete. New justifications of the intimate relationship between ‘liberty of the press’ and democracy are needed (Keane 1991: 175).

It is easy to see the significance of how such foundational ideas about democratic freedom can play out in the minds of journalists, including those coming from different cultural traditions. The prospects for developing professional media culture around democratic deliberation in politically transitional settings will be explored in the final chapter. But already it is clear that media scholars and practitioners would do well to start refashioning their professional models to take account of intersections between new media and democratic practices. Accordingly, such models can incorporate these practices in ways that are faithful to democracy’s historical purpose of bringing about non-violent political change.

Just as post-colonial nation-builders implanted the ‘virus of modernity’ into developing societies to undermine the pillars of traditional order, so too can the ideology of a free press serve to erode political order in transitional societies. But like all ideologies, media freedom can be resisted, coopted and transformed in different contexts, for different ends and not always peacefully. This was certainly the case with the perjuangan press tradition in Indonesia.
iii) Culture and freedom in the newsroom

News is foremost a social institution that imparts to events their public character; it takes social and cultural resources and transforms them into public property (Tuchman 1978: 4-6). It is produced by professionals serving organisational needs. Newsmaking is, therefore, a cultural process embedded in relationships with other institutions, including political ones which set structural limits on the way newsroom culture evolves.

The Indonesian practice of state officials supplying envelopes of cash to individual reporters (with employers turning a blind eye) has been labelled the ‘envelope culture’ and is intelligible as an aspect of ‘news culture’. It has been suggested that any progress towards eliminating this practice depends on prolonged reforms to root out entrenched systems of politico-business corruption (Romano 2003: 173). The changes, it is agreed, cannot simply be willed into being by enlightened editors.

As Romano’s study reveals (2003: Ch 11), envelope practices are not uniform from newsroom to newsroom and infiltrate press culture in a manner that defies simplistic judgment. For example, she notes that on one level they are a form of welfare for low-paid reporters; on another, envelopes rarely surface when a story is generated on the reporter’s initiative. This serves to highlight autonomous spaces where a reporter is free to exert a degree of control over the newsgathering process – and ultimately, the nature and style of the news product - by claiming independence from special interests. In terms of substantive duties performed, this is a world away from the passive receipt of government press handouts and their faithful reproduction as ‘news’, with or without a kickback. In both cases, resources are fed into a production system,
but the end products are radically heterogeneous, even if this is not easily discernible to news consumers. The two artefacts may be similarly branded but differ substantially in their authorial integrity and ‘public-service’ implications.

The interplay of source material (content) and the manner of its presentation within a narrative form is of central concern to this media analysis; and, as the above example of media graft illustrates, the manner of its production matters and its importance heightened during transitional conflict. This is because this synchronous art in the trained hands of news producers has the capacity not only to describe violent events but also to produce powerful social effects that prolong them.

Much can be extrapolated from the sociology of news about the predictaments faced by Indonesian news reporters in covering violent breakdown during political transition.

In *Objectivity and the News*, Dan Schiller uses an historical method to dismantle the myth of objectivity: objectivity is connected with the transformation of the newspaper into a commodity (1981: 7). In the American context, this occurred in the 1830s with the emergence of the low-price, high-circulation ‘penny press’ that spoke the language of the tradesman by appealing to his belief that knowledge, like property, should not be monopolised for exclusive use by private interests and supplying him with cheap, value-free, ‘objective’ facts (10).28

28 Journalistic objectivity found further support from positivist science and photographic realism, both of which claimed to reflect the world without reference to human subjectivity or selectivity (Schiller 1981: 10).
News objectivity positioned journalists as transcendent purveyors of the facts. Journalists, in Schiller’s study, defined themselves by developing their own writing conventions which served to simultaneously break with politically partisan reporting and broaden their market for readers (6). But objectivity, with its transcendent powers, he argues, precludes the very presence of conventions and thus masks the patterned structure of news (2).

This patterned structure emerges from habitual use of journalistic conventions to the point where ‘standards of reality’ come to be shared by writer and audience (Carey in Schiller 1981: 9). When this happens, news solidifies into a language of power,

....an idiom through which the correspondence between the public truth of events and the social power of their perpetrators [is] routinely renegotiated (Schiller 1981: 182).

Universally, in different mediaspheres, these routine negotiations have waxed and waned between assertions of journalistic autonomy and the subordination of journalistic content to the commercial sale of editorial space.⁵⁹

To define a press model, Romano notes, it is institutional “values and behaviours in all their complexity” that must be examined (2003: 65). Central to press behaviour in the reformasi period was how reporters applied their newly won freedom to their professional duties. Or in other words, how did the rupture of the old political order provide openings for changes in news cultures? Media groups had to contend not only with the lifting of state

⁵⁹ In Australian journalism history, for example, the critical contest between organised professionals and media proprietors was bitterly fought and eventually produced lasting gains for the profession as editorial independence was recognised as a pre-condition for commercial success (see Schultz 1999: 265-66).
controls, an explosion of new publications but also de-facto restrictions placed on their freedom by an empowered civil society. Within the murky transitional period under study, civilian groups – sometimes backed by politicised elements of police and military – used the threat of physical violence to influence media behaviour. According to one editorial manager, violent conflict imposes its own internal restrictions, not least on forms of writing:

Religious control of news has now become very strong and very dangerous. Reading the Maluku conflict in a newspaper can be misunderstood, what is being said, because it is hidden in terms that are sometimes very difficult to follow (Dhakidae 2001).

Publications at the top end of the market – Kompas, Tempo - Dhakidae argues, enjoy a very high level of credibility. This, he says, is matched by a level of professionalism equal to their counterparts in Western media (2001). But clearly, the obfuscation cited above will directly impact a newspaper’s ability to keep faith with its readers.

Furthermore, it has been recorded that within Indonesian press culture during the 1990s, strong liberal tendencies were prising Indonesian journalists away from the heavy hand of Pancasila values towards a sentinel or watchdog role (Romano 2003: 166). This has allowed, for example, Kompas readers to accrue a credibility dividend and repay the paper with loyalty. But there is more to professionalism than mass loyalty and high circulation; it also implies a definition of self that reflects collective attitudes towards the audience - attitudes that underpin professional purpose.

Journalists claim legitimacy by declaring that they act in the public interest, but may hold disdainful attitudes towards the public (as audiences, if not sources), and are comfortable with being out of step
with community values on political and social issues (Schultz 1999: 268).

While this statement has been made in relation to the Australian professional class, its paradox is a universal one, and one complicated in those media sectors where commercial success has become an end-in-itself rather than a protection against government interference (272). Such social distance is generally cited as a professional imperative (even virtue) if journalists are to properly discharge their ‘public-interest’ duties. But the real public-interest test is whether this social distance increases or decreases the chances of the reporting enterprise delivering its primary service to readers of uncovering public truths. The least favourable outcome would be an enterprise that is unshackled from commercial, political and sectional interests – that is, ‘free’ – but fails to use that freedom to advance the understanding of its attentive audience. This logic is relevant to the later textual study of metropolitan press coverage and its evident superficiality (Chapter Six).

Formally created news conventions might deliver a formal equality of access to an abundance of news reports but, in effect, create an ‘illusion of objectivity’ and obscure an actual inequality of access to useful information (Schiller 1981: 2 & 182). The impact of this inequality, in the context of transitional violence, is likely to fall most heavily on its victims.

In interviews conducted with Malukan editors and reporters, respondents routinely understood their duties in terms of objectivity, balance (report both sides) and lack of bias. But such worthy professional goals were pursued in a climate of “underdeveloped professionalism, lack of resources, poor access to information and public pressure” (ISAI 2004: 32).
The working day for these journalists was peculiar in the sense that their newswork was embedded with institutions undergoing violent disintegration. It was clear that their own news operations were caught up in this spiral when one Ambon newspaper - *Suara Maluku* - threatened to implode as the battlelines of physical strife were replicated in its newsroom. It was not a lack of professional camaraderie that split Muslim and Christian journalists but the impracticalities of reporters carrying out their basic duties within a single newsroom. However, because the newspaper offices were in a Christian area, Muslim reporters had to file their stories by fax. This led to suspicions about the handling of their copy by Christian editors, which contributed to the split (Basorie 2005: 65).

According to an account by Suara Maluku’s editor (Pinontoan 2001), journalists of different faiths endured six months of high conflict before the owner agreed to create a separate (Muslim) weekly newspaper, *Ambon Ekspres*. Professional activity was carried on under extreme duress as the community branded each paper as ‘Muslim’ and ‘Christian’. In this climate, Basorie notes, the two papers under the one owner, succumbed to the pressure of carrying provocative news because “they could no longer keep their distance from the escalating conflict (2005: 66).

The religious designation of newspapers in Maluku was for most editors interviewed a matter of community perception, with real consequences for access to religiously designated communal areas. However, these perceptions were based on key facts about the make-up of each newsroom. Many were staffed by journalists of only one faith. Editors knew the value of a mixed faith workplace but were, in several cases, thwarted in their attempts to secure a mix of staff reporters. In Suara Maluku’s case, following the split, journalists were given a choice of joining the new publication or remaining with Suara Maluku. But journalists were confined to areas of rioting controlled
by their own (religious) communities. So, the staff were divided along religious lines (Pinontoan 2001).

Likewise, weekly tabloid *Tabaos* was exclusively Christian, but its editor says when it reopened in September 2000, a special reception for journalists was organised but no Muslim journalists came forward (Kerleli 2001). Ambon-based *Suisma* was largely Muslim but saw itself as serving the Malukan diaspora of all faiths throughout the archipelago. At the district level, it employed Muslim and Christian journalists but within Ambon they were all Muslims. Its editor says the paper has “no real religious orientation” and its branding as a ‘Muslim’ paper only occurred after the riots had begun (Touwe 2001).

The fundamental impediment for all these local Maluku papers was access to the locations of violent events. Warfare produced territorial segregation which prevented reporters of the ‘wrong’ faith entering those areas. Even when they did manage to enter – sometimes on the back of media delegations from Jakarta – community leaders refused to speak to them, identifying them with the enemy camp (Institute for the Free Flow of Information 2004: 39; Matakena 2001).

In Ambon, Suara Maluku relied on three official source channels – the regional governor, Kodam (regional military command) & Kapolda (regional police command) and the official representatives of the warring parties based at their respective command posts/religious headquarters: the Christian *Posko Maranatha* and the Muslim *Posko Al-Fatah*.

We write a chronology of what happened in the field, so later we can ask for their [officials] comments and confirmation; if there is a difference the community can make a judgment. Our encounter in the
field is 'like this’, their statements 'like this’. So let the community judge who is telling the truth (Pinontoan 2001).

According to media sociologist Gaye Tuchman, choice of sources is part of the process of source legitimation; while their comments may be disputed, officials are never challenged over their right to make news. This structure, she says, theoretically allows the reader to decide who is telling the truth; by structuring the alternatives, reporters absolve themselves of responsibility for getting at the truth (1978: 92).

Such a climate did not simply affect a source’s reluctance to trust a reporter of the ‘wrong’ faith; it also infiltrated recruitment in the media, as this North Malukan editor explained: “What struck me so much about this conflict is we don’t yet have any Christian reporters. We attempt to find Christian contacts who are ready; but at the beginning of the conflict everyone is so suspicious of each other and don’t want to hand over information...because he is Muslim, who knows if he is a journalist or whatever” (Djalil 2001).

Notwithstanding the heightened sensitivity over a reporter’s religious identity brought on by the war’s contagion of suspicion, conflict conditions (access) served to steer reporters away from firsthand accounts that were not ‘official’.

I control my reporters. I say don’t take sources from the grassroots, from those at war, that’s not permitted. If you take a source from a warrior, he will definitely take the side of his own group. He only sees his own area, not other people’s (Pinontoan 2001).

In turn, the highly sensitive nature of partisan accounts pushes reporters into the ‘safe’ hands of government officials.
To avoid taking sides with one group, we just use the one government version. We are then accused of being a mouthpiece for the government by the Islamic group. In the conflict area, it’s possible the only neutral source is the government one. Because they don’t take the side of one group or the other, for us government and security forces are still very neutral (Djalil 2001).

But reliance on official accounts does not always imply that they are regarded as reliable: “We can’t place too much faith in official military sources when their statements are analysed alongside conflict happening in the field,” remarked the editor of an Ambon tabloid (Kerleli 2001).

Rusli Djalil edited a paper in North Maluku – Ternate Pos – that was avowedly non-partisan. However, such publications were outnumbered by those that took sides and acted as mouthpieces for combatant groups (ISAI 2004: 43; Basorie 2005: 66). The paper did include non-officials in its search for balance and neutrality.

It’s difficult to find neutral sources in North Maluku. But we can confirm first with local people who witness the event, and later, with warring groups, both red and white and then we re-confirm with government leaders; we don’t forget security forces patrolling the conflict. Each piece of information we can gradually filter, although it’s not the complete truth but at least we try to check with various groups. So we can arrange the facts to get closer to the truth (Djalil 2001).
In the south, however, the unreliability of ‘communal’ sources – referred to by one editor as ‘press contamination’ - led some papers to expand rather than collapse the range of accounts informing the story.

We aren’t happy with just one or two sources. We can take a middle way that is balanced between one group and the other; although we don’t have direct access to certain groups, our method is as much as possible to gather several sources....There are several sources in Maluku that are considered by both sides to not take sides (Kerleli 2001).

The privileging of institutional sources over ordinary citizens, Tuchman notes, allows newsworkers to manage news controversies without establishing a statement’s claim to truth. This is achieved through the routine balancing of attributable information where fact and source are mutually embedded (1978: 91-93). Sometimes the web of facts are arranged so as to lead the reporter closer to the truth and invest the report with explanatory power. At other times, fact and source are self-validating: facts become authoritative by virtue of their source, but no more than this. They meet organisational needs by allowing reporters to present balanced statements but do not advance professional purpose through significant exposure, explanation or revelation.

But aside from organisational imperatives within the news business, there is a deeper, semiological domain of power where the bias of misleading, incomplete reports is “structural and rooted in the narrative form itself” (Koch 1990: 9). The significant form in which newspeople present a version of events, Koch argues in The News as Myth, involves a ‘unary transformation’ whereby events are consistently mediated through “a single complex of cultural values”; news comes with its own “inherent value system” conveyed in its consistent linguistic structure (28).
News is therefore better understood, he concludes, for its mythic value than its claims to truth. Reportage is useful in the sense that it affirms “the official’s view of his role as an interested, caring and competent public guardian,” thus sustaining

....a culturally potent message of official competence and omnipotence. The result of the narrative pattern of contemporary journalism is precisely an inflection that favours the official version and technocratic view of events and thus of society (Koch 1990: 173).

Among the Maluku papers, there were clearly cases where the professional routines of newsmaking did not produce balanced reporting, but incitement.

I can honestly say our reporting was not 100% neutral. We believe that the emotion we brought to our profession, we also channelled to the community (Matakena 2001).

In North Maluku, I admit reporters deliberately took sides for three months - January to March 2000. Because they were emotionally involved as victims, their coverage was not so objective, or even very unobjective (Djalil 2001).

The erosion of professional norms was not only caused by the periodic breakdown of the 'strategic ritual' of detached objectivity. Strategic failures to get access to the site of battle left reporters dependent on the bureaucratic output of government officials, civilian and military. By avoiding the perception of partisanship, communal accounts are neglected and new pressures are brought to bear on editors.

30 This term is borrowed from Tuchman (in Schiller 1981: 3).
Religious control of information, highly restricted access to sites of combat, professional ill-discipline from journalists and the ambiguous role of security personnel all combined to cede significant narrative control to official state sources. Malukan journalists were propelled towards this state of dependency because this dependency harmonised with organisational imperatives that dictated that news maintained an appearance of neutrality. The textual analysis of metropolitan news in Chapter Six will also show Jakarta reporters in the grip of this same logic.
CHAPTER FOUR

VIOLENCE, CULTURE & NATIONAL DISINTEGRATION IN INDONESIA

“When unappeased, violence seeks and always finds a surrogate victim. The creature that excited its fury is abruptly replaced by another, chosen only because it is vulnerable and close at hand.”

- Rene Girard, Violence and the Sacred (1977)

i) Political violence and the discourse of national disintegration

This chapter surveys the circular dynamics of Indonesia’s centre-periphery relations and their relation to different forms of group violence. An historical approach reveals that violence is not so much an eruption of ancient hatreds rooted in the past, triggered by conscious acts of collective memory but rather an expression of contemporary group interests and their interactions with the state and its political agendas. Collective violence is rationalised by selective memories of the past but is driven by images of the future – and how to realise them.
Although Maluku was marginal to the orbit of power emanating from the Indonesian centre, it is, nonetheless, emblematic of the national disintegration that threatened the state. Although it played out in ethnic and religious terms, the form that localised violence took in different places from 1998 was tied to the political dynamics between metropolitan centre and regional peripheries.

- Barbarism, sovereign violence and modernity

At the end of the 1990s, the Pakistani anthropologist Akbar Ahmed posed the question – ‘Has ethnic cleansing become the cognitive and affective symbol of, or metaphor for, our postmodern age?’ (Ahmed 1999: 236).

Ahmed had an eye to the Balkan savagery that followed the collapse of Communism, but more generally he locates the malaise around the notion of ‘the collapse of modernity’, the de-powering of ascendant ideas sprung from European Enlightenment: freedom of speech, humanism, rationality and secularism (237).

Others see the falling back on “imagined primordial identity” (238) as a sign not so much of modernity collapsing but of an aggressive rejection of its cultural assumptions in favour of ethnic and religious revivialism and chauvinism (Hamelink 1997: 30). In fact, ethnic cleansing is shorthand for a broader category which includes inter-religious conflict. It denotes “the sustained suppression by all means possible of an ethnically or religiously different group with the ultimate aim to expel or eliminate it altogether” (Ahmed 1999: 239).
Modern society is one that, unlike any preceding culture, lives in the future rather than in the past (Giddens & Pierson 1998: 94). For many, however, caught up in modern transformations, trust is tenuous and fleeting. Modernisation is experienced by many as a fragmented, contradictory, and disquieting process that produces untenable situations and unfulfilled desires (West & Sanders 2003b: 16). Ethnographic studies provide ample empirical backing for an alternate theory that groups and movements reappropriate and redefine the discourse of modernity according to their own cultural agendas (West & Sanders 2003a). As Appardurai explains: “[T]here is increasing evidence that Western models of political participation, education, mobilization, and economic growth, which were calculated to distance the new nations from their most retrograde primordialisms, have had just the opposite effect” (Appardurai 1996: 141).

“The cultural program of modernity” (Eisenstadt, 1996 & 2000a) brings different programs of modernity to different places across the globe. Societies that had been colonial peripheries saw local elites themselves selectively adopt some of the universalistic premises of modernism such as the nation-state and its legal and political institutional trappings, while aspects of traditional identities were retained and re-cast in often religious terms (Eisenstadt 2000a: 13-15). Eisenstadt also identifies “various Jacobin movements and ideologies” which form part of a continuous modernist cultural program “from revolutionary programs, through nationalist movements, up to contemporary fundamentalist movements” - all of which profoundly reconfigure centre-periphery relations in favour of the political centre (1996: 34).

Pre-modern ethnic, racial and tribal barbarism certainly existed but Eisenstadt argues that the legitimation of barbarism against the ‘collective primordial other’ reached its fullest development only in modern times: “It is the outcome of the inability to incorporate these dimensions of human
experience...into the institutional frameworks generated by the cultural program of modernity” (38-39).

Rene Girard’s *Violence and the sacred* (1977) argues that traditional religion sought, through ritual and sacrifice, to acknowledge the destructive power of violence and hold it in check by according it a reverential or sacred status.

From a modern-rationalist perspective, such societies are vulnerable to violent breakdown because their system of law does not possess a depersonalised ‘administration of justice’ with an independent judicial authority:

[T]here is the risk that the act of vengeance will initiate a chain reaction whose consequences will quickly prove fatal to any society of modest size (15).

Paradoxically, the religious and moral authorities in a community attempt to instill non-violence, through the application of (ritual) violence (20). The redirection of aggression in the sacrificial rite mimicks certain properties of violence, in particular its ability to move from one object to another. From the point of view of participants, these affective processes assume a mystical status through “the awesome machinery of ritual” (19).

In large-scale, modern polities, institutional developments have largely short-circuited the spiral of vengeance that menaces small-scale, traditional political communities. Girard argues that this has blinded us to the critical and practical role that religion plays in safeguarding the latter’s social cohesion; it has also led to extreme views by outsiders who alternately portray them as either horribly barbarous or blissfully utopian (19).
The mystification of these processes allows subjects and citizens to impose their own culturally conditioned sense of moral judgment on key concepts such as ‘vengeance’, ‘sacrifice’ and ‘legal punishment’.

The demystification of these systems (an erosion of faith in them), Girard notes, necessarily leads to their disintegration (24-25). This may be one reason why traditional ideologies can serve to mobilise a ‘community of interpretation’ with all the fervour of religious duty. Challenged by the corrosive and destabilising effects of modernising or cosmopolitanising forces, defence of the ‘sacred’ occurs along (territorial and discursive) political boundaries, by means of, in Phillip Winn’s term, “sovereign violence” (2003) – a concept analogous to Girard’s ‘sacred violence’.

Like the Dayaks’ elaborate and largely hidden ritual preparations against their ethnic enemy in West Kalimantan (see later in this chapter), the Maluku wars from early 1999 also contained elements of ritualised war preparations whose purpose and significance were not immediately discernible. Gangs of young men assembled at barricades in Ambon; they wore coloured headbands and performed a war dance known as *cakalele*. The dance is a local (Malukan) manifestation of war magic, signified by the *parang* (machete), waistshield and spear and associated with invulnerability rites prior to combat. The jumping-and-swaying movement of the *cakalele*, Winn says, straddles the tension between social obligations and excessive male violence (2003: 56) and possesses a complex relationship to sovereignty, power and violence (53).

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31 The word is from the lingua franca of the Malukan archipelago, *Bahasa Melayu Maluku* (Malukan Malay)
The performances are deeply implicated in local perceptions of local sovereignty and communal relations (57). The *cakalele* occupies a sacred position at the centre of moral discourse defining inside and outside.

Winn bolsters this explanation by drawing on the work of Agamben\(^{32}\) who asserts that sovereign power manifests itself at the threshold of law and violence, a power to grant exceptions to act outside the moral order - that is, the violent taking of human life: "this threshold is confirmed, marked and patrolled by the head-taking party that the *cakalele* represents" (Winn 2003: 58-59).

Such explanations, however, only go so far as to re-construct an exemplar of authentic religious life. While they may contain enduring truths about political and religious community,\(^{33}\) they do not illuminate how such ‘authentic’ traditions are re-constituted by their historical interaction with enemy groups; nor do they explain how such traditions (or their contemporary manifestations) become implicated in the eruption of prolonged communal savagery, for example, at the end of the New Order’s reign, between Christian and Muslim groups. This dynamic process of interaction and (sometimes violent) exchange between the Indonesian centralised state and its politically and economically marginalised peripheries is the subject of Section Two.

- War and the construction of ethnic identities

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\(^{32}\) Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* 1998

\(^{33}\) Such ethnographic perspectives can reveal aspects of the cultural dynamics underpinning chauvinistic aggression; for example, in the context of inter-village warfare, by fulfilling a vow to the spirits, the severed head is proof of the headhunter’s superior piety and virtue over their victims and hence superior moral authority of their local spirit figures/founders (*datu-datu*) over those of their victims (see Winn 2003: 64).
Intuitively, the term ‘ethnic cleansing’ recalls the Balkan slaughterhouse; but ‘primitive’ savagery has occurred across the globe in places at varying stages of development and within different intercultural milieu. A feeling of personal vulnerability and threat from the ethnic ‘other’ causes people to fall back on group belonging, often when formal structures fail them. According to Akbar Ahmed, ‘ethnic cleansing’ has levelled the bi-polar categories – First World-Third World; East-West; North-South – that divided the global community (1999: 240). Such ‘falling back’ is sometimes portrayed as a ‘rediscovery’ of ethnicity. It may be more useful to say, in many instances, ethnicity is being re-invented to confront new dangers that are perceived to be ‘clear-and-present’. Its rediscovery may turn out to be no more than a discursive one experienced by the media in the face of ethnic conflict it neither predicted nor understood.

Conflicts from Bosnia to Kashmir and Indonesia are routinely defined in terms of their disintegrative qualities: the breakdown of law and order, the break-up of territorial integrity and the imminent collapse or failure of nation-states as their institutions crumble or mutate at the mercy of centrifugal forces. But imagine for a moment that such processes, with all their attendant violence, also serve an integrative function. Reference has already been made in the previous chapter to the ‘violence’ of the nation-building enterprise and to the frequent devastation in the wake of modern developmentalism. These often entail the resolution of long-standing enmities, the reorganising of power and reconstituting of new political arrangements.  

These attempts to classify and map the contours of group identities can be seen as control mechanisms within a larger dynamic between the European metropoles and their colonial hinterlands.

34 The Rwandan genocide appears based on just such miscalculations by German and Belgian colonial masters in the nation-building exercise of that region (Kirschke 1996; Meredith 2005).
It is a feature of 20th century racism that – like ethnicity – racial beliefs and prejudice altered according to shifting power balances within and between national identities. The changes were the outcome of global forces. Some were political, like the end of the Cold War: the collapse of the Soviet Union left 25 million Russians living outside Russia in the former Soviet states (Hamelink 1997: 29); others were economic and demographic: state-sponsored population movement brought different ethnic groups into contact with each other; and de-territorialised nationalities dispersed globally and sought to maintain their identities alongside majority local populations and prosper by exploiting their transnational social capital.

These shifts and movements over the century were behind a reconfiguration of racial prejudice from ‘race’ to ‘culture’. Crudely put, old racism of the colonial era was about a fixed hierarchy of races, a kind of superiority scale. Once the generic ‘science’ (social Darwinism) on which this was based was debunked or overrun by the forces referred to above, a new ‘racism’ emerged, sometimes called ‘new tribalism’. This did away with the racial hierarchy and replaced it with fixed group identity based on ethnic and cultural belonging. Inter-group relations were typically hostile and given to violent conflict. Ethnicity and cultural factors rooted in history defined group interest and determined how they behaved in relation to other groups (Ricklefs 2000: 33-34).

Likewise, economic transformation in Indonesia was made possible by the political defeat of the PKI (Communist party) marked by the mass killings of 1965-66; primitive accumulation was made possible not just by the army’s seizure of state power but by the mass seizure of land and property. Like the apartheid solution, the killings were a case of “vertical, bureaucratic violence”: “army-directed mass violence resulted in the separation of a large number of people from their means of production and subsistence” (Farid 2005: 4). It too was a defining moment in Indonesian nation-building.
Such expulsions and exterminations have routinely created the social infrastructure for a new order - sometimes paving the way for a profound reorganisation of the economy vis-à-vis global integration (e.g. post-1965 Indonesia) and at other times, settling scores on the periphery between rival communal groups fighting over resources that have become contestable at moments of political transition (e.g. Maluku).

Playing identity politics was integral to European colonial policy and its imperative to manage and control colonial subjects. However, colonial constructions of ethnicity were built on antecedent layers of history and culture. Colonists knew that cultural symbols – tribal chiefs, religious icons – resonated with their adherents and worshippers. They possibly discerned, intuitively, that such symbols expressed, in Geertz’s phrase, their “most comprehensive ideas of order” (1973: 89). But the constant reincorporation of these symbols into colonial strategic thinking and their re-production as administrative weapons over centuries was never smooth and was regularly imposed by force of arms.

Symbols of ethnicity become, in a Foucauldian sense, tactics of power. Not by chance, identities are re-constituted, assume a dynamic of their own and “live on, shaping possible future interpretations” and “framings of knowledge” (Peluso 2006: 126). This is well illustrated in the case of ethnic Dayaks in West Kalimantan. The Dayaks’ experience of collective violence is especially instructive for our case study as it falls into the same administrative periphery vis-a-vis the Javanese centre as the province of Maluku. So too was the ethno-religious strife more or less contemporaneous in both regions.

Nancy Peluso has argued that the strategic value of Dayak violence is derived from a generic image – the primitive, fearsome Borneo Headhunter (2006: 122). This image changed according to shifts in colonial power. After
independence, although Dayaks had endured several generations of pacification and Christianisation, the Indonesian New Order saw fit to revive it for the purposes of an internal security operation its military was carrying out on its border with the newly formed Federation of Malaysia (118-19). The border campaign was not directed at the Malaysian state (as was Sukarno’s earlier military adventure into North Borneo, known as *Konfrontasi*)\(^{35}\). It targeted residual elements of communist insurgents still operating along the border between North Borneo and Indonesian Kalimantan.

In post-war colonial Malaya, the British never faced a war of independence as the Dutch did in Indonesia. However, they did face re-establishing control in a war-torn, divided, multi-ethnic society. The combination of racial strife, labour militancy and a violent communist insurgency led the colonial government to introduce a state of emergency in 1948, lasting 12 years. Part of the British plan against the insurgents was to re-settle half a million rural Chinese, a tactic designed to deny the insurgency support in the countryside\(^{36}\) (Shamsul 2000: 95).

Following the anti-communist pogroms of 1965-66 which heralded the New Order, the West Kalimantan border area became highly militarised (as it had been during *Konfrontasi*). Ethnic Chinese had lived in the area since the seventeenth century (Peluso 2006: 114).

The military sought to evict Chinese farmers and traders from the border area as far back as the provincial capital, thus depriving the Sarawak People’s Guerrilla Force (PGRS) of an environment where they might gain a foothold on Indonesian territory. The tactic was to incite indigenous Dayaks against

\(^{35}\) *Konfrontasi* was a diplomatic and military campaign of President Sukarno launched in 1963 opposed to the incorporation of British North Borneo (later Malaysian Sarawak and Sabah) into an independent federation with the Malayan peninsula (Zainu’ddin 1968: 268-70).

\(^{36}\) Labour militancy in the rubber and tin sectors (vital to British interests) was supported by the Malayan Communist Party, a Chinese dominated organization (Shamsul 2000: 91).
their Chinese neighbours. This was put into effect by creating an atmosphere of fear among Dayaks that their common enemy – guerrilla or farmer - had a Chinese face. Acts of violence were committed against Dayak leaders and blamed on Chinese; false rumours were spread that Dayaks had been killed by Chinese guerrillas. This resulted (in the minds of Dayaks) in “the conflation of ‘Chinese’ with ‘communists’ in a manner that did not hold true in any other part of Indonesia during the anti-communist violence of the 1960s” (120).37

The military build-up was consummated in October 1967 when gangs of Dayak men and boys armed with bush knives, homemade guns and military-issue firearms evicted all Chinese men, women and children from their homes with the support of regular soldiers. Between 300 and 5000 were killed over a three-month period with more than 50,000 refugees. The military’s search for PGRS guerrillas in the border area continued for another seven years (113-14; see also Human Rights Watch/Asia 1997c).

The strategic deployment of Dayak violence against ethnic Chinese – an episode known as Demonstrasi Cina – was preceded by the revival of the Borneo Headhunter, representations that helped to build an atmosphere of psychological terror (for Dayaks), associated as it was with impending tribal war.

In a cultural politics of violence, military strategists worked with some local Dayak leaders to use selected Dayak cultural symbols and practices to mobilize West Kalimantan Dayaks against the rural Chinese (109).

Thirty years later, Dayak violence exploded again on the same plots of land, this time on a much larger scale and against migrants from the island of Madura. No other settler group – Chinese or otherwise – was targeted. Peluso argues that despite the absence of military manipulation in 1996-97, the

37 This appears to be disputed by Heryanto (1998); see also Kahn (1998: 6-7).
spectre of the 1960s military operation played an important role as a cultural symbol of ubiquitous Dayak violence. The cultural traits of headhunters had been conflated with the tactics of war (110).

Symbols of ritualised violence reinforced the headhunter image: passing the red bowl to summon allies to war, panglima (war magicians/generals), invulnerability rites, spirit possession, decapitations and the tariu war-cry to strike fear into the enemy. And yet, some aspects of Dayak mobilisation – the territorial movement of attackers, roadblocks, patrols - were not traditional to headhunting and had more in common with modern territorial defence and security derived from the military (117). Drawing on the common cultural memory of Demonstrasi Cina, guerrilla warfare became the underlying modus operandi of organised slaughter in the 1990s, while appropriating ‘traditional’ symbols of violence and terror to mobilise people and to inspire fear (110).

In the 1960s it took several years of coercive manipulations before Dayaks could be turned against the Chinese; in the 1990s, no such cajoling was needed to mobilise Dayaks against migrant Madurese. Construction of the Madurese enemy was built on Dayaks’ habitual experience of Madurese violence in fairly recent history (124). Stereotyped in official and media discourse (‘the former headhunters of Borneo’), Dayaks re-appropriated “ethnicised images of violence” and turned them into effective tools of war (126); in a similar way did Peruvian Indians, once de-humanised as ‘primitives’ by Spanish colonisers, harness colonial perceptions as a form of collective empowerment against their long-time tormentors (Taussig in Peluso 2006: 109).

The disbelieving tone of foreign reporters – such as Richard Lloyd Parry in his memoir In the Time of Madness – reinforces ethnic strangeness and isolation and intimates that incomprehension may be a safe position from which to survey the descent into primordialism:
An extraordinary thing had taken place, and passed by with no more than a glance from the outside world: an ethnic war of scarcely imaginable savagery, fought according to principles of black magic, a couple of hours’ drive from a modern city of banks, hotels and airports (Parry 2005: 24).

Unlike most journalists, Parry did travel the backroads of West Kalimantan and attempted to make sense of the carnage to himself and to his readers. He gathers testimony on why the Dayaks have lashed out so ferociously – economic and political marginalisation, loss of land to migrants, alienation and violations of their customary law. And he tries to fathom the almost universal loathing of ethnic Madurese, who are said to possess “totally different traditions” (36).

Unable to penetrate the inner dynamics of Dayak group consciousness, he succumbs to an explanation of agency that reaffirms local myth:

There were no ringleaders, no decision-making process, and no responsibility. The Dayaks had been provoked, and had gathered together to hold a ceremony. With that decision they had surrendered their free will to the spirits (41).

But presumably, attackers were sufficiently conscious to assiduously avoid pillaging village mosques which could have regionalised the conflict along religious lines. When he returned two years later in 1999 to renewed clashes, Parry discovered the battlelines had become more complicated. In Singkawang and Sambas, Dayaks had attacked Madurese in February and March but this time ethnic Malays – indigenous to the coastal area and Muslim – had joined in the carnage (60-71); young Malays were even mimicking some of the headhunter rituals of their Dayak neighbours (68-70).
Peluso argues that these long-established rituals and cultural myths were used by Dayaks themselves to lay claim to an “ethnicized symbol of terror, violence and power” while others, including journalists, used them routinely as an all-purpose explanatory tool “to ‘identify’ people, to ‘contextualize’ complex stories of communal violence in simplistic images of a poorly understood and ultimately misrepresented cultural history” (Peluso 2006: 124).

Official discourses, local and global, have wrangled with this central truth, and the necessary follow-up question: if this is war, what kind of war is it? Journalists, simply by writing about war and conflict, cannot help but sketch its dimensions.

In the Dayak case, some researchers have approached this question from the point of view of recent history and point to the erosion of the Dayak economic base through government-controlled plantation projects that have proved efficient at “separating the local communities from their natural resource base and also from the full products of their own daily labour” (Dove 1997). Or Dayak communities have been de-stabilised as a by-product of large-scale development projects on Dayak land and transmigration settlement programmes (Loveband & Young 2006: 150). Such projects received the support of international finance which adds weight to Hamelink’s global assertion that “the causes of most ethnic conflicts in which civil and political rights are brutally ignored, are socio-economical (1997: 30; see also Stewart 2005).

In addition, it is cited, the central government has never recognized traditional Dayak land tenure and considers both their reserves and garden plots to be state land, available for commercial uses such as logging. Greater penetration of the Dayak interior, increased competition for resources and the accumulated frustrations finally erupt in attacks on a familiar target - the Madurese (Human Rights Watch/Asia 1997c).
A Dayak researcher has criticised these socio-economic perspectives, not as false in themselves, but as wrongly applied to the collective violence against Madurese. Rejecting “revenge” or “ethnic cleansing” as a motive, John Bamba has stated that Dayaks acted out of obligation to customary (adat) laws:

Adat demands that a threat to the village from outside must be settled through discussion and, where necessary, ritual. Where this breaks down, or the outsider refuses to acknowledge and submit to the process of adat, the threatened villagers are forced to choose from between them a person who is the most capable of standing up to the enemy disturbing them. This person is called pangalangok in the Kanayatn Language, or panglima [general] by other Dayak (Bamba 1998).

During the New Order, there is a history of violent clashes between the two groups (Human Rights Watch/Asia 1997c); but the scale of the violence in the late 1990s far exceeded anything previously and left thousands (mainly Madurese) killed and tens of thousands displaced (Loveband & Young 2006: 150). Bamba is dismissive of the HRW report, especially the argument that only third party intervention (provocateurs) can explain the scale of the violence. He also rejects its solutions based on greater state intervention as interfering in the adat process (Bamba 1998).

This Dayak perspective (or cultural frame) is significant in its contempt for portrayals of Dayak violence as revenge attacks, arising from material deprivation. Instead, it characterizes group violence as “an empowered act”, giving effect to indigenous law. In this sense, communal war is not a sign of (Dayak) social breakdown, but, on the contrary, a powerful act of solidarity and group cohesion. But war is avoidable by submitting to the demands of this law. All wars with Madurese, Bamba claims, originated with the killing of a Dayak where the Madurese refused to submit to adat law.
Culture differences in social relations may be amplified in times of friction. Madurese as dry-rice farmers require an individualistic, self-protecting work ethic; Dayaks (though not usually wet-rice farmers) share a cooperative work culture with the *padi* (wet rice) culture of coastal Malays and Javanese where communal cooperation is important for maintaining irrigation systems and the cultivation cycle (Kuntowijoyo in Loveband & Young 2006: 152). The loosely structured and dispersed nature of village life on Madura mitigates against state control; in matters of honour, outside interference is not accepted (de Jonge 2002: 152).

By the time of the conflagration of the late 1990s, the stereotype of the Madurese enemy as ‘thieves’ and ‘violence-prone’ was well entrenched and generalized through national discourses (Peluso 2006: 123-24). What was startling about local media reports at the time was the absence of any that condemned the Dayak rampage. It was as if the Madurese had it coming to them. So, is the Madurese ethnic stereotype a self-serving invention by rival ethnic groups, or does their cultural history really render them – wherever they settle – ‘neighbours-from-hell’? (Parry 2005: 20-21).

A sociological explanation begins three hundred years ago in the Dutch colonial period. The Madurese princes sought the protection of the Dutch after breaking away from the Javanese kingdom. Unlike direct colonial rule in Java, the princes were given a free hand. In return, they supplied troops to the Dutch to put down various uprisings across the archipelago. They took as much tribute and crop yield as the peasant population could scratch from the barren earth which led to abuses, untouched by changes in other parts of the colony opened up by trade (de Jonge 2002: 149-50).

The corrupt rulers resisted protests and forfeited the trust of the peasants. Madura became an extremely violent place and awash with weapons. With a
weak and corrupt central authority, Madurese developed what de Jonge quaintly calls ‘violent self-help’. Criminality did decline as the colonial government and later the Indonesian central government intervened. But this did not eliminate violent self-help - especially in matters of personal honour. The cultural practice of carok (violent revenge killing) became engrained, particularly in rural areas. The practices persist to the present day especially over issues in which “local morality and national law do not tally with one another” (Husken & de Jonge 2002b: 8).

The inheritance of persistent cultural beliefs and practices can help explain the basis of anti-social and violent behaviour. Cultural orientations towards conflict, as noted above, also appear to be at loggerheads. Madurese deal with disputes in a more individualized manner where swift vengeance is regarded as honourable. Dayaks, and for that matter Malays, abhor the practice of Madurese carrying their sickles in public, and the quick resort to violence that it signifies. For Dayaks, this is a violation of adat; frustration with habitual violent encounters with Madurese justifies their violent responses. This is not headhunting revived, as Malays too were key players in the 1999 attacks on Madurese settlements (Bamba 2005). The spilling of Dayak blood or affronts to honour demand collective responses – fortified by ritual - against the collective threat. The Madurese embody such a threat (Loveband & Young 2006: 152)

Bamba does concede, though, that “disputes over resource management, economic and political power, and the absence of the rule of law” underlie the conflict (2005). Reclaiming land lost to Madurese underlies the material contestation between ethnic contenders. But Peluso maintains that land recovery was not the strategic goal of the expulsions. They are nonetheless significant in the Dayak-Madurese war for their symbolic value (2006: 112). Despite the material depredations suffered by Dayaks, their long resistance to outsiders is a sign of long-lasting cultural conflict which no peace agreement
or territorial expulsions are likely to resolve. In contrast to more conventional battles over strategic resources or territory, these cultural conflicts are quite stable over time and according to Shinar, are likely to move not towards ‘resolution’ but ‘transformation’ where the conflict moves to a new phase (2003: 3-4).

Incompatible and potentially combustible cultural beliefs and practices were all at play in West Kalimantan’s social environment in the late 1990s. The political economy of the region brought changes and stresses that sharpened rather than blended ethnic boundaries. This created space for the enlargement of Dayak identity. The political consciousness that coalesced made enemies of the most conspicuous violators of Dayak collective honour. Long memories of Dayak communal violence and tribalism were re-fashioned as a potent weapon of cultural resistance and Dayak ethnicity re-deployed as a tactic of war.

The above analysis allows us to speak of a new kind of organised violence – different from the mass warfare that emerged from the modern revolutions at the end of the 17th century, rooted as they were in nationalism and characterised by professional, bureaucratic armies. These are wars of collective identity – late 20th century post-modern, ‘culture’ wars – sprung from the faultlines within and between disintegrating or de-stabilising transitional nation-states.

This approach broadly validates the constructivist paradigm where a community ‘constructs’ its own identity discursively and politically, in response to prevailing cultural and historical conditions. However, Wee & Jayasuriya (2002) claim that constructivism is too rigid to reveal why political conflict becomes refracted through ethnicity rather than other identities, such as class (476-77). Assertions of national and ethnic identity emerge within spaces produced by political negotiation and bargaining between group interests and
coalitions at both the centre and the periphery. To the extent that the distance between centre and periphery widens, so too does space for negotiation contract. An ever-widening disparity (material and discursive) leads to conflict and eventually war.

[I]dentity itself becomes a political resource used by the state and in turn by local leaders and groups for their own interests (477).

Such eruptions, Arjun Appardurai has put forward, turn on disjunctures or “the distorted relationship between daily, face-to-face relations and the large-scale identities produced by modern nation-states” (1996: 154). The distortions can be triggered by the violation of sacred law (Dayaks) or by global events that ripple down to the street and neighbourhood. Either way, there is a collective sense of treachery and betrayal, of “knowing who the Other was and of rage about who they really turned out to be” (154).

When these identities are portrayed as primary (indeed as primordial) loyalties by politicians, religious leaders, and the media, then ordinary people are lured to act as if only this kind of identity mattered and as if they were surrounded by a world of pretenders (155).

ii) Centre-periphery cultural politics in Indonesia 1998-2000

- Ethno-religious identities in the unitary state

Colonial history abounds with examples of the road to independence and statehood becoming bogged down in ethnic political identities. ‘National’ community was so much more easily imagined thanks to missionary endeavours to transcribe unwritten languages into educational forms. Tribal
identities were subsumed into larger ethnic groupings and validated by ‘official’ written *lingua franca* in mission-run schools. Dominant print dialects created “languages-of-power” which broke administrative boundaries. Once created, they could be exploited for political ends (Anderson 1990: 45; Appardurai 1996: 28).\(^3\)

Urbanisation accelerated the process where competition for jobs was more likely to solidify ethnic solidarity and foster the idea of single ‘ethnic’ nationalisms. Politicians became “ethnic entrepreneurs” delivering the spoils of office back to their kinship, clan and ethnic supporters (Meredith 2005: 155-56).

This tendency towards political clientelism, ‘ethnic capture’ (of jobs, political office) and their often violent breakdown at moments of political crisis is the central paradigm for the cultural politics played out between the Javanese centre and ethnically-mixed peripheral regions of the Indonesian archipelago.

Chapter Three outlined the key tenets of Indonesian national ideology and how the logic of *Pancasila* was adapted to the needs of New Order developmentalist thinking. But, as earlier mentioned, it was not Indonesia’s ‘original sin’ at the regime’s birth (anti-communist purges) (Farid 2005) that created the blueprint for the political centre’s rule over the archipelagic regions. That political moment was July 1959 when President Sukarno reverted to the 1945 constitution with the support of the military. The reversion, after 10 years of multi-party parliamentary contestation, was a triumph for its chief drafter Supomo and his integralist notion of Indonesia as organic union of state and society.

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38 The power of mass literacy and its large-scale projects of ethnic affinity without the need for face-to-face communication, Appardurai describes as “the paradox of constructed primordialism” (1996: 28).
After 1965, when centralised power coalesced into a power-sharing alliance between civilian bureaucrats and army generals, diverse and politically-empowered regional centres did not fit the organic union that underlined New Order rhetoric of stability and development. Bureaucratic authority in Jakarta became synonymous with its national development agenda. A state culture thus asserted an ideological claim over its geographical dominions in the outer islands. That dominion encompassed official notions of national belonging and the state’s exemplary place at their centre.

Power was extended outwards by the creation of administrative units; the centralised state thus severed the link between local ethnic self-identity and self-government. The system was inimical not just to political pluralism in the regions but also to cultural heterogeneity.

Integralism, national unity, *Pancasila, dwifungsi* ([military] dual function) and the territorial organization and strategy of the army all demanded and took for granted a uniform identification with the Republic of Indonesia that transcended particularistic loyalties to region, ethnicity or religion (Loveband & Young 2006: 154).

Indonesia’s unitary status flowed from its war of independence in the late 1940s when Dutch forces tried to fragment the republican movement by military and diplomatic means, including holding some fortified enclaves (Zainu’ddin 1968: 232-33). Unity triumphed because “the association of federalism with Dutch puppet states made the idea anathema to nationalists” (Liddle 1997: 285). The ascendancy of a unitary state might not have been achieved without some strategic victories in the early life of the nation: in 1950 former Ambonese members of the Royal Netherland Indies Army declared an independent Republic of South Maluku (RMS) which, once suppressed, set itself up in exile in the Netherlands; then the national army crushed anti-centrist regional rebellions in Sumatra and Sulawesi led by military officers demanding changes to armed force structure discriminating
against the regions outside Java (Liddle 1997: 287; (Zainu’ddin 1968: 254-59).

But by the time the unresolved parliamentary debate over religion and state was silenced with the switch to Guided Democracy in 1959, an extra-parliamentary guerrilla movement had been active for a decade in pursuit of an Islamic republic. *Darul Islam* was based in West Java and Aceh with support centres in South Sulawesi and Kalimantan. Its militia were descended from units of the Islamic Army of Indonesia active during the Japanese occupation and, before the Dutch defeat in 1949, had waged war against both Dutch and republican forces. The movement was not silenced by Sukarno’s republican soldiers until 1962 (Zainu’ddin 1968: 234, 249-50).

Given this colonial and early post-colonial history of legal and philosophical authoritarian unity, it was logical for Indonesia’s rulers to develop ways of managing and, when necessary, suppressing challenges to state authority. The most thoroughgoing and pervasive policy during the New Order was discussed in the last chapter, namely, the emasculation of politics in the civic sphere. It begins with the destruction of competitive party politics in the early seventies. Its administrative extension to the regions operated at both an institutional level (mass corporatism) and at a territorial and provincial level (centralised civilian and military postings) right down to the village level. Its territorial military command operationalised *dwi fungsi* - the fusion of political and security doctrine. This was overlaid with a matrix of surveillance agencies that policed and informed on any political activity outside the system (Tanter 1990).

Part of this doctrine was that cultural difference – as vast as it was across 4000 miles of archipelago – was a dangerous source of politicisation that, if left unchecked, could threaten the stability of the republic. This was the essential New Order view of competitive parliamentary politics in the 1950s. The national motto – unity-in-diversity – like *Pancasila*, had a very particular
New Order meaning. Multiethnicity in the form of hundreds of cultural groups could be celebrated within the encompassing hearth of the greater Indonesian family.

As much as the ruling elite - like Sukarno before them - controlled the symbols of national unity and loyalty, it was apparent to all that Indonesian society was riven by ethnic cleavage - in Liddle’s schema, along three faultlines: religious, racial and cultural/regional (Liddle 1997).

There are five official religions in Indonesia: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism and Buddhism. Adherents are heavily concentrated in regional ethnic groups, for example, Islam on Java among Javanese and Sundanese; Christians among Batak of North Sumatra and parts of eastern Indonesia (e.g. Flores, Ambonese in southern Maluku, Papua). Balinese are mainly Hindu, ethnic Chinese mainly Buddhist but many are Christian.

Within Islam, there are three main streams of adherents: Javanese syncretists, traditionalists and modernists (sometimes called reformists). The least Islamic are the syncretists who mix traditional Javanese beliefs with Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic elements. As every Indonesian must designate one official religion, syncretists are nominal (abangan) Muslims.

Modernists tend to be urban based, educated in Western-style schools and reject Sunni orthodoxy in favour of a direct interpretation of the Koran who draw theological inspiration from the bearers of modernist Islam who migrated from the Middle East in the late 19th century (Liddle 1997: 275-76).

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39 The Indonesian word Kristen does not translate as ‘Christian’: it means Protestant; a separate term - orang Katolik - is used for Catholics.
The centralised state has been both a response to perceived existential dangers of diversity and an incubator for ethnic and religious grievance that burst into the open when the New Order fractured in 1998. One organising principle of regional resentment has been against ‘Javanisation’ – the belief that centralised policymaking has been a vehicle for Javanese majority domination. This has been expressed both in terms of privileging the majority’s group interests and also a broader cultural hegemony – an attempt to impose Javanese ‘feudalistic’ values of hierarchy on more egalitarian non-Javanese cultures (279). As Budianta notes –

The President misused the Javanese culture of politeness and harmony to instil obedience...The appointment of Javanese military officials as local administrative and military rulers throughout Indonesia was another example of internal colonialization...The New Order culture is basically paternalistic, with the power centralized in the metropolis, and more specifically in the hands of the president, who behaves in the manner of a Javanese king (2000: 116).

This has been reinforced by specific policies such as transmigration. This New Order, World Bank-supported population policy involved subsidised resettlement of poor farmers from heavily-populated Java and Bali to less densely-populated areas in Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and Irian Jaya. Elite engineering of demographic change was implemented through a series of five-year plans, the goals of regional economic development became subordinated to bureaucratic and military interests (Tirtosudarmo 2005: 61). Indeed, population distribution was a means of ‘geographic integration’ designed to support national defence doctrine. Populations were positioned as strategic human resources to be drawn on to resist “subversion, infiltration and invasion” (Sugardo in Tirtosudarmo 2005: 62).

The alliance between an empowered military and economic technocrats legitimised nationalist imaginings by making it seem possible that “society can
be engineered through rational and systematic planning to achieve...a unified, secure and prosperous nation” (Tirtosudarmo 2005: 64). Such an alliance forced a convergence of historical forms – Javanese hierarchical power, colonial bureaucratism and modern developmentalism - into a society-wide solution driven by five-year plans and the exigencies of donor allocations. This technocratic utopianism (my term) ignored or suppressed ethnic differences and claims to recognition in favour of “elitist illusions of a harmonious and conflict free society” (64).

The ‘economic-miracle’ discourse – the transformation from agricultural to industrial society - Tirtosudarmo notes, was told in essentially positive terms by academic researchers who praised Indonesia’s modern transition right up to the time of the Asian monetary crisis that precipitated the collapse of the New Order. He cites, as an example, economic historian Hal Hill’s *The Indonesian economy since 1966: Southeast Asia’s emerging giant* (1996). Economic writers, likewise, drove this discourse with *The Economist* in 1994 (31 October) predicting Indonesia would join the top five leading economies (see Budianta 2000: 125).

What Suharto’s developmentalist state looked like from the vantage point of Indonesia’s multiplicity of cultural communities is not easy to discern. But clearly not all groups interacted with the state in a uniform way. Centrist policies were designed to be all-pervasive and reach down to every village, but at the grassroots, belonging to the Indonesian family meant different things as distance (geographical and conceptual) from the Javanese centre grew. Fachry Ali cites the case of a peripheral village in southern Maluku inhabited by a small but distinct group called the *Nuaulu*. Such distinctiveness is marked by a traditional belief system still intact in contrast to the much larger surrounding settlements which are populated by Christians and Muslims with whom they interact. For the Nuaulu, the Indonesian nation is part of the
outside world. They witnessed the crushing of a local separatist movement in the 1950s that made them aware of the Indonesian state (Ali 1997: 188).

Experience of ‘Indonesian state culture’ is through participation in modern state ceremonies but the Nuaulu’s contribution (ritual dances), Ali argues, is not sincere and is emptied of its semantic content. They only participate in such rituals as Nuaulu, not as Indonesians. Indonesian state culture is just another intrusion to be tolerated (189).

Similarly, Christian highlanders in Central Sulawesi stood in opposition to the state bureaucracy. The Christianity that Dutch Calvinist missionaries planted in the highlands in the early 20th century entrenched a bureaucratic church hierarchy that competed with secular state policies by re-working local ethnicity in religious terms. Church and kinship leaders – who were one and the same – resisted state assumptions that “the local and particular can be translated into core national values” (Schrauwers 2003: 131).

These almost alien encounters are contrasted with the place of the Javanese in state culture where the distinction between Indonesia and Java is blurred. The reason can be traced to the Javanese experience of colonial rule. The Dutch, based in Batavia, extended control over Java in the 18th century through strategic military intervention in wars of succession within the kingdom of Mataram. By assisting the victorious party, the Dutch were able to negotiate favourable treaty terms which preserving political differences across the island that supported their policy of divide-and-rule.40

Managed by a Dutch district head (Resident) in concert with a native overlord (Regent) and Chinese middlemen, tribute flowed from the peasantry to the sultan and up to the colonial rulers. The divided Javanese kingdoms were

40 The third war of succession led to the partition of Mataram (central & east Java) in 1755 and saw the Dutch establish their own candidate in Solo as a rival to the Sultan of Yogyakarta (Zainu’ddin 1968: 111)
largely pacified and sealed off from the outside world where the society increasingly “looked backward rather than forward, preserving the old rituals even when these were cut off from the realities which had given them their meaning” (Zainu’ddin 1968: 113).

After the defeat in 1830 of Diponegoro, a prince from central Java who led a guerrilla war against the Dutch, the colonial power consolidated its control of land use by compulsory control of much arable land and labour to turn a profit from export crops. Agriculture was expanded and diversified in the latter part of the century to allow for private (European) investment in plantations that serviced the demands of European industrialism (Zainu’ddin 1968: 128-33).

Colonial policy at this time was tempered by the political influence of Dutch liberals in the (Netherlands) metropolis that led at the turn of the century to the Ethical Policy, driven by a recognition that metropolitan prosperity had been achieved on the back of the Javanese peasantry (140-41).

Ali, drawing on Geertz, argues that colonisation rendered Javanese village life formless and vague; that is, its goal was to commandeer its productive resources to extract a surplus while leaving the social structure undisturbed: “Java’s crops were to come into the modern world, but Java’s people were not” (Ali 1997: 190). The layers of hierarchy, in colonial times, that shielded “the Javanese village from the presumptively destructive forces of the rationalized, modern West” (190) were re-constituted as New Order paternalism to promote “definitions of Javaneseness as a means through which to glorify the acquiescence of self to the greater good of the whole” (Berman 1998: 10). In this historical context, it is possible to see Indonesian nationhood as a triumphant re-construction of Javanese collective identity and values: the ‘nation’ as a tool for their cultural revival (Ali 1997: 191), with potent political implications for all who bear the Indonesian name.
Thus Indonesian developmentalism in the Suharto period - led by Javanese bureaucrats in Jakarta - was delivered to the far reaches of the archipelago in cultural nationalist terms (Wee & Jayasuriya 2002: 481)\(^{41}\).

Javanese ethnic consciousness was also bound up with Islamic identity. Despite the historical divisions between different regions and centres of power, a ‘Javanese’ identity was discernible by the early 18\(^{th}\) century, with Islam being one of its central markers (Ricklefs 2000: 35); the holiness of warrior pursuits against ‘the enemies of Islam’ was a theme of war preparations and became a powerful mobilisational tool against the Dutch or enemies aided by them (36).

The 20\(^{th}\) century distinction in Islam between devout (santri) and nominal (abangan), Ricklefs argues, originates from Dutch colonial repression of Muslims who used their religion as a symbol of protest; conversely, those who did not make their faith an emblem of defiance were rewarded. At the santri end, those Muslims influenced by the reformist movement of proselytisers from the late 19\(^{th}\) century became more pious. The division was evident in the early 1900s within the nationalist movement and came to a head in the 1950s when secular nationalists triumphed politically over advocates of Negara Islam (Islamic state). However, in Ricklefs’s historical scheme, such a split in Javanese society represents a one hundred year interlude and since the 1960s has been declining “as the Islamization of Javanese society resumed its pre-nineteenth-century momentum” (37).

- Religious identity in the regions

\(^{41}\) The term coined by Jayasuriya for this form of nationalism is ‘reactionary modernist’ (Wee & Jayasuriya 2002: 481)
It is important to recognise that, unlike traditional Javanese power emanating from the *kraton* (the king’s palace), Islam came to Indonesia’s regions independently of the Javanese kingdoms which nonetheless periodically propagated the faith to rally against colonial intrusion. In fact, some of the staunchest resistance to Dutch hegemony came from the most devoutly Islamic communities outside Java.

This was true of the Aceh kingdom (at the western end of Sumatra) which was one of the earliest regions to be settled by Arab Muslim traders, who may have reached Sumatra as early as the 7th century (Bakti 2000e: 143) prior to Islam’s spread from west to east in the 15th and 16th centuries. The fall of the great trading kingdom of Malacca (which controlled the Malacca sea lanes between the Malay peninsula and Sumatra vital to the spice trade) to Portuguese sailors in 1511 diverted Muslim traders to Malacca’s rival port of Aceh. By the start of the 18th century, Aceh’s traditional (female) rulers were replaced by religious (male) leaders, a conflict between local *adat* (custom) and Islamic authority that was to be played out many times over across the archipelago (Zainu’d’din 1968: 81-84).

A formal treaty respecting Aceh’s sovereignty lasted only 30 years when Dutch encroachments on Sumatra led them into open conflict with the Acehnese from 1873. Despite the capture of the Sultan’s palace, the Acehnese fought a long guerrilla war until the turn of the century, succumbing only to superior weaponry backed by Dutch-led local troops from various regions (including Ambon) and the successful strategy of dividing local *adat* chiefs from religious leaders (134-35).

In fact, indigenous resistance to colonial intrusions had long been sustained through mobilisation of the *ummat* (Muslim community). Javanese *santri* Muslims had rallied to the Acehnese cause when the leadership of that war fell to charismatic *ulama* (Islamic preachers) who rebuked Dutch entreaties with calls for them to convert to Islam (Reid 2004: 42-43).
It is important to realise the complexity of religious and power relations in the
development of the Indonesian state. From first contact with Europeans,
Muslim rulers used these visitors to shore up their power against fellow, but
rival Muslim states. Tactics of military aggression and diplomacy were
alternately employed in the eastern outer islands as first the Portuguese and
then the Dutch established factories, secured trade monopolies and built
fortresses and administrative centres while coopting local rulers into the
colony’s political economy. The Portuguese won the race to reach the Spice
Islands (Maluku) in 1522 and promptly exploited the rivalry between the
northern sultanates of Ternate and Tidore (two neighbouring islands
abundant in clove), establishing a base on the former and alienating the latter
(75). By allowing the Portuguese to build a fortress on his island, the sultan of
Ternate sought to assert political pre-eminence over the rival sultanates of

In Makassar, a port on the spice route due west of Ambon, the Muslim ruler
opened his harbour to both Dutch and English merchants, denying the Dutch
monopoly rights. Its kingdoms had trade rivals at the northern tip of the
island (now Sulawesi) at Manado and to their east at Ternate. Closer to
home, the Buginese states were traditional enemies as were the Butonese. In
1641, Malacca fell to the Dutch and within twenty years, despite an alliance
with the English, the Makassarese were defeated by Dutch forces in cahoots
with their enemy and fellow Muslims, the Buginese (Zainu’ddin 1968: 87-88).

An important progenitor to Indonesian Islamic identity (including its regional
varieties) was a mass movement traceable to the early 20th century. A
combination of commercial pressures on the indigenous trading class,
Western-educated urban intellectuals and Islamic leaders with grassroots
influence saw the birth of *Sarekat Islam* in 1911. An alliance of Javanese, Sumatran and Arab merchants opposed to Chinese competition solidified around a faith-based movement for indigenous social advancement. Its leadership included independent Muslim scholars with reformist leanings who were not tied into the colonial machinery of state.

While beginning as a commercial association, *Sarekat Islam* soon acquired a religious aura and evolved into a kind of Muslim nationalism with a strong following among peasants, urban workers and religious *santri*. It became a vehicle for voicing resentment against the colonial government and its trappings: “Dutch superiority, *priyayi* [Javanese aristocratic] arrogance and the social barriers imposed on the native society” such as racially segregated education.

The emergence of a religious reform movement from the end of the 19th century had been activated by exchanges between Middle Eastern centres of Islamic study and scholars returning to the archipelago. At the same time the Colonial Ethical Policy broadened the chances of indigenous students receiving a higher (Western-style) education. This in turn drove the expansion of religious school networks by returning scholars to compete with Dutch-run Christian schools in the Dutch language (Bakti 2000b: 129-31).

Religious solidarity was further mobilised and politicised in response to Dutch policies encouraging Christianisation of the Javanese by favouring non-Muslims in key administrative posts and expanding Christian education and missionary activities (Adam 1995: 162). It led in 1912 to the establishment of *Muhammadiyah* to advance modern education with an Islamic foundation.

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42 Adam (1995) and Zainu’ddin (1968) both cite 1911 as the start date for *Sarekat Islam* whose original name was *Sarekat Dagang Islam*; but Bakti refers to two separate organizations called *Sarekat Dagang Islam*, one established in Batavia in 1909 and another in Solo, central Java in 1905 (2000b: 121).

43 By 1912, it had become the first Indonesian mass organization, with a membership of 100,000 (Adam 1995: 161) and by 1919 claimed 2 million members (Bakti 2000b: 122)
Allied with *Sarekat Islam*, its main purpose was to provide a Western-style formal education to Javanese children seen as indispensable to opportunities in the civil service.

Some of the forces propelling Indonesian Islamic reformation were not unique to Indonesia; in the first half of the century, the Muslim world faced massive changes to their life conditions. From living in mostly agrarian communities at century’s end, by mid-century, nationalist regimes launched ambitious programs of mass-education and mass-marketing which accompanied what Robert Hefner calls ‘detraditionalization’. Religious hierarchies were destabilised giving way to a newly pluralised social landscape and the emergence of younger religious activists prepared to challenge the monopoly of religious power enjoyed by classically trained religious scholars (*ulama*) (Hefner 2001).

In Indonesia, political engagement and conflict with colonial authority was unavoidable precisely because Islamic ideology remained fluid, avoided esoteric legal debate and exhorted followers to apply reason (*ijtihad*) to understand the place of religion in their increasingly modern lives. This encouraged a new ethic among Muslims to seek social solidarity in voluntary associations and sharpened bonds of common experience as colonial subjects (Bakti 2000b: 132-33).

Significantly, two of *Sarekat Islam’s* guiding lights were non-Javanese ethnic Minangkabau from West Sumatra, a region heavily influenced by Middle Eastern Islamic modernism.⁴⁴ Agus Salim and Abdul Muis helped to expand its influence in the outer islands. The movement was driven by intellectuals to varying degrees embracing international ideologies: Pan-Islamism and

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⁴⁴ The Minangkabau region of west Sumatra had experienced something of a reformation in the early 19th century when Muslim preachers returning from Arabia challenged the power of hereditary chiefs by attempting to impose Islamic law over *adat* law which up to that point had co-existed with Islam. The chiefs and nobles formed an alliance with the Dutch against the revivalists who, under Tuanku Imam Bondjol, led a 15-year guerrilla war until 1837 (see Zainu’ddin 1968: 123-27).
Communism. It was this dualism that ultimately split the movement and distanced it from its grassroots membership. Its santri wing further splintered when Western-educated reformists in the cities diverged with rural activists who went on to form Nahdlatul Ulama in 1926, a traditionalist social organization at odds with some modernist/reformist precepts and more tolerant of adat traditions practiced by its Javanese peasant constituency (Zainu’ddin 1968: 191-92)\textsuperscript{45}. Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah remain today the two largest and politically most important mass Islamic organizations in Indonesia.

The evolution of Sarekat Islam from trade association into a political party by 1923 underscores its progressive role in galvanising indigenous aspirations towards nationalist goals. According to Bakti, its national congress in 1916 was “the first time the idea of Indonesian independence was stated publicly and officially” (2000b: 137). Its reformist spirit drove group solidarities that were to form the basis of an Indonesian nationalism by transcending family, cultural, ethnic and racial boundaries (132)\textsuperscript{46}.

The mass movement spawned an Islamic ideology which equated with an anti-colonial Muslim nationalism, transforming the primordialism of culture and place into a unifying religious identity across the regions (Bakti 2000b: 135).

By the early 1920s, SI’s modernist momentum had produced a secular, communist wing (Sarekat Rakyat).\textsuperscript{47} Indeed, it was the secular nationalists, Bakti admits, who ultimately proved more experienced in the fight against

\textsuperscript{45} The rural Nahdlatul Ulama is based in East Java and follows the Syafi’i school of Sunni orthodoxy; Bakti remarks that traditionalists from NU dismiss city-based modernist scholars as ‘Wahhabists’, followers of a strict, puritanical form of Sunni Islam based on the Hanbali legal school (2000b: 126).

\textsuperscript{46} Bakti goes so far as to assert “it is not an exaggeration to say that Islam was the founder of a powerful Indonesian nationalism” (2000b: 134)

\textsuperscript{47} The Indonesian Communist Party of the early 1920s was the oldest and largest in Asia before it was suppressed by the colonial government in 1926 (see Reid 2004: 44)
colonialism by claiming the most powerful heroes and creating the most powerful myths (2000b: 161-62). One reason for this success, Reid suggests, was the belief within late colonial states (including Indonesia) that the secular ideology of Communism was best positioned to march subjugated peoples towards the dream of modernity (2004: 44-45).

When the (communist) dream was dashed in 1965-66, religion was institutionalised as a pillar of Pancasila. But syncretism and animism were not included in the five official faiths. It was their adherents on Java and among upland tribes who had suffered most from the massacres, perpetrated in large part by young Muslims against the ‘godless’ communists (Reid 2004: 45). Appalled by bands of Muslim youth taking part in the slaughter, 2-3% of abangan Javanese renounced Islam and converted to Hinduism or Christianity. Such a shift was tiny compared to those who simply adopted a more pious, depoliticised orientation to their Muslim faith in accordance with Government policy (Hefner 2001).

In spite of the conviction of 20th century Islamic modernists about the unifying force of their religion in Indonesian nationalism, the new nation was at independence not only one of enormous cultural diversity but also a multi-confessional one. Abangan Javanese (sometimes called Javanists) overlaid rather than replaced Hindu-Buddhist traditions and rituals with Islamic doctrine; Javanese peasants retained animist beliefs while incorporating Islamic rituals into a non-doctrinaire syncretism.

The political influence of modernist Islam after independence, therefore, should not be overstated. Sukarno’s rush to grab power in the late 1950s was

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48 Civilian vigilante groups were recruited and trained by the military, drawing especially on the Muslim youth group Ansor, a wing of the rural Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) (see Cribb 2000: 184)

49 Similarly, ethnic Bataks from North Sumatra adopted Christianity from German Lutheran missionaries in the 19th century but continued to live in their longhouses and attend churches, which today carry large bulls’ horns atop their steeples to ward off evil spirits.
encouraged by military officers of secular background who blamed Islamic activists for stirring rebellion in the regions and threatening the centralised national unity that they envisaged (Liddle 1996: 620).

In the first parliamentary elections in 1955, the Islamic party machine Masyumi won only 21% of the vote. Having been banned in 1960, the first New Order election in 1971 yielded its successor only 5.3% (Liddle 1997: 315). This set the scene for two decades of marginalisation by Suharto’s secular ‘Pancasila democracy’ culminating in the shooting of Muslim protesters at Tanjung Priok in 1984. The assiduous suppression under Suharto of political Islam up to the mid-1980s – discrimination, harassment and jailing of activists – was consistent with the emasculation of all political parties and their corporatisation. During this period, political Islam was ‘public enemy number two’ after Communism.

But some scholars argue that, paradoxically, New Order policies have over time produced a more pious ummat and a more uniformly Islamic culture (Liddle 1997: 312). This is attributed, they say, to the expansion and standardisation of formal education from primary school with the compulsory study of religion.

The toppling of Sukarno’s ‘Guided Democracy’ regime in an orgy of anti-communist violence in 1965-66 was carried out in collaboration with a broad range of Islamic groups. These groups, however, were wrong to believe their political support which helped establish Suharto’s military rule was anything more than a temporary alliance of convenience. President Suharto had no intention of sharing power with any mass political groupings, Islamic or otherwise. In the president’s eyes and those of his generals, political Islam

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Protests led by Muslim leaders took place in the context of regime policies of political marginalisation; after an incident at a prayer house involving security officers, protesters marched on an army post demanding the release of a number of detainees. Soldiers opened fire. Casualties ranged from 18 to hundreds. In the ensuing months, bombs exploded across Java (see Bertrand 2004: 77).
violated two central tenets of New Order *Pancasila* orthodoxy: a multireligious polity and national territorial integrity (Liddle 1996: 620-21).

The political suppression of Islam took place at an institutional level and was aimed at insuring against an Islamic revival. Compulsory religious instruction was placed in the hands of a corporatist Department of Religion, sidelining the political influence of ex-Masyumi activists and scholars and *Nahdlatul Ulama*. A foundation under Suharto’s patronage doled out huge subsidies for mosque construction. Personal piety among the Muslim majority was encouraged, politicisation of religion suppressed, if necessary, by force (Liddle 1996: 621-22).

The New Order was the first government to have significant resources to expand formal education in a modernising economy. The result of three decades of development with standardised religious education, Liddle argues, has led both to a more openly pious citizenry and a growing self-confident Muslim middle class. He believes this has caused the standard divisions – *santri* versus *abangan* and modernist versus traditionalist – to become attenuated (623). Similarly, Robert Hefner (2001) points to an Islamic revivalism from the late 1970s, ironically, fertilised in an environment hostile to public expressions of Islamic political community. Such renewal was partly the result of Islamic leaders changing their strategies, eschewing political confrontation in favour of infiltrating New Order institutions to advance Islamic interests. This translated to increased electoral support for Golkar in the 1987 elections (Bertrand 2004: 86).\(^{51}\)

Just as in the 18\(^{th}\) and 19\(^{th}\) century when Muslims avoided the colonial state by expanding their vast network of Qur’anic schools across the archipelago,

\(^{51}\) Behind this *pemikiran baru* (new thinking) were Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid. Wahid’s *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) had been weakened by the amalgamation of Islamic parties into the PPP and its accommodation with the ruling party in the late 1980s was an important early stage of the Islamisation of New Order institutions (Bertrand 2004: 86).
Muslim leaders directed their energies to religious proselytisation in the shadow of a repressive New Order state. But Islamic leaders were split into two camps as to where this revival might lead. One group – represented by ex-Masyumi politicians – longed for a revival of the party and ultimate capture of state power. These older modernists had observed the impoverishment of Muslim businesses since the 1950s and their further marginalisation by Suharto’s favouritism of ethnic Chinese crony capitalists. Their appeal to a poorer and less educated social base emphasised “not merely Islamic laws, but the strict, tough, and anticosmopolitan populist Islamism of the urban poor and lower middle class” (Hefner 2001).52

The second (younger) group of educated modernist Muslims had little experience of Muslim party politics and did not see state power as a political end-in-itself. Instead, they aimed at a Muslim ‘civil society’ capable of counterbalancing the power of the state and promoting a public culture of pluralism, participation and social justice. By the early 1980s, Hefner argues, the proponents of this ‘civil Islam’ had joined forces with the leadership of the traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama.53 By the late 1990s, Suharto was confronted by a mass alliance of modernist and traditionalist Muslims with a civil and pluralist Islamic agenda. Their rallying cry was not ‘Islamic state’ but a call for a diffusion of power from the state’s corrupt centre (Hefner 2001).54

53 Hefner argues elsewhere that in the late 1980s it was Suharto’s strategy to try to prise NU away from its pro-democracy allies. As this failed, Suharto courted Abdurrahman Wahid’s rivals in modernist Muslim organizations including newly-created ones such as ICMI (Hefner 2002: 758). This may go some way to explaining why Islamisation of the New Order in the 1990s had a decidedly modernist orientation.
54 What Liddle describes in the politics of the 1990s as ‘the Islamic turn’ (1996), Hefner characterises more as a ‘two-step’ process; under pressure from the “small dissident wing in ICMI” who used ICMI’s privileged status within the government to criticise Suharto (e.g. Amien Rais), the president turned to ultraconservative Islam and two previously oppositional Islamic groups: Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation)(DDII) and Komite Indonesia Untuk Solidaritas dengan Dunia Islam (Indonesian Committee for Solidarity with the
This split within the modernist camp, partly generational, can also be expressed at a conceptual level as different streams within Islamic thought over the relationship between state and religion, political democracy and Islamic political community:

The Qur’an offers only wisdom, not a detailed concept about society, politics or state. It leaves the details for Muslim thinkers and activists to formulate, according to the environment in which they live (Effendy 2005).

Various Western scholars have pronounced on the compatibility between Islamic beliefs and democratic practice – Ernst Gellner and Robert Bellah believe they are, Bernard Lewis thinks not and Samuel Huntington is undecided. The modernist formulation quoted above places the onus on intellectuals to devise a Muslim politics to realise ‘the totality of Islam’ in the lives of simple believers. This totality – a faith described as ‘omnipresent’ and ‘holistic’ – sometimes receives an ‘organic’ intellectual treatment whereby “the relationship between Islam and every aspect of life should be legalistic and formal”. Effendy ties this school of thought to Mohammad Natsir, a leading political thinker behind the 1950s struggle by Masyumi and others for an Indonesian Islamic state (Negara Islam). He (Effendy) argues that the failure of post-independence Islamic and secular nationalists to reach consensus in the constitutional debates was due to differences that were primarily legalistic/formalistic, rather than substantive.

The deadlock over the basic principles framing the Indonesian state derives from pre-war differences over how the ‘nation’ was to be imagined. The unifying role played by Islamic scholarly networks transcending locality and Muslim World)(KISDI). With the onset of the monetary crisis and currency collapse in early 1998, these two organizations were instrumental in framing the crisis as orchestrated by ‘enemies of Islam’ (ie Christians and Chinese): “the urban food riots that broke out across Indonesia targeted not regime officials but, rather, hapless Chinese storeowners” (Hefner 2002: 759).
tribe was challenged by those *abangan* nationalists for whom Islam was a foreign teaching imported into Javanese culture (Bakti 2000b: 145). The Islamic nationalists, on the other hand, rooted in the *Sarekat Islam* tradition, charged their secular opponents with promoting Javanese nationalism, rather than one uniting the whole archipelago. They accused them of wanting to revive a pre-Islamic Hindu-Buddhist empire, based on the idolatry of nationality. It was left to Sukarno to defend the secularists by asserting that Indonesian unity was not to be modelled on a European, chauvinistic nationalism, but one based on spiritual ideals. Natsir countered that only Islam could form the basis for a nation encompassing all ethnic groups given its unique role in planting the seeds of Indonesian unity (150).

Since the defeat of Islamic nationalists by the end of the 1950s, Islamic political thought underwent a gradual paradigm shift from symbols to substance, an emphasis on concrete meaning over political form as a path for Muslims to realise a democratic political life (Effendy 2005).

In the 1990s, Muslim leaders had gained a number of concessions from Suharto – establishment of an Islamic bank, strengthening authority of Islamic courts and lifting a ban on head veils in state schools, to name a few. Notably, Suharto approved and sponsored the establishment of an elite modernist organization known as The Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI), of which B.J. Habibie was its most recognisable public face.

There are different interpretations of the meaning of this development in Muslim politics and its historical timing (the early 1990s). In 1990, a Jakarta magazine editor was jailed over an article deemed offensive to *santri* (devout) Muslims. Four years earlier, a newspaper expose about President Suharto’s extreme wealth by an Australian journalist caused a diplomatic dispute between the two neighbours. It has since been asserted that despite public displays of anger at the president’s treatment, dissident generals allied to armed forces commander and Defence Minister Benny Murdani (a Catholic)
acted to keep the issue of presidential corruption alive in the public domain in order to advance their own factional interests (Kingsbury 1997: 136-40).

Suharto reasserted control through balancing competing factions within the Golkar and military bureaucracies. So the 1990s saw ICMI-affiliated appointees heading Golkar (Habibie and Harmoko) and the two top positions in the armed forces given to generals with santri backgrounds – Feisal Tanjung and R. Hartono (the so-called ‘green’ faction)(Liddle 1996: 630).

Despite these intrigues, ICMI was a rallying point and outlet for educated Muslims to discuss their faith and its articulation with New Order politics. Its arrival coincided with a period of relative political openness (keterbukaan) in the regime’s repressive history.

Amien Rais, a senior ICMI firebrand and head of Muhammadiyah, tried to turn a 1995 East Timorese protest against immigrant traders into a nationwide confrontation between Christians and Muslims. He also led a brief campaign in 1996 for an official inquiry into the 1984 shooting of Muslim protesters at Tanjung Priok (Liddle 1997: 315). ICMI ranks also featured some old-guard Masyumi followers of Natsir’s Islamic statism, but its modernist core was generally believed not to support a Negara Islam political agenda. Its middle-class members, in fact, presented themselves as having much to contribute to New Order developmentalism through their technical skills and advocacy of manpower development. Likewise, ICMI – through its newspaper organ – Republika – challenged the crony-capitalist business model favouring ethnic Chinese and holding back pribumi (indigenous) businessmen, who are overwhelmingly Muslim (Liddle 1996: 618; Bertrand 2004: 86).

The aspirational voice of ICMI – at its elite and grassroots ends – was not a propagator of religious ideology but rather aimed against the New Order’s class of professional economists running macroeconomic policy since the
1960s. IMCI saw these ‘technocrats’ as devising policies that favoured the non-Muslim rich at the expense of the Muslim middle class and poor (Liddle 1996: 619). As astute as Suharto’s courting of Islam was, social changes – a better-educated and growing Muslim middle class - dictated an accommodation with Islamic interests (Bertrand 2004: 87).

In the post-independence era, Christian identity was represented by religious political parties, in the case of Protestants by Parkindo. The evolution of politico-religious communities under Sukarno, Schrauwers argues, can be traced back to ”Dutch definitions of religion….through the ‘Ethical Policy”’ (1998: 220).

Following the 1950s experience of the Darul Islam and Permesta regional rebellions against the state, the New Order’s Pancasila ideology sought to de-politicise ethno-religious identities to discourage ethnic separatism. This has involved a reversal of colonial era policy of recognising distinct cultural communities governed by their own adat in favour of subordinating adat law to a uniform national law run by a centralised bureaucracy. Subsequently, the New Order has sought to promote aspects of Toraja ‘culture’ and ‘tradition’ through state-sponsored events only so far as such timeless, ‘authentic’, ‘folk’ traditions reside within the national community as a whole (204; Redfield in Schrauwers 2003: 131). These new policies - in central Sulawesi and elsewhere - have created tensions of their own. The government’s re-definition of local (adat) culture in de-politicised, pre-Christian, animist terms often collides with the more politically salient Christian self-definitions of ethnic identity (Schrauwers 1998: 222-23).

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55 In national elections in 1955, the Indonesian Protestant Party received about 2% of the vote. All Christian parties were later forced to amalgamate in 1973 with a dominant Nationalist Party to form Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (PDI).

56 Accordingly, Budianta describes the New Order’s cultural discourse in terms of “the glorification of cultural heritage, based on an essentialist notion of culture as ideal values to be excavated from the archaeological past and to be sanctified and preserved as a normative structure” (2000: 116).
Yet, there are still historical continuities in the exercise of administrative and political power by the centre over its peripheral subjects. Where colonial governors defined ethnic boundaries to harmonise indirect rule and aid missions, New Order bureaucrats have amalgamated regional ‘cultures’ to fit the administrative and politico-military needs of each Indonesian province (204). The Ethical Policy’s manipulations of traditional governance, rationalised through adat area studies supplied by missionaries, were extended to the economic sphere. A massive resettlement by the Dutch of Toraja highlanders saw them abandon their mountain villages, ‘inferior’ communal ownership and set up on the plains as freeholding wet-rice farming households (Schrauwers, undated).

Attempts to raise the productivity of wet-rice cultivators in the late 20th century, through new seeds, fertilisers (the green revolution) drew them further into the orbit of moneylenders and merchants to whom they became debt dependent. Protestant highlanders remained largely subsistence farmers but to the extent they were drawn into the cash economy they generated debt for themselves and wealth for non-indigenous middlemen (Bugis, Makassar and Chinese). Many sold land to pay for their children’s education or paid bribes to secure government jobs (Sidel 2006: 157) and risked losing their land to transmigrant settlements over which communal title was not recognised. By the end of the New Order, many Protestant youth found themselves both landless and jobless (Aragon 2001: 56). Further encroachments by migrants in the late New Order plantation boom caused friction on ancestral land as customary practices were by-passed by entrepreneurial outsiders with government backing (57).

To survive, these farmers developed a moral economy – mobilising the social capital within kinship systems (e.g. family labour and land) - as a shield against the vagaries of the market and as a means of making commodity
production feasible.\textsuperscript{57} The Church supported them both as Christians and as oppressed farmers against local merchants and state officials who were both Muslim and from different ‘outsider’ ethnic groups. Schrauwers believes that it is these faultlines that are at the root of communal violence in the Lake Poso district from 1998 (Schrauwers, undated; Schrauwers 2003: 139).

Likewise development policies favouring resource appropriation by mobile outsiders with capital and market networks engendered opposing land use claims; but Protestants saw their declining economic status as engineered by increasingly ‘Muslim’ government officials who benefited from these commercial activities (Aragon 2001: 56).

Tensions emerged where the migrants found themselves in religiously mixed communities and where their numbers tilted the balance between religious communities (Bertrand 2004: 91-92). Where migrants were from diverse ethnic backgrounds, the ones that clashed with local populations tended to be those who established themselves within the small trade and business sectors. So economic displacement was significant in communal clashes in Irian Jaya between Papuans and traders from South Sulawesi, rather than poor farmers from Java who, in any event, were often sponsored transmigrants (93).

Notwithstanding discursive manipulations and demographic changes mentioned above, the New Order’s overall suppression of institutional development stunted the growth of cross-ethnic political interests and genuine political parties that might have served to carry them forward. Class-based political agitation – from the time of the PKI’s elimination – was nobbled in favour of a marriage between patrimonialism embodied in presidential authority and centrally controlled trickle-down economics. While

\textsuperscript{57} For an elaboration of the linkage of kinship, generosity and spiritual guidance by elders, and the cultural concept of \textit{posintuwu} (gift exchange) within the kinship sphere, see Schrauwers 2003: 138-40
outward expressions of communal conflict were officially taboo, Kingsbury argues that the suppression of non-communal political and social organization served to entrench communal difference (Kingsbury 2005a: 129). Communalism thus became the reified receptacle of accumulated group grievance.

- Between ethno-religious and political violence

War-making involves highly strategic sets of calculations over time that assess the capacity and motivation of fighting forces on both sides. The act of taking up arms is itself a powerful symbolic gesture, whether or not victory is at hand. Ethnic and religious communities – like Dayaks in West Kalimantan or Ambonese Christians – will assert their cultural autonomy against an existential threat. Where such communities remain homogenous, aggressive mobilisation based on ethnic or religious belonging is relatively straightforward with high levels of participation in the fighting; inter-national feuds, where fighting is assigned to a professional warrior caste drawn from a plural, multiethnic nation, require different communicative rituals to engender the support of dispersed populations. But like the Dayaks’ ‘passing of the red bowl’, international wars still require their home-fronts to participate in mass national ceremonies. Such rituals rely heavily on cultural and sacred symbols re-cast towards aggressive ends.

In the long history of centre-periphery exchange in the Indonesian archipelago, the steady erosion of local sovereignties often erupted in violent resistance. An Ambon native, Pattimura, led a revolt in 1817 against Dutch forces; soon after the triumph of nationalists in 1949, the captors of state power were confronted with another rebellion - Republik Maluku Selatan (RMS) secessionists – which included largely Christians but also some Ambonese Muslims. Both were crushed by exemplary metropolitan power - Pattimura hanged and RMS rebels killed or exiled (Pannell 2003b: 18-19). In
the wake of the *fin de siècle* Maluku wars, peacemaking dialogue – such as the Langgur Accords in 2001 – notably leaned towards local cultural solutions, constituting, postconflict, another assertion of sovereign power – albeit within a framework of nonviolence (25). This preference by local leaders for cultural revival and reclaiming of *adat* discourses delegitimises rational-bureaucratic forms of intervention and solutions.

Such preferences are revealing insofar as they privilege a return of power to traditional village leadership. For example, the Ambonese tradition of *pela* – inter-village alliances – is said to have long bound Ambonese Christian and Muslim villages together in mutual support. However, as Pannell argues, the custom only binds villages, not religious communities. Much of the tension which led to bloodletting and an exodus of refugees was between Ambonese Christians and migrants from South Sulawesi, the latter not sharing the *pela* tradition (25).

But while the true nature of the Maluku conflict may have been a much more cosmopolitan one than these local solutions acknowledge, they signify a point of continuity in the long historical negotiation of sovereign claims – a process of politico-economic exchange that ranges from outright warfare to accommodation and engages adversaries as close as neighbouring villages as well as regional contenders and distant metropolitan regimes. Thus, in Levi-Strauss’s terms, violence is an exchange relation - part of “the currency of difference”, and war a form of failed exchange (Winn 2003: 51). Malukan archipelagic peoples have long possessed a sense of statehood in their autonomous local states (*negeri adat*), supposedly abolished in 1979 during the New Order by the ‘village government law’ (Pannell 2003b: 27). The modernising project – with its attempt to monopolise the means of violence – necessarily violates indigenous sovereignty. It is these *adat* structures - long transformed by successive regimes (28) – that local leaders at Langgur sought to re-invent in their own terms to restore order and protection to their devastated communities.
The media solutions to violent conflict presented in Chapter 6 are based on a reading of how violence – as a discursive event – is embedded in the political and moral structures of these same communities. My argument, however, should firstly be disassociated from the ‘orientalist’ precepts often applied to societies that are yet to embrace Eisenstadt’s so-called ‘cultural program of modernity’. Anthropological observations concerning ‘cults of violence’ are so imprecise that they lend themselves to reductionist speculation. They also embody persistent ideologies that are more revealing of the unequal exchange relations that re-ordered local pre-modern states to the demands of colonial-era development. For example, in reference to Maluku, Pannell concludes:

To the European colonisers, local slavery, headhunting and inter-village hostility represented irrational, barbarous activities, driven by mutual cultural traditions, the inherently violent disposition of the population or by unchecked greed, which required regulation or complete eradication (2003b: 16).

In a narrow sense, political violence is code for state-sponsored violence or atrocities. Since the 1970s, the 1965-66 killings have become accepted as an instance of elite manipulation *par excellence* marking the birth of a new political order (Cribb 2005: 42). But state sponsorship is never purely local and has always had global dimensions. In the Dutch colonial era, these emerge from politico-administrative arrangements that encompass the economic system from imperial centre to colonial periphery. Whether it be the 19th century’s brutal exploitation of native labour tied to the Cultivation System, the criminalizing of indigenous trade relations to enforce Dutch monopolies, the strict policing around the lucrative teak and sugar plantations in Sumatra and Java (Cribb 2005: 48-50) or the deployment of the East Indies standing army against civil insurrections, law-and-order regimes express
aspects of state formation that do not fit the Weberian model of the state’s monopolisation of legitimate violence.

In fact, the colony’s coercive culture, notably the state’s cooption and empowerment of a criminal underclass in 19th century Java, reflected a stagnation of state formation (Schulte Nordholt, H. 2002: 40). Rather than replicating in the colony institutions of the metropolitan power, centre-periphery relations produced a distinct global division of labour. Such configurations are the subject of world-system theory advanced by Immanuel Wallerstein (1979). The global dynamics between centre and periphery produce different political orders depending on where you are within the global political economy. The extraction of surplus product from the periphery to service the centre requires regimes of coercion. A resort to state violence has been described as a rational response by comprador regimes who have adopted an agricultural export growth model and who are unable to stem social unrest resulting from economic dislocation (Mason & Krane in Campbell 2000: 10). Similarly, a neglected aspect of the anti-communist pogroms of the 1960s was the way they paved the way for the New Order’s economic strategy. State-sponsored violence – land evictions and property theft – cleared a path for accelerated capitalist expansion through control of land and labour for exports destined for investor nations (Farid 2005; Anderson 2001b: 13).

According to Cribb, this complementary but exploitative relationship between economic metropolis and regional hinterland creates tensions between legal universalism (one law for all) and legal pluralism, which favours a diversity of legal regimes for different populations (2005: 45-46). The latter was dominant in the colonial model and helped legitimise racial classification and slavery.
In Dutch colonies, legal pluralism can be traced to the mercantile objectives of the Netherlands trading company - VOC - which had neither territorial nor missionary ambitions. Despite its history of warfare and conquest, Cribb notes that at the height of its powers, the Netherlands Indies ruled half of the archipelago indirectly. That is to say, it was a highly decentralised system with fragmented legal regimes where “the colonial authorities were much less interested in the detection and punishment of crimes in regions away from European settlement and European economic interest” (48). In this way the Dutch could avoid an expensive universal legal system and concentrate legal and coercive resources in regions where they were considered most needed (50).

In any event, Cribb argues, the Dutch were “the least assimilationist of the major colonial powers” and, in matters of criminal law, their sympathy for legal pluralism ran deep. The desire to allow Indonesians, as far as possible, to operate under their own traditional legal practices led to their codification and incorporation into colonial law (51-53). Professed sensitivity to adat systems was a feature of Dutch modernism derived from a legal philosophy rooted in European Romantic legal thought (Bourchier 1999: 187-88); it was also a culturally relativist approach that accepted that indigenous conceptions of criminality deserved recognition and were demonstrably different to European (Weberian) ones (Cribb 2005: 51). None of this is to suggest that Dutch colonial penetration of traditional society was anything but deep and long-lasting. The hands-off approach within certain cultural spheres, including community justice, Cribb suggests, served to deflect hostility from the larger colonial intrusion. Village lynchings were partly a consequence of frustrations and anger which aspects of colonial rule inevitably created among its subjects (56-57).

This analysis has a number of implications. Firstly, the colonial state’s reluctance to impose legal uniformity across the archipelago and its plural, selective and instrumentalist approach to coercive power quarantined ‘a right
of vengeance’ within an indigenous, sovereign legal sphere. Secondly, it provides an insight into the origins of vigilantism in the contemporary era; if community spirit can be so aroused as to take spontaneous action against an individual thief threatening community harmony, it might also turn its hostility towards group targets. Partisan support or encouragement for such actions by security forces operating at the behest of their political masters open all manner of possibilities for politicised violence and its escalation.

In the period under study (1998-2000), the focus should not be on a bi-polar struggle between local cultural resistance at the political and geographic margins and the crushing conformity imposed by agents of the unitary state; rather it recognises that cultural traditions are transformed by successive regimes and revived to serve specific local and elite agendas. Creative governmentality rules, Pannell theorises, where a partial and incomplete process of nation-building produces violent conflict and chaos that is integral to state authority, and inherent in the normality that is created between the state and its citizens (2003: 30).

This normality, at a discursive level, has sprung from state discourses on national stability and state sovereignty. This analysis seeks neither to reproduce the ideological statements derived from these discourses nor to accept simplistic and static explanations of centre domination and control over regional peripheries; instead, this normalisation of violence can be understood by disentangling the ‘religious’ and ‘political’ descriptors as they are applied to violent events - as I have attempted to do earlier with the ‘ethnic’ tag attached to Dayak violence.

Standing in the way, in much Indonesian historiography, has been a conceptual separation of the cultural sphere from overarching modern political discourses. To correct this, Henk Shulte Nordholt (2002) has sought to map
these cultural themes as they recur and tie them to Indonesia’s colonial and postcolonial political history. The result is a ‘genealogy of violence’ that shows remarkable continuity as violence is re-constituted through various periods.

His central premise is that there has been no decisive break in the state’s coercive relationship with its subjects since colonial times. Dutch colonial power in the East Indies is known for its effective subjugation of native populations; important breakthroughs in defeating local resistance were marked by military victories, sometimes drawn out - as in the case of Aceh - but always decisive.

The Western concept of the state having a monopoly on violence played an ideological role in colonial expansion; royal authority in the indigenous kingdoms was seen as weak and the locals in need of protection from the arbitrariness of royal power (34). However, Schulte Nordholt maintains:

Contrary to the conclusions drawn by both nineteenth-century authorities and twentieth-century anthropologists, pre-colonial royalty in Southeast Asia was based on the notion that control over violence was more important than the actual implementation of it, because there was a strong belief that violence could easily result in total destruction (Schulte Nordholt, H. 2002: 36).

He castigates recent Dutch historiography for averting its eyes from “the technology of colonial domination”; he notes, however, other Dutch sociological work on colonial military violence which explores how the status of armies as heroic controllers of violence leads to a kind of denial of that violence and a taboo on recognising war crimes (41).
No different from colonial power relations elsewhere, the East Indies colonial state displayed a profound distrust born of fear towards the populations under its dominion. These colonial ‘regimes of fear’ were backed by waves of violence that ensured the dread was mutual. The first wave was orchestrated in the 1600s by the Dutch East Indies Company (VOC) to secure trade monopolies (see, for example, FN 37); having conquered much of Java in the 18th century, the second was from 1871 to 1910 at a time of imperialist expansion into the outer islands and land-hungry export plantations. Through force of modern artillery, 32 colonial wars were fought during this period - Aceh’s protracted 35-year guerrilla war counting as just one of them. In that war alone, more than 100,000 were killed.58 (36-37)

While the colonial state used orientalist stereotypes of ‘inherent barbarism’ to extend its monopoly on ‘legitimate’ violence, it was not averse to turning indigenous symbols of sacred violence into tools of military subjugation and ultimately, indirect rule. For example, culturally resonant beheadings of local leaders were used to mark conquest, and war-dances (cakalele) were re-deployed, performed by local recruits press-ganged into Dutch-led civil militia. These militia - known as schutterij in VOC times - were used for security of Dutch residences in Batavia (Jakarta) but also for military expeditions and slave-taking raids on villages selected by their VOC commanders. Symbols of local sovereignty were appropriated and fed back to the vanquished to celebrate Dutch authority established through the superior violence of conquest (Winn 2002: 66-67).

Such appropriations form an important historical thread where men of violence came to inhabit an overlapping sphere between crime and the state. So, in the 19th century, villages coopted criminals known as jago (lit: fighting

58 The breakdown was 75,000 Acehnese or 15% of the population; 25,000 coolies and 12,500 soldiers (Schulte Nordholt, H. 2002: 37)
cocks) to provide security in the Javanese countryside. As Shulte Nordholt puts it:

[T]he entire construction of the colonial government in Java was in fact based on an extensive network of rural crime, largely due to the inability of the official Javanese administrators to control all of Java. For this reason, they were forced to bring local strongmen into their service, in exchange for which these jago were free to carry out their own criminal activities (Shulte Nordholt, H. 2002: 39).

Jago networks operated well into the 1930s as entrepreneurs of violence in the service of the rural and colonial elites. Thus the state had helped create a criminal class that it could not control (40). This pattern re-emerged in the revolutionary period (1945-49) when nationalist troops cooperated with civilian militia known as lasykar (force). Cribb reports that the independently armed militia initially overshadowed the troops with their fighting spirit; but they were soon brought under control through repression and co-optation (2000: 184-85).

In the postcolonial period, organised youth (pemuda) had a positive revolutionary connotation from the war of independence which provided violent groups with legitimacy: for example, in the 1990s, army-backed militia in East Timor resembled and posed as offspring of the pemuda of the 1945-49 war. During the war of independence, criminals teamed up with young nationalists to form the Jakarta militia; these politicised gangsters shared a belief in action, heroism, and resistance to a hegemonic power. They also inspired terror in their victims (Colombijn 2002: 54-55; Cribb 2000: 187).

During the New Order, these shifting bands of criminals were never allowed to develop any independent Mafia-like power base (the serious criminal entrepreneurs were either military men or Chinese businessmen often working in collusion with each other). The localised hoods – known as preman
were dependent on political patrons to run protection rackets, extortion and debt collection, robbery and occasional contract killings (Cribb 2000: 185-86); but it was during Suharto’s showcase elections every five years that they came into their own as standover men and agents provocateurs.

New Order elections have all been heavily managed set-pieces. Its organizational machine – Golkar (golongan karya – lit: work groups) – was founded in 1964 by army officers as an anticommunist coalition and in 1969 was turned by the New Order state into an electoral vehicle (Liddle 1996: 626). The Golkar party-of-government – with its strategic appointments – had the serious task of delivering Indonesia’s power elite parliamentary majorities. Its task was made easier by restrictions placed on the only two other parties allowed to compete: government intervention in leadership selection, a ban on criticism of most government policy, a ban on campaigning except for a brief window prior to elections. In addition to the ruling party’s monopoly on material rewards, the two non-government parties – PPP and PDI – were faced with a Golkar machine that drew on the coercive resources of the armed forces, exercised through its ten territorial commands.59

But intimidation of non-Golkar leaders and voters was commonly subcontracted to criminals; this followed the historical pattern from colonial times of using an underclass or youth gangs to achieve political and security objectives. Cribb notes that election campaigns were marred by violence and suggests the arson and looting served an ideological purpose by marking each election as a time of potential crisis with a powerful subtext: support Golkar and all will be well (2000: 185). Liddle records that Suharto’s winning electoral strategy over several decades was based on his ability to maintain a “unity of purpose” within and between Golkar and the armed forces. This was

59 Liddle asserts that coercion or its threat played a major part in turning voters to Golkar in the 1971 and 1977 elections but it declined in the 1980s and 1990s “as voters came to understand what was expected of them and the government’s fear of an election defeat receded” (1996: 627).
achieved in two ways: by controlling officers within the armed forces leadership and by selecting Golkar officials who were both competent (at delivering votes) and personally loyal to the president. In addition, he ensured that no individual in either institution was capable of amassing enough power to depose him. This was typically achieved by playing the civilian and military hierarchies off against one another through astute appointments (1996: 627).

In the 1970s, one such Golkar appointment was New Order ideologue and electoral strategist, Ali Murtopo. After the 1982 elections, however, Murtopo’s star was falling and the fortunes of his former protégé, General Benny Murdani rising. Cribb argues that Murdani was looking for a pretext to dismantle Murtopo’s extensive patronage system that supported and employed street thugs in Jakarta and other cities. At the time Indonesia was going through a serious crime wave; this was undermining New Order legitimacy and had the potential to white-ant middle class faith in the implicit bargain between the benefits of development and political repression.

Coinciding with Murdani’s appointment to head the chief operational command for managing the political process, the bodies of street criminals began appearing in major cities, some displayed in prominent places and some showing evidence of torture. Within months, the calm response of government officials convinced many that the killings were the work of local security forces operating clandestinely (Cribb 2000: 190). Dubbed the *Petrus*

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60 Its seriousness can in part be attributed to the fact that some criminals were protected by virtue of being a part of loose networks of recidivists who were consolidated into formal associations with military patronage. On such group, *Prems*, was broken up by the *Petrus* killings but not before providing services to Murtopo’s electoral strategy which involved intimidating and kidnapping opposition members (see Ryter 2001: 142-43).

61 It was politically important for the New Order not to allow the crime wave to continue unchecked: “A part of the New Order’s implicit promise…was that repression and control was a reasonable price to pay for accelerated economic development and modernization. If development and prosperity, however, were fragile and temporary, then people were likely to find that price too high” (Cribb 2000: 188).

62 KOPKAMTIB (Operational Command of the Restoration of Security and Order).
killings\textsuperscript{63}, estimates suggest that across the archipelago, there were 5000 to 10,000 murders from 1983 to early 1985 (191).

The ‘off-duty’ police and military officers behind Petrus were, in Cribb’s terms, “a surreptitious extension of the state”. These death squads have been relatively rare in Indonesian history because “the legal and practical constraints on state power have been so weak that the authorities have been able to repress opposition groups openly and without resorting to clandestine means” (182); in fact, the Indonesian armed forces have been at pains to prevent the emergence of any autonomous armed group and have assiduously suppressed those groups (e.g. secessionist guerrillas) they did not control.

Notwithstanding this, civil militia were not only tolerated but recruited, armed and trained to eliminate communists after the October 1965 Gestapu coup attempt. Many of the most willing were Muslim youth from Nahdlatul Ulama’s youth wing, Ansor. Much can be said about the political crisis and social tensions at the end of Sukarno’s rule. The role of media, rumour and communication networks also has much to reveal about the escalatory dynamics of the massacres; but the killings themselves need to be seen in terms of how state agents operated to exploit a set of circumstances that led to “the greatest humanitarian tragedy in Indonesia’s history” (Adam 2005: 27) and belong to “the worst counter-revolutionary acts of violence of the twentieth century” (Schulte Nordholt, H. 2002: 44).

There was both an inter-communal and a political (state-driven) dimension to the mass killings. According to Asvi Warman Adam, the social conflict that already existed between mass Islamic groups (NU and Muhammadiyah)

\textsuperscript{63} The term Petrus is a contraction of penembakan misterius (mysterious shootings): “Although local police and military officials seem to have been responsible in some cases, many observers attributed the killings to the army’s special forces, Kopassanda (later called Kopassus), and to units hardened by battle and covert experience in East Timor” (Cribb 2000: 191); Suharto later admitted in his memoirs that the killings were state-sponsored.
commanding civil militias and their eventual victims could have been settled peacefully. But it was the arrival of military units (including weapons training by army commandos) that gave impetus to the massacres. Just as the military joining with the people to expel the colonisers in 1948 was a heroic act, so too in 1965 did the military activate its security doctrine to drive out the (communist) enemy within.

The more hands which were bloodied by suppression of communism, the more hands which could be depended upon to stand firm against any future PKI resurgence and depended upon not to turn and point in accusation against those who sponsored the massacres (Cribb in Adam 2005: 31).

Henk Schulte Nordholt argues that the mass murder in 1965-66 of between 500,000 and 1 million Indonesians over a six month period – like Dutch military conquests of the colonial period - established a regime of fear where all protests were repressed and the murders banned from appearing in historical accounts. He rejects the sanitised references that portray the pogroms in elemental terms – an inevitable and autonomous process, a force of nature (2002: 44).

They were, he says, “an intensification of modern state violence, the foundations for which were laid in the colonial period”; nothing in the colonial state structure had prepared the way for institutionalised resistance from civil society (45). But this does not explain the sheer scale of violence which bore no relation to what was necessary to achieve political ends. Schulte Nordholt looks for meaning behind the murders in the extreme death toll by using the metaphor of ritual cleansing, which resonates with Rene Girard’s notion of sacred violence. The birth of a new order (the New Order) was imagined as a purification enacted in violence to define the limits of the national community (which did not include communists): “[T]he destructive impulse towards total cleansing is characteristic of many forms of unmitigated violence and can be
found in the mass murders in Indonesia” (46). The massacre of communists was both mass murder and a decisive, state-sponsored reconstruction of national identity.

Similar exculpatory themes are common in fundamentalist thought. Sheila McDonough characterises fundamentalism as a reactive movement; typically religious, these movements have utopian visions which give birth to blueprints for the future by retrieving ‘fundamentals’ from the past and asserting them as a defence against threatening outsiders (McDonough 2000b: 190-92)\textsuperscript{64}. Typically too, they take the shape of nationalisms where religious and cultural traditions fuse with a geographic territory to encompass ‘national unity’. This fundamentalist appeal to the spiritual union of people and nation was no more apparent than in the revolutionary rhetoric of Sukarno. His strident xenophobia during \textit{Konfrontasi} was amplified in the ears of his followers by virtue of the fact it took place amidst political turmoil and worsening poverty. This squares with the view that fundamentalist appeals resonate most strongly, not in the security of the village, but in the big cities amongst the stressed and alienated masses (Embree in McDonough 2000b: 193).

In the case of Maluku, the manner in which, as a prelude to violence, such polarisations arose from inter-communal differences or were orchestrated by the state and its agents is the subject of the next chapter. However, in the history of Indonesia, nationalist unity has always been the ideological cover for much state-sanctioned violence. Its political economy was the flip side of the nation’s impressive national growth figures during the New Order. The

\textsuperscript{64} She relies on a definition of fundamentalism from Martin E. Marty, namely a strategy whereby “beleaguered believers attempt to preserve their distinctive identity as a people or group. Feeling this identity to be at risk…they fortify by a selective retrieval of doctrines, beliefs and practices from a sacred past. These retrieved ‘fundamentals’ are refined, modified, and sanctioned in a spirit of shrewd pragmatism; they are to serve as bulwarks against the encroachment of outsiders who threaten to draw the believers into a syncretistic, religious, or irreligious cultural milieu” (Marty in McDonough 2000b: 189-90).
last chapter outlined the legal foundations of this period and how its political survival depended on reproducing patrimonial relationships between its institutions and citizens. Such relationships produced patterns of state criminality long familiar to its colonial subjects over several centuries (Lindsay 2001).

It was also mentioned above how the New Order’s political model relied on a middle-class trade-off between the trickle-down benefits of continued growth and political repression; there was, however, a far more numerous underclass of poor urban youth for whom stable employment was out of reach. And yet, their fortunes were no less dependent on the spoils of economic growth in a low-wage economy. Loren Ryter’s study of the national youth group *Pemuda Pancasila* (PP)(2001) provides insights into the nature and durability of Indonesian political violence and the re-distributive logic that underwrote it.

*Pemuda Pancasila*, the most durable youth gang during the New Order was, not surprisingly, the one tied to the ruling Golkar party. It was not, however, a creature of the New Order in that its birth, significantly, coincided with Sukarno’s 1959 presidential degree to return Indonesia to its 1945 authoritarian constitution. According to Ryter’s study, PP’s longevity owes much to its ability to make itself indispensable in providing a bridge between the criminal and political domains of the Indonesian national community. PP emerges successful both as a discursive triumph (able to alter its image to suit changing political conditions) and as the competitive winner over rival groups in playing the political game.

Drawing on *pemuda* (political youth) as a deeply affective symbol of Indonesian nationalism and revolutionary heroics, PP took part in the killing of communists in 1965 across a number of cities and as such played a role in

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65 The youth-nationalism lineage extends from the Youth Pledge (1928) where nationalist consciousness coalesced with the slogan ‘One homeland, one nation, one language’, to the nationalist revolution and defeat of the Dutch in the independence war (1945-49) with the collaboration of civilian youth militias.
ushering in the New Order. However, the historically progressive political role of youth did not sit well with the New Order’s emphasis on stability and depoliticisation. The regime therefore was to reinvent the role of pemuda as “merely historic”: “In New Order revisionist history, pemuda had fulfilled their historic and final role by joining with the army to establish the New Order regime (Ryter 2001: 137-38).

The spirit of youth protest against land evictions in the 1970s soon met with counter-demonstrations backed by powerful interests. As with other spheres of society, the New Order state sought to corporatise and control unruly youth in state-sponsored associations. Youthful high-spiritedness was thus domesticated where demonstrations were turned into delegations supporting government programs or attacking soft foreign targets, such as embassies. If such groups could make themselves useful by participating in the development process, they might also be able to negotiate arrangements with the state whereby their other activities could remain undisturbed (142). Thus the historic cooperation between criminal groups and state authorities was able to take root in the New Order.

Furthermore, the payback for impunity could be to assist the state in keeping its low-wage repressive regime functioning more or less smoothly and to avoid the pitfalls of disintegration that afflict all coercive regimes. It was along these lines that PP was able to consolidate itself within the New Order’s evolving political machinery. Organised youth already had links to the military in Jakarta as many of them were the sons of military officers. Ex-criminal associations were founded under military patronage and formed part of Ali Murtopo’s network of hired thugs so important prior to elections. But as noted above, this coercive infrastructure was irreparably damaged by the Petrus hit squads which heralded the rise of General Murdani as Suharto’s politico-military enforcer.
In the 1960s, PP already possessed a degree of national coordination, affiliated as it was with a political movement and having been involved in military training for the Irian campaign against the Dutch. Its national reach was strengthened by recruitment of charismatic leaders, who in their own regions were preman bosses with ready-made extortion rackets and revenue streams. Their post-1965 revolutionary nationalism was therefore ripe for transformation into one based on loyalty to a (personalised) state. Their perjuangan (heroic struggle) was turned to one which rewarded private material gain, turning them into privateers, or preman. Mirroring other New Order ideological transformations such as perjuangan press-to-Pancasila press (see Chapter Three), perjuangan became increasing identified with turf wars, while the concepts of pemuda and preman became indistinct.

This critical blurring of youth and street criminal is more profound when one considers the etymology of the word ‘preman’. Having 17th century Dutch roots in vrijman or ‘free man’, it referred to a trader not employed by VOC but whose freedom was restricted to plying his trade towards VOC commercial interests; it connotes a semi-official status: in a contemporary sense, an off-duty soldier or policeman, or marginal youth, traversing the legal and extralegal domains.

This straddling of officialdom and the informal sector, of law and criminality necessarily places preman and premanisme in an ambiguous relationship to law and its administration by state agents; preman operate in a sphere where freedom from the law is possible if one can avoid detection. This is achieved by adopting a chameleonic identity, at once assuming the shield that membership of an official youth organisation brings and reverting to preman by shedding their uniforms. Thus Ryter concludes:

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66 IPKI – Ikatan Pendukung Kemerdekaan Indonesia (League of the Supporters of Indonesian Independence).
67 a vrijman in later colonial times could be a freed plantation slave; in the early 20th century it could mean a non-contract overseer or day-labourer, that is, working for the company but not ‘owned’ by it (see Ryter 2001: 129-30).
Through this combination of contradictory appearances, which show PP members visibly upholding the highest national ideals and, alternately, appearing as the usual suspects of criminality, a prevailing logic of the Suharto period is clearly revealed (126).

This prevailing logic is epitomised in PP’s modus operandi. One view is that after the Petrus killings and the fall of Murtopo, PP was granted a national franchise on underworld activities (Bourchier in Ryter 2001: 144). However, Ryter argues its political role within the military-bureaucratic state was not consolidated until 1987. By this time, the military were convinced that PP’s national model of rent-seeking territorial franchises harmonised with its own security doctrine. Henceforth, PP branches and the respective Regional Military Commands (Kodam) were aligned (144-45). Offering themselves as an unofficial extension of the territorial command system and motivated by private gain, PP was positioned to take up political projects: organising counter-demonstrations, raiding the offices and NGOs and non-Golkar parties, expediting land clearing for developers by pressuring land owners to sell at low prices, acting as private bodyguards for the Suharto family, intimidating students and activists and campaigning for Golkar, especially prior to national elections.

The youth group seamlessly adopted the refined techniques of their military mentors, already proven in the informal sector. Its power derives from its ability to create tension and even chaos - which it is strategically placed to resolve. And in a society riven with social cleavages and unfulfilled social and political aspirations, every ‘incident’ is a rent-seeking opportunity. Like the army, PP manages community perceptions and controls damage through a ‘logic of disavowal’.68

68 This key term comes from Ryter (2001).
PP has no formal connection to any political party including Golkar, nor to the bureaucracy - civilian or military. Prior to each election, it decides at a congress ‘independently’ to channel its political aspirations to Golkar. It can thus present its attacks on political opposition groups as no more than the organisation’s idealistic zeal (semangat) or spontaneous actions of its members, and not tied to any government agenda. Any excesses are explained away as the work of oknum (rogue elements); PP leaders mouth a few words of regret or deny the oknum is a PP member who may simply be posing as one. Unsurprisingly, in the late New Order, PP was the usual suspect for all sorts of misdeeds, including the storming of Megawati’s PDI party headquarters in July 1996. With accusations aimed at PP, the army was free to utilise other resources to carry out acts of political thuggery, including soldiers moonlighting as preman - for example, Prabowo’s use of Kopassus and Jakarta Military Command personnel during the Jakarta riots in May 1998 (146-147). In either case, an indispensable cover shields both PP and its official (military) minders.

The collapse of Suharto and his New Order government threw PP’s military patronage system into turmoil. It did so not by making PP irrelevant but by creating a more fragile political and security environment for all youth groups and quasi-official security forces. But like Golkar, PP members have attempted to re-invent themselves and deal themselves into post-Suharto reformasi politics. A fluid, plural and chaotic political transition presents opportunities as well as risks. A PP leader even offered the group’s services in support of the students’ struggle for reformasi; this support was couched in terms of ‘disciplining’ the demonstrations so that they would not turn to anarchy (151)

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69 Ryter notes that the term is used regularly in the Indonesian press to denote army involvement in criminal activities. She says journalists regard its use as an unofficial press regulation since the 1970s when referring to state criminality – robberies, shootings, gambling, prostitution – thus avoiding any direct accusation. The term is used euphemistically also to describe rogue students, rogue journalists (see Ryter 2001: 126); a similarly euphemistic, colloquial English translation might be ‘bad apple’.
– an echo of New Order corporatist approaches to blunting and suppressing political expression.

But the biggest threat to PP’s pre-eminence has been competition in the business of grassroots mobilisation resulting from the fracturing of state institutions and the pluralisation of the political system. As the army splintered along nationalist and Islamic lines, PP members were vulnerable knowing that their uniform no longer signified united military backing. The changed dynamics were no more obvious than at the MPR special parliamentary session in November 1998 when several youth groups, including PP, confronted student demonstrators. The newly recruited Muslim volunteers of Pam Swakarsa had to be evacuated by the army after a number of them were hacked to death by demonstrators. The shift to Islamic oriented youth groups and preman reflects both political realignment within the military as well as the heating up of longstanding divisions within Islamic politics.

As factions – military and civilian - vie for power within the widening political spaces of Indonesia’s new electoral politics, preman migrate to new patrons in response to economic opportunities and political demands. The cycle is a familiar one. Rural bands of politicised Muslim youth were disarmed and disbanded once their anti-communist job was done in 1966 with no dividend paid to political Islam in the new military regime; in the 1980s, the Petrus

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70 Despite this competition, PP has managed in North Sumatra, for example, to maintain a foothold in illegal gambling and prostitution; some have even won seats in the local assemblies, including as members of PAN and PDI-P (see Hadiz 2003: 603-604).

71 This was actually a political redeployment of an old civil defence policy. The original Pam Swakarsa (Volunteer Security Guards) were a ‘neighbourhood watch’ security arrangement in place since 1980 and designed to discourage acts of communal violence/revenge (van Dijk 2001: 155).

72 For example, in the late New Order, Suharto’s son-in-law Prabowo Subianto cultivated and patronised militant Islamic elements inside and outside the military, many of whom came into competition with Pemuda Pancasila; one such preman was Anton Medan – a gangster-turned-Islamic proselytiser – who was linked to the looting and burning that engulfed parts of Jakarta in May 1998 (see Ryter 2001: 150).
killings eliminated criminal networks that had served their purpose under a fallen political patron and had started to undermine the regime’s delicate balance between development and repression. These were replaced by nationally coordinated networks of preman led by Pemuda Pancasila whose modus operandi became increasingly militarised in line with prevailing security doctrine.

In the post-Suharto transition, the Islamic credentials of B.J. Habibie called for a grassroots force to drum up votes for the incumbent at the general elections in 1999. *Front Pembela Islam*\(^{73}\) became part of his electoral machinery, but having failed in that task, FPI’s pious, urban Muslim men of action transformed themselves (no doubt under new patrons) into a violent morality police - raiding bars and ‘sweeping’ hotels, mixing extortion and xenophobia under cover of religious piety (Wilson, I. D. 2006: 282-289).\(^{74}\)

The return to multiparty competitive politics has spawned many grassroots solidarity groups whose mass mobilisation efforts are tied to parties that inhabit the congested political terrain of the transitional period. Such organizational forms are also sensitive to the post-Suharto security environment. Most significant has been a citizens’ backlash – much of it violent – against the security apparatus that prevailed during Suharto’s reign. Mob violence against members of the police and military has been particularly vicious.\(^{75}\) And the profound cynicism that corrupt state officials would continue to avoid legal sanctions burst into the open and hardened with the

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\(^{73}\) Islamic Defenders Front  
\(^{74}\) *Front Pembela Islam* was one of a number of pro-Habibie groups through which 100,000 Pam Swakarsa volunteers were mobilised to confront student protesters at the MPR special session in November 1998. Others were KISDI, DDII and Furkon. Defence of the Habibie government was portrayed as defence of Islam itself. The volunteers received the blessing of the government’s Islamic Preachers Council (MUI), were trained and armed by the security forces and paid by military officers, Islamic leaders and allegedly the Suharto family (see Sidel 2006: 138-39). See also FN 34.  
\(^{75}\) This was brewing prior to Suharto’s departure as resentment rose in response to government attempts to ‘beautify’ the cities by getting rid of street vendors from footpaths and enforcing the traffic laws (see van Dijk 2001: 154)
general lack of confidence in the government as an institution to physically protect its citizens. This cynicism spilled over into a readiness to take the law into their own hands (van Dijk 2001: 155; Lindsey 2001: 293).

The discrediting of the security forces has often left them exposed and impotent in the face of large protest gatherings. The clandestine killings of alleged sorcerers and Muslim clerics in East Java in 1999-2000 (Herriman 2006; Sidel 2006: 142-153) and open communal savagery in Maluku during the same years reinforced community perception that state security forces could not be relied on to keep the peace or alternatively, they were complicit in black operations aimed at fomenting chaos for political purposes (van Dijk 2001: 157). The authorities made a number of attempts to re-invent civil defence policy to cope with the multiplicity of law and order problems, made more urgent by the upcoming general elections in June 1999. One of the more popular developments was the resort to private paramilitaries assigned to protect their parent political party or organization. These ‘taskforces’ were known as Satgas.76 Similar affiliations have long existed in Indonesia, for example, the militant forces attached to Muslim mass organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama77 and Muhammadiyah78. As these longstanding Islamic institutions now support their own electoral party vehicles, their taskforces fit the post-Suharto model of private paramilitaries standing guard over their members and assets and ultimately their political interests.

This is a decisive break with New Order security doctrine that prevented the emergence of independent armed groups that the military did not control; however, the legacy of the system which nurtured Pemuda Pancasila may yet prove telling. The Satgas have embraced militaristic culture and while their formation could be regarded as a move to safeguard democratic participants in a fragile transition, the prospects for their cooperation with regular security

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76 Satgas is a contraction of Satuan Tugas ‘task force’.
77 Barisan Serba Guna or Banser founded in 1964.
78 Komando Kesiapsiagaan Angkatan Muda Muhammadiyah or Kokam founded in 1965; both Banser and Kokam were involved in the anti-communist pogroms.
forces remain highly ambiguous. There have already been signs that the more militant groups could gain a degree of independence from their party patrons, that unauthorised or rival Satgas could emerge and split parties in a violent manner and that such groups could become available for hire. The likelihood of violent clashes between the Satgas of rival parties is real and simply expresses the new reality that these mobilisational forces have become instruments in post-Suharto political, ideological and religious strife (van Dijk 2001: 161-62).

The incumbent government can also use its own constituent taskforce to threaten political violence to shore up its position. This occurred in May 2000 when President Abdurrahman Wahid showed himself willing to mobilise the huge paramilitary wing of his NU support base – Banser – during his presidential tenure. If a government is allowed to entrench tactics to deny responsibility for the misdeeds of its supporting paramilitary wings – a political art perfected during the Suharto years – the door could again be open to politically directed criminal terror (van Dijk 2001: 163-64; Ryter 2001: 155).

In post-1998 crisis management, some preman leaders have moved out of the much complicated political operations and returned to the relative simplicity of running protection rackets; others have taken advantage of New Order networks to try their hand at electoral politics. The political appeal of ‘Pancasila democracy’ has lost its currency but the preman’s skills in mass mobilisation and the logistics of chaos are still relevant and highly prized. However, not all grassroots mobilisation is tied solely to the electoral game. Broader and historically deeper forces are driving the crisis-ridden political transition in the form of ethno-religious strife, as will be seen in the next chapter.

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79 For an analysis of this reorganisation of electoral forces, see Hadiz (2003). See also Wilson, I. D. (2006) on the privatisation, decentralisation and ‘democratisation’ of violence in the post-New order period and its consequences: 290-93.
CHAPTER FIVE
CULTURE WARS AND REPORTING TABOOS IN INDONESIA:
MALUKU
“Never before in human history have the global and the local, the high and the low, the past and the present, the sacred and the profane, the serious and the frivolous been so bewilderingly juxtaposed and so instantly available to stimulate, confuse and anger the individual.”


i) The Maluku Wars’ geometry of violence

This chapter explores how socially unprecedented devastation in the form of communal war came to be visited on Maluku’s chain of islands from 1999 and why its inter-religious hostility was unique in Indonesian history. While much of the carnage was characterised as crudely-armed young men attacking entire neighbourhoods, many fatalities were the result of intervention by various units of the security forces. Others were intentionally thrown to their death from inter-island ferries which led to sea transport – like most other social and economic activities and services - being segregated along religious-communal lines (Aditjondro 2001: 100 & 128).

By July 2000, under a civil state of emergency, 14,000 troops were stationed across Maluku; their large numbers did not translate into reduced violence (see this chapter, Section II). But by early 2001, President Wahid’s position was becoming untenable, owing to fracturing within his own party and loss of confidence within the parliament. It was during this period of a waning presidency that security forces took their most decisive action against Laskar Jihad militants, having only 12 months earlier facilitated their passage to the region.

Their leader, Umar Thalib, was arrested in May and on 14 June 2001 a TNI combined battalion (Yon Gab) attacked Laskar Jihad’s headquarters in Ambon
city. The following month Wahid was impeached at a special session of the MPR (People’s Consultative Assembly) and replaced by his vice president Megawati Sukarnoputri.

Significant steps towards de-escalation were made later that year in December with a meeting of religious leaders in Yogyakarta, followed in February by the successful signing of the Malino Accords. These successes were not manifest in Ambon until late 2002 when a series of spontaneous ‘mixing’ between warring parties brought a measure of peace. In April 2004, however, violence re-started in Ambon around the anniversary of the (failed) declaration of independence for South Maluku 54 years earlier (ISAI 2004: 30).

In the New Order’s security thinking, communalism was a source of deep ideological dread. It was a symptom of and precursor to separatism. Separatism was the diametrical opposite of unitarianism - the *sine qua non* of territorial integrity. This dread was derived from primordialist assumptions about inevitable cultural antagonism, the need for a strong state to safeguard integralistic cohesion and an ever-vigilant population on the lookout for deviations from *Pancasila* orthodoxy. Such thinking infused population policy (Tirtosudarmo 2005) which inherited and re-fashioned colonial techniques of administrative control over ‘suspect’ population groups.

Whether through formal resettlement programs or oversight of voluntary migration, the Indonesian state sponsored inter-provincial migration that, inadvertently or not, often brought Islamic and Javanese groups considered loyal to the state into contact with regional groups without close ties to the central government (Bertrand 2004: 91-92). Given that Dutch policies of divide-and-rule had produced loyalist groups defined by ethnicity and geography, it was no coincidence that in the post-colonial period, distinct
regional populations were prone to assert their political grievances and sovereignty claims along communal (including religious) lines.

Similarly, claims on the state and its distribution of social goods – in the absence of social contract ties – were expressed communally rather than through vertical political channels. Across the archipelago, a pattern emerged where regional political grievances defined by ethnicity and geography were met with policies that deflected such claims away from state accountability into localized inter-communal competition. This replicates neo-colonial patterns throughout Southeast Asia where “colonies of people representing the ‘core’ of the [post-colonial] state” fan out into areas for economic gain. Such movement was sanctioned by the state for strategic purposes (Kingsbury 2005b: 138). This was true of the Philippines where Christian migration from the north helped forge a political identity based on territoriality among the Muslim Moro peoples of the south (Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago). This regional nationalist banner united different ethnic groups first in response to American colonialism and second, to land lost to Christian settlers, enabled by the Philippines military (135-36).

In Indonesia, flag-bearers for the Indonesian state manifested themselves in East Timor soon after re-colonization began in 1975. The surprise opportunity to vote on independence in 1999 threatened the interests of core groups representing the political centre. Some of these were migrant settlers from different regions of Indonesia and others were coopted East Timorese who had been formed into civilian militias to act as auxiliaries to the police and military. The resistance to Indonesian rule (that is, the state) was represented in official Indonesian discourses as a dispute between local East Timorese factions for and against integration. As the ballot approached, violence was portrayed as legitimate expressions of internal political difference beyond the control of the state security apparatus. This ‘communalisation’ of political conflict masked the fact that pro-integration militias contained many non-East Timorese and were in fact trained, armed and led by members of the
Indonesian army (139). Similarly, security strategy against separatist rebels of Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM) in 2003 involved supplementing regular troops and police with 10,000 mainly Javanese militia in the central highlands as part of a military offensive known as the ‘state of emergency’ designed to defeat the Acehnese resistance (145).

The communal warfare which erupted and spread across the Maluku archipelago from early 1999 conforms to a very specific set of circumstances, tied to transitional power struggles at the nation’s political centre. These circumstances and struggles, however, were not quarantined from narratives emanating from global public spheres. Embattled communities, in fact, drew on them to help make sense of fast-disintegrating national political structures. I offer Arjun Appadurai’s theoretical framework to guard against reductionist explanations for such disintegration that might come from their over-confinement within economic, socio-geographic and international relations paradigms.

The new global cultural economy has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order that cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models....Nor is it susceptible to simple models of push and pull (in terms of migration theory), or of surpluses and deficits (as in traditional models of balance of trade), of consumers and producers (as in most neo-Marxist theories of development)....The complexity of the current global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture, and politics that we have only begun to theorize (1996: 32-33).

Many commentators have characterized Indonesia’s violent conflict at this time as falling into either the vertical or horizontal category. While this is a convenient geometric metaphor to describe vertical (e.g. separatist) conflict
(Aceh, Papua) as distinct from horizontal (inter-communal) conflict (Kalimantan, Maluku), a less static, non-linear framework is required to plot the dynamics of conflict as it unfolds through stages of friction, violent clashes, riots and organised warfare. ‘Communalisation’ will be my preferred analytical tool to map the many and varied acts of violence in Maluku that were both protracted and geographically dispersed through its chain of islands.

Maluku’s large-scale and prolonged fighting, however, did not occur in isolation from other cases of communal violence in the 1990s - expressed, as they were, as antagonisms between believers of the Christian and Muslim faiths. While news of East Timor abroad has been dominated by vertical resistance to the state (e.g. the Dili massacre in 1991), this province also suffered eruptions of inter-ethnic violence that subsequently were portrayed as inter-religious conflict. Riots sparked by anti-Catholic statements were directed at ethnic Bugis traders in September 1995 and subsequently led thousands of non-East Timorese to flee the province. Migrants taking up positions in the trade sector were seen as the latest wave of exploiters and non-East Timorese civil servants as outsiders denying educated East Timorese employment (Bertrand 2004: 95-96).

Despite the historically specific conditions of military occupation in East Timor, similar antagonisms manifested themselves elsewhere. On predominantly Catholic Flores Island, in the early to mid 1990s, acts of religious insult triggered riots which were visited on more recent Muslim migrants from West Sumatra and Java, while more established Makassarese, Chinese and Florinese Muslims were spared. Similar to East Timor, resentment grew at the ease with which migrants from Java and Bali took up civil service positions amid widespread indigenous unemployment. Perceived discrimination against local Christians did not always provoke communalistic anger directly against ‘outsiders’ but sometimes was directed at symbols of the state. This aggression could be interpreted as anger directed at the perceived ‘ethnic
capture’ of governmentality by outsiders. So, attacks on courthouses, police stations and even judges could be seen as violence directed at the political centre in Jakarta (97-98). Catholics had long been influential in the New Order’s bureaucratic culture but changing perceptions of how the system was operating in the late New Order fuelled Catholic anger in Flores. Communalism by Catholics was in such cases not so much outbursts of primordial fighting spirit but rather a response to tangible signs that they were losing their traditional influence at the centre. This erosion of influence was itself a result of institutional changes in the 1990s.

The political suppression of Islam had occurred during the 1970s and 80s under a powerful alliance of civilian and military bureaucrats which was dominated by abangan Javanese and Christians (mainly Javanese Catholics). But these networks overseen by presidential patronage and manipulation had begun to fragment by the late 1980s. By this time, CSIS\textsuperscript{80} had been sidelined and soon, the intellectual centre was inhabited by Muslim technocrats from ICMI like B.J. Habibie who went on to fill the cabinet by 1993 (Hasan 2002: 162-3).

In this transitional period, the fragmenting and subsequent realignment of power at the centre disrupted and ultimately transformed the clientelist ties of religious communities to the state.

These changes demonstrate the long-term failure of attempts to co-opt and repress Islam as a political contender within New Order institutions. In addition to oversight by the Ministry of Religion, a corporatist National Council of Ulama (MUI)(established 1975) and training institutes for Islamic teachers (IAIN) were efforts to bend Islamic aspirations to fit within the limits set by

\textsuperscript{80} A New Order think-tank – The Center for Strategic and International Studies – was built around the Murtopo-Murdani axis in the 1980s and staffed mainly by Chinese Catholic intellectuals (Bertrand 2004: 81).
Pancasila unity. By 1984, it was decreed that all social organisations (including religious ones) must carry Pancasila as their sole ideology (76). In addition, regulatory policies were often in response to inter-religious tensions: a permit system for the construction of new religious buildings was introduced in 1969; and in 1978 there were decrees against proselytizing among people who were already adherents to an officially-sanctioned religion (e.g. Islam and Christianity) and restrictions on the operations of foreign missionaries (79). Despite these barriers, there is a perception among sections of the ummat that foreign aid in rural areas and slums has served to induce some poor Muslims to convert to Christianity, fusing economic disadvantage with fear of conversion (Bakti 2000e: 158). Although attempts have been made to encourage dialogue between religious faiths over these issues, the government’s policy instincts were repressive and censorious. Religious conflict was treated as contrary to the Pancasila vision of social harmony such that the public airing of communal disputes was curtailed, while the social friction at the root of them was left unresolved. In this way, Bertrand argues, state policies contributed to the strengthening of religious identities and the competitive tension between Christians and Muslims.

The New Order responded with measures designed to prevent conflict. Yet, it became increasing clear that these same policies reinforced religious divisions and heightened the stakes in obtaining access to state resources to promote or protect one’s particular religious group (Bertrand 2004: 78).

Despite this failure, as national political momentum in the 1990s was increasingly driven by the issue of sukses (Suharto’s succession), a politically empowered Muslim middle class still encountered significant structural impediments to capturing state power the moment Suharto vacated the presidency. John Sidel argues an IMCI-aligned political class faced all the barriers put in place by Suharto’s elaborate patronage network on which his family’s vast business empire was built. Secondly, ICMI had begun as a
(opportunistic) construct of New Order politics (see earlier) and it was by no means certain that its apparatchiks could bring vast socio-communal organizations (*Nahdlatul Ulama* & *Muhammadiyah*) behind its political project. Thirdly, modernist Muslims, despite their deep networks in the social and educational realms, faced competition from other centres of popular mobilization, namely, workers, peasants and activists engaged in a variety of grassroots movements in opposition to the regime in general and its industrial and development policies in particular (Sidel 2006: 69-71). Most of these movements did not derive their mobilisational appeal from ‘Islam’.

Furthermore, the very emergence of a self-confident political elite with Islamic identity served to highlight its disconnection from the mass of urban and rural poor who identified with autonomous mass social organizations. These groups were successful to the extent that they were seen to represent their members’ interests and avoid cooption by political elites, Islamic or otherwise.

[P]recisely at the moment when a modernist Muslim network based in ICMI was ascending to the pinnacle of state power, and when devout Muslims were enjoying unprecedented upward mobility in….business, the professions, and the universities, the plausibility of Islam as a rubric for the assertion of claims to represent the broad mass of the population began to come into question (Sidel 2006: 72).

The outbreak of religious fighting in the 1990s was not confined to religious communities in the outer provinces. Violence was breaking out simultaneously at the Javanese centre. The scale of church burnings from 1996 was unprecedented. In a number of cases of mob violence, Muslims vented their

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81 Nationwide between 1992 and 1997, there were 145 churches demolished, burned down or forced to close (Sidel 2006: 73). The Indonesian Christian Communications Forum estimates that out of 594 cases of church vandalism, 456 occurred during the New Order (1967-98) and 138 during Habibie’s presidency. Of this total, 355 or 60% occurred in the period 1995-99 (Jubilee Campaign 1999; Hefner 1997: 78-79).
anger against non-Muslim communal targets (non-\textit{pribumi} businesses, churches) as well as institutions of state (police, courts). On some occasions, the attacks were triggered by disputes that were unrelated to Christians or their symbols. On others, there was a perceived insult to Islam or its religious authority and mobilization against the perceived inadequate response of police. Often the violence was directed at commercial property \textit{and} places of worship which blurred the distinction between Christian and ethnic Chinese targets (Bertrand 2004: 100-102; Sidel 2006: 74-88; Budianta 2000: 112). Simultaneous attacks on churches and government property, Bakti explains, are derived from communal perceptions of Christians and government as ‘collaborators’ against the \textit{pribumi} majority (2000e: 157).

These non-Malukan cases demonstrably do not fit neat geometric categories. In many instances, collective violence that is often tagged as ‘religious’ or ‘communal’ bears a complex relationship to vertical and horizontal discourses of conflict. Both geometric metaphors – \textit{centre-periphery} and \textit{vertical-horizontal} conflict – in different ways encompass both spatial and temporal configurations of power. Accordingly, political change reconfigures power along parameters set by structural changes in identity formation that have important spatial and temporal dimensions.

More concretely, Wee & Jayasuriya define separatist (ethnic) movements (in vertical conflict with the state), as the “uneven diffusion” of the nation-state (2002: 483). Politicized communal groupings that are geographically distinct challenge the state by turning away from the national centre and attempt to re-positioned themselves as the \textit{centre}. This discursive re-definition occurs through politicizing a distinct identity (ethnic, religious) and linking it to a just and credible struggle. Attempts to garner national sympathy and international support rely heavily on media representations. Information markets put into

\begin{footnote}
\text{82} Appadurai characterises this disjuncture between ‘state’ and ‘nation’ slightly differently: “As states lose their monopoly over the idea of nation, it is understandable that all sorts of groups will tend to use the logic of the nation to capture some or all of the state, or some or all of their entitlements from the state” (1996: 157).
\end{footnote}
circulation the discursive raw material on which the legitimacy of key powerbrokers are judged. Ethnicity and religion are thus *political resources* within competing narratives of power. Such narratives in the hands of competing interests imply representations of time and space towards political goals.

Ethno-religious identities are politicized by group interests through active ideological formation. Specifically, Wee & Jayasuriya cite *atavism* and *indigenism*:

- Atavism roots the imagination in time, indigenism roots it in space.
- Atavism emphasizes the continuity of past and present, with implications for the future. Indigenism emphasizes the relationship between people and place, with implications for their rights over place.
- In this way, atavism and indigenism serve to authenticate the imagining of a community of the future.

- Cultural constructions that are temporally located in the past enable usages for present purposes. The present is thus reconstructed in terms of this constructed past, thereby legitimating a particular trajectory towards the future (2002: 490-91).

Attention to these ideological aspects of political mobilization may serve largely pragmatic ends, nothing as grandiose as political sovereignty. Ethnic pride was thus the rallying cry of the vigilante group *Forum Betawi Rempug* (Betawi Brotherhood Forum - FBR) which flourished as a thugs-for-hire operation in the post-Suharto period of political competition. It appealed to working-class ethnic Betawi men indigenous to the Jakarta region.\(^{83}\)

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\(^{83}\) For a full account of the FBR and its organisational structure, see Wilson, I. D. 2006: 276-282.
These formulations – atavism and indigenism – are more or less consistent with Sidel’s model of religious violence. But in his book *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad: Religious Violence in Indonesia*, he singles out constructions of religious identities as being amenable to political deployment precisely because their instability and vulnerability is “inherent in the very nature of religious authority itself” (Sidel 2006: 10). He then goes about contextualising this authority by examining the position of Islam in Indonesian society: a product of “the distinctive nexus of class relations” and “the peculiar and highly ambiguous position of the political class vis-à-vis the business and working classes” (11).

The violent events classified in Sidel’s study span almost a decade (1995-2004); their classification hangs on “the essential premise that much of this violence should be understood as religious”. This ‘religious’ construction of violent action has attackers acting in “avowed defense or promotion of religious beliefs, boundaries, institutions, traditions, or values, and behind religious symbols and slogans” (7). This definition assumes rather than establishes that such avowals should exert definitional power over actions made in their name; it assumes that perpetrators’ actions taken under a religious banner are an actual expression of beliefs that are derived from an organised faith (rather than some other ideological system); and it implies that these physical attacks defend boundaries that are produced and patrolled by the attacker’s religious ideology. Such assumptions when applied to specific events may turn out to be justifiable. But the primacy of religion as a discursive category is open to challenge.

Is it correct, for example, to ascribe a primary religious antagonism to attacks by Catholics on Flores against Minangkabau (West Sumatran) and Javanese migrants (both Muslims), while local Florinese Muslims were spared? Why were these more recent ‘Muslim’ migrants targeted but more established migrants from Makassar (also Muslim) left unmolested? Was it an upsurge of religious (Catholic) solidarity in East Timor that released a wave of violence
against ethnic Bugis traders in the mid 1990s? Was the Muslim faith of the Buginese a determining factor in their targeting or in the ferocity of rioting visited on their marketplaces? If avowed religious prejudice had not triggered these riots, would some other (non-religious) pretext have been found? Why did (Muslim leader) Amien Rais’s attempt to give these East Timor riots a hegemonic religious interpretation largely fail? Why did gang violence and subsequent attacks on churches in Ketapang (Jakarta) in November 1998 lead to attacks against mosques and mainly migrant Muslims in Kupang (West Timor)\(^\text{84}\) while other depredations remained localised?

And central to our case study, the attackers who perpetrated the worst atrocities (Christian-on-Muslim) of the communal wars (both north and south) in Tobelo on 26 December 1999, would likely have included some Muslim indigenes, derived as they were from mixed-faith groups from Kao and Jailolo. As their convoys moved through Tobelo, they stopped at Muslim villages and having forced residents from their houses, slaughtered them \textit{en masse}. Fleeing the mayhem and finding temporary refuge in mosques were some ethnic Chinese, who – swept up in the ‘cleansing’ – were in the context of North Halmahera’s cultural politics grouped with Muslim settlers as encroaching outsiders.\(^\text{85}\)

Indeed, although the escalation of communal war in North Maluku was driven by religious solidarity, the original dispute and acts of violence clearly stemmed from the politicisation of \textit{ethnic} communal identities and interests (Wilson, C. 2005).

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\(^{84}\) The attacks in majority Christian Kupang at the end of November led many Muslim migrants from South Sulawesi to flee to their home province. On their arrival a Catholic church was set on fire and in West Java churches were also damaged (see Bertrand 2004: 104).

\(^{85}\) See Tomagola’s account in ‘Dalam Semalam 800 Muslim Dibantai’, \textit{Republika}, 4 January, 2000: 1 & 9
Sidel acknowledges that Dayak and Malay attacks on Madurese in West and Central Kalimantan (1996-97 & 1999-2000) “certainly appear to be ethnic rather than religious in nature” and Aceh and Papua appear to be separatist. Similarly, citing Bosnia as a case in point, he observes “one striking feature of most of the supposedly ethnic conflicts is their outbreak along a specifically religious divide” (9)(my emphasis). Despite these purported ambiguities, he simply excludes the Kalimantan pogroms and regional wars in Aceh and Papua from his definition. That is, he declares them to be non-religious and outside the terms of his study – even though in Kalimantan and Papua war was waged by combatants who stood on opposite sides of ‘a specifically religious divide’. If the ethnic basis of war in Bosnia can be questioned, why not question ethnic constructions of war in Kalimantan and Papua?

And yet Sidel maintains that the religious character of an immensely diverse range of other violent events is the book’s essential premise. Such a framework does not sufficiently isolate the significance of religion as a primary identity marker.

Sidel himself acknowledges that actors in violent struggle go to great lengths to inscribe their actions with favourable interpretations, quite commonly ones drained of any sense of religious or communal enmity. So, he reports that Christian groups in Maluku and Poso were supplied with financial and logistical support from Christian businessmen, military officers and politicians. International church groups also supplied various forms of aid.

But these Christian forces, like the avowedly neutral agencies of the Indonesia state, were careful to distance themselves from acts of violence against Muslims and to define their involvement in terms of helping to defend vulnerable minority communities under threat (2006: 197).
In both contexts, it is precisely these declarations of avowed neutrality, or as earnestly, ‘humanitarian mission’ that constituted the ideological rearmament of opposing forces and (re)legitimised the material war preparations and physical strife that nourished and prolonged the bloodletting.\(^{86}\) As we shall see below, the security forces’ response to the Maluku crisis did not deliver security but in many cases, escalating chaos. Similarly, with the intervention of external Islamic militias from April 2000, an elaborate doctrinal justification preceded deployment, smoothing the way for paramilitary infiltration and covert military collaboration under cover of avowed humanitarian solidarity.

Seven years after the Maluku violence subsided, there is still no consensus on how such a conflict should be represented. It remains contested academic as well as political territory. If analysts still disagree, it is perhaps unfair to expect field reporters in 1999-2000 to achieve an easy consensus in the heat of their professional duties. But this does not diminish the importance of accounts by local and foreign journalists to public understandings of violent political transition and its ongoing trajectory. Academic researchers emphasise different aspects of centre-periphery dynamics just as reporters’ dispatches applied different intellectual formulae to events as they unfolded.

One editor of an Ambonese weekly conceives the conflict as “‘remote control’ carried out by elite groups in Jakarta” and adds: “we never report the Ambon conflict is between religious groups of the Malukan people” (Kerleli 2001). Another calls it “a conspiracy of political elites” (Pinontoan 2001). This non-religious (and sometimes conspiratorial) conception of group conflict is common among Malukan editors and journalists.

If we use the label ‘religious’ we don’t generalise it to represent religions; instead we use ‘group’ (kelompok), Christian group, Muslim

\(^{86}\) See for example, ‘Jihad doesn’t mean war’, *Jakarta Post*, 11 January 2000: 1.
group but we don’t say Islamic community (*umat*), Christian community (*Pinontoan* 2001).

Some local editors also take a longer historical view:

We considered that the main point of the conflict in North Maluku is unbalanced government policy for 32 years. There is an attempt to defend the interests of the New Order regime that had already collapsed, to retain power there and rescue their assets on Halmahera and all over Maluku (*Djalil* 2001).

The term ‘social jealousy’ (*kecemburuan sosial*) is prominent in several explanations:

Because the settlers were richer than local inhabitants, I draw a comparison - indigenous inhabitants become guests in their own house, on their own land. Because they systematically sell land to the settlers they are themselves forced from the town and live on the fringes, and that brings jealousy to the surface (*Touwe* 2001).

With the benefit of hindsight and extended research periods, the academic contributions to the Maluku wars overlap and diverge with the above journalistic accounts according to varying interpretations of the forces driving political change in the critical 1998-2000 period. Such differences turn on how centre-periphery cultural politics produced social environments which turned bloody (violent clashes) and escalated into organized warfare across the Maluku archipelago (communal war).

**ii) Faith and politics in the Maluku firestorm**
Islam came to Maluku after the 15th century along trading routes from the port of Malacca (Malay Peninsula) and northern coastal ports of Java, while Christianity spread through Portuguese (from the early 16th century) and Dutch mission activity (early 17th century). Despite the rhetoric of historical Muslim-Christian unity, Bartels (2003) refers to “a more complex picture filled with manipulation, intrigue, and rivalry”. Portuguese, Dutch, Japanese and post-independence rulers – the Javanese – “frequently succeeded with manipulation of the elites on the basis of religious affiliation, pitting Moslems against Christians”; but he says there is little evidence of deep inter-communal hatred and no evidence of villages uniting along religious lines to fight each other, except when they were coerced to do so: “Moslems and Christians have coexisted in a climate where cooperation seems to have been more common than polarity and discord” (131).

The historical trading centre in the colonial period and post-independence provincial capital – Ambon – has a long tradition of dispute resolution based on inter-village alliances. Known as the pela gandong system, these formal ties involve vows of brotherhood among or between Christian and Muslim villages (pela) as well as alliances between villages that have a common ancestor. The latter (gandong) could be between villages of different faiths and involve mutual obligations such as helping to build each others’ houses of worship (CPI 2001), which sometimes was marked with a common interfaith service (Bartels 2003: 135). The system held together in the post-independence period and came to symbolise both Ambonese identity and Muslim-Christian unity (132-35).

Both Ambonese Muslim and Christian belief systems remained indigenised to the point of obscuring their actual differences in Ambonese eyes, leading to a loose syncretism between the two faiths. The strength of adat (custom) saw the two faiths emerge from a common belief system which recognised the one creator god revealed in its foundation myths: “there was only one God and Islam and Christianity were seen as two alternate but equally valid paths
to salvation” (135). The erosion of this system of mutual aid was gradual and sprung from a number of sources during the late colonial and New Order developmentalist periods.

On the Christian side, the familiar power struggle between *adat* and Christian leaders played itself out in the late 20th century where more worldly Protestant ministers sought to purify Malukan Christianity. With the ancestors acting as the interfaith bridge, *pela* alliances relied on recognition of common ancestry. While not eradicated, *pela* rituals were increasingly Christianised, Bartels argues, reducing *adat* and diminishing Christian interaction with their Muslim partners. To urban-born Christians *adat* traditions had lost much of their relevance. In any event, the new generation were drawn to Western ideas. The world church was a modern institution while ancestors were relics of the past (137).

A similar ‘purification’ was taking place within Indonesian Islam, driven by the urban modernist movement of clerics associated with *Muhammadiyah*. Younger Muslim leaders projecting a modern dynamism and pan-Islamic universalism made inroads into the parochialism of Ambonese Islam, undermining its indigenised fundamentals. Furthermore, the New Order reform of the village government law, with the stroke of a pen, disenfranchised traditional village hierarchy and replaced it with the Javanese *desa* (village) system with an elected *kepala desa* (village head)(138). However, Pannell argues this attempt to undercut the power of traditional leaders paradoxically gave them more authority: the new administrative structures, she says, were appropriated “to further empower customary forms of political organization”, an attempt to indigenise and socialize the state to their own advantage. This perspective questions the more conspiratorial accounts of peripheral conflict where the state’s impact in provinces like Maluku is seen to be “coercive, repressive and necessarily centralized” (Pannell 2003b: 28).
This goes to the heart of the true dynamics between Javanese centre and Malukan hinterland and how they can account for the descent into chaos at the end of the New Order. Some authors emphasise political changes in Jakarta as the engine for communal fighting; others stress fundamentally local dynamics without dismissing conflict at the political centre as determining the timing of violent outbreaks. Others still have changed their views over time. The theory of military instigation advanced by George Aditjondro (2000a & 2001) poses a Jakarta-centric analysis where inter-communal tensions are transformed into open warfare at the instigation of agents provocateurs who are themselves state officials or acting at their behest. Named military officials (serving and retired) in concert with civilian politicians in Jakarta and paramilitary forces they control act to preserve political and economic privileges at moments of political transition when these privileges come under threat.

Much store is placed in this account on intensified political resistance in Ambon to Jakarta rule at its moment of weakness in 1998 after the fall of Suharto and before political legitimacy could be established with national elections the following year. Thus he refers to the 7000 students demonstrating in Ambon in November 1998 in front of army headquarters, demanding, among other things, an end to the military’s political role enshrined in the doctrine of dwi fungsi (dual function). Protesters also sense an opportunity to turn back thirty years of political marginalization and economic plunder at the hands of Jakarta generals and their business cronies.

Violent gangs contesting the spoils of centralised patronage long existed during the New Order in the Outer Islands with criminal networks and franchises linking provincial cities with Jakarta. Aditjondro observes that Suharto did not suppress gangs but turned them into instruments of political thuggery in accordance with civil defence doctrine. Like Pemuda Pancasila, in the chaotic urban warfare on the streets of Ambon City, Ambonese gangs, 

87 Compare, for example, van Klinken (1999) with (2006).
previously not delineated according to religious identity, were transformed into freedom fighters defending their religiously segregated neighbourhoods and raiding enemy ones.

These gangs later provided excellent cover for professional troublemakers, recruited from the Indonesian Army and the Suharto’s family’s ‘private army’, to initiate the spark that blew the Moluccan powder keg. In other words, it was the presence of these thugs – in Ambon and in Jakarta -, that enabled the masterminds of the Moluccan violence to ‘indigenise’ – or more accurately, ‘Ambonise’ the state-sponsored violence in Maluku (Aditjondro 2001: 106).

The historical roots of vertical conflict, he argues, lie in the consolidation of the New Order state from the 1970s and its economic reorganization of the province as a quarry for resource and agricultural exploitation managed from Java. This was achieved through privileged access afforded to Suharto-linked conglomerates in timber and fishing as well as parasitism of select Javanese generals (104). Suharto’s son Tomy was allowed monopoly control over the marketing and production of the bulk of Maluku’s traditional export, clove. This centre-periphery model of expropriation eventually engendered horizontal conflict as Bugis and Makassarese merchants entered the province en masse to service these economic transfers in alliance with predatory elites at the centre. This was facilitated by the replacement of local political elites with Jakarta appointees (Galvan 2001: 12).

Gerry van Klinken (2006) has challenged this Jakarta-centric view with one that sees the breakdown of communal cooperation as tied to the unstable nature of local patrimonial networks at a moment of regime change (129). Once fighting erupted in Ambon, the distinction between native Muslim and Muslim outsiders was soon blurred as it took on a purely religious character.
The initial riot was marked by a few primitive home-made guns but by December 1999 both sides had semi-automatic weapons. Local workshops produced weapons that handled military ammunition. The result was deep segregation but control of territory did not shift decisively to one side in proportion to the population distribution. Refugees could not return to areas where they were members of a minority (131-32).

Van Klinken rejects the idea that the wars that spread south and north from Ambon were the work of military agents intent on destabilising the elected government (from June 1999) and elected president (from October 1999) to engineer a return to military dominance. The failure of the security forces to quell the riots was “the failure of a vastly overrated organization, indeed, a failure of the state, rather than a devious plan hatched in Jakarta to create unrest” (134).

Provokator allegations had over the two years since Suharto’s resignation become part of the competitive game the nation’s rival elites played against each other. Any serious analyst found it difficult to take this factless and contextless intrigue seriously. Provokator talk reflected a mindset in which order was constantly imperilled by disorder, but mysteriously, without involving social forces (van Klinken 2006: 138).

Instead, he paints a local picture of intense competition for ‘communal’ goods, most notably civil service jobs which had been captured historically by Christians but in the late New Order were being increasing contested by Muslims. The origins of Christian dominance lay in the Dutch period when Ambonese converts received favoured treatment in the colonial army and were seen as more loyal to Holland. This led to Ambonese being offered work
as teachers and civil servants all over the colony which formed an Ambonese middle-class which was entirely Christian (136).

Malukan society was hierarchical with youth socialised in competing religious organizations. Closed social stratification – for example in Southeast Maluku – divided an aristocracy from commoners and entrenched patron-client relations in the competition for jobs and political office. Religion was the most important marker of these clientelist networks. The ‘capture’ of the regional civil service by Christians originating in Dutch favouritism was by the 1990s under pressure from a rival Muslim network that offered access to government patronage for Muslim Ambonese, as well as for non-Ambonese Muslim migrants (139). Maluku provincial governors since 1992 had tried to redress the communal imbalance by promoting Muslims to government jobs. Van Klinken notes the political impetus for these changes came from ICMI members in the central government but lays the blame for the ensuing violence at the feet of warring provincial elites. Following Suharto’s fall, with IMCI figures like Habibie at the wheels of power, and decentralisation promising to deliver more resources and revenue streams to local powerholders, the parliamentary elections of June 1999 (for national, provincial and municipal assemblies) loomed as a critical contest for new lines of patronage and protection of existing privileges. Politicisation of communal clashes in Ambon, van Klinken argues, can be seen as warring forces allied to elites who had a stake in the parliamentary elections (140).

Bertrand’s explanation is similar but more Jakarta-centric than van Klinken’s. He characterises provincial elites as responding to shifts in New Order politics

88 Ambonese soldiers were trained as members of the Dutch Netherlands Army and used against fellow colonial subjects in small-scale rebellions. They were stationed in Jakarta at the end of the war to protect the capital for returning Dutch forces (Zainu’ddin 1968: 225). On the class inequality between Ambonese Christians and Muslims, see Tomagola (1999)
and policies. Some key positions – such as mayor of Ambon and rector of the state university (Unpatti) – were seen as Christian strongholds and as such were fiercely defended.

[S]ecuring high-level jobs was seen as communal victories within the heightened tension of Muslim ascendancy and declining Christian influence nationwide in the bureaucracy, military and national ministry (Bertrand 2004: 120).

Ambonese gangsters who arrived *en masse* in Ambon in late 1998 fresh from a turf war in Jakarta, would have exacerbated communal hostility but, according to van Klinken, are not central to the conflict.

All commentators place some store in demographic changes in the late New Order that drove communal tensions towards a violent and religiously polarised endgame. The sense of existential threat prior to and during the wars turned in part for Christians in Central Maluku on a sense of being overwhelmed by newcomers who all appeared to be Muslims. The island of Seram was a transmigration centre and sponsored migrants brought from overpopulated Java were always going to be mostly Muslim. But by far the greatest number of in-migrants were spontaneous and mainly ethnic Bugis and Butonese from South Sulawesi. Their movement into Maluku was on the back of development projects in infrastructure and they came to control small-scale commerce, including on Ambon Island. The main antagonism in Ambon city was between Ambonese Christians and these Muslim migrants (Bertrand 2004: 122).

Aditjondro, on the other hand, attributes a very active role to military personnel and their agents. He cites intelligence operatives distributing provocative pamphlets, communication equipment handed out to ring leaders
with a view to creating a sense of imminent attack and spreading the rioting across larger terrain (2001: 113). Security forces, he notes, colluded with militant Islamic networks controlled from Jakarta. Military commanders were in charge of troop deployments to Maluku which "escalated the inter-religious violence"; he names two colonels who were close to preman on both sides and who used these contacts to perpetuate disturbances. Most critically, when the conflict was losing momentum in April 2000, these commanders allowed thousands of Laskar Jihad paramilitaries to board ships to Ambon, against the express orders of the president (114). Kopassus (Special Forces) were seen alongside Laskar Jihad troops on campus (Ukim) and as snipers killing combatants on both sides (117).

Up till May 2000, 70% of victims were killed from gunshot wounds from police or military (Tomagola in Aditjondro 2001: 117). The TNI failed to control the violence or its members. Brimob (riot police) were accused of favouring Christians and Kostrad (Strategic Reserve) of favouring Muslims; there were reports of clashes between these units of the police and army (Bertrand 2004: 129). Brimob were 75% Christian and Kostrad contained many ethnic Bugis and Makassarese Muslims from South Sulawesi (Bertrand 2004: 127 & 131).

Despite post-1998 democratic scrutiny of TNI, it appears to have continued to play out its historic ambiguity “as both the state suppressors of violence and the unofficial instigators of it” (Pannell 2003c: 94). With official admission that military personnel were firing on crowds and increasing casualties, the TNI commander justified intervention on the grounds that soldiers were protecting their families (Bertrand 2004: 131). Indeed, according to Pannell, the nature

89 Hefner (2002) reports that open defiance of the Wahid presidency was stepped up from March 2000 by “old regime stalwarts in the armed forces and bureaucracy”. Laskar Jihad paramilitary forces enjoyed unimpeded movement across Java, sometimes with military escort and were welcomed in Maluku by “rogue members of the armed forces” (760); on Islamic militants’ justification for ‘holy war’ in Maluku and their dealings with Wahid, see Hasan (2002: 165-67). For Wahid’s own account of the militants’ entry into Maluku, see Wahid & Holland Taylor (2005).
of state coercion is tenuous and unstable, its forces oscillating between an all-powerful Leviathan and a set of local and quite familial relationships, where citizens, by providing resources and services in village settings, often actively sustain the police and military (2003c: 95). Her less conspiratorial framework sees violence and chaos as integral to state authority - part of the normality created between the state and its citizens (96):

[W]e have reports of people fleeing the armed forces and seeking refuge with them; accounts of the military firing upon residents and the residents, in turn, attacking the security forces. In this schizophrenic scenario, order and chaos, reason and violence, exist in a hallucinatory symbiosis, equally dependent on each other for their very arbitrariness and legitimacy (94).

And yet, van Klinken’s and Aditjondro’s theses – at odds with each other on substantive points - have more in common than the above summaries suggest. Both are concerned with elite manipulation: van Klinken with Maluku elites in competition with each other mobilizing their communal supporters/clients to the point of bloodshed. Aditjondro similarly focuses on elite capacities to manipulate order and chaos for political ends, but commanded from national (not provincial) centres of control. Both are instrumentalist in method but deal with different centre-periphery power configurations to explain observable phenomena.

Having adopted a semiotic method, this study is necessarily fixed on the way violent phenomena are described and how such descriptions may condition dominant interpretations to the point of assuming a discursive life of their own. Not surprisingly, in the tradition of Clifford Geertz, anthropologists have taken to applying their ‘culturalist’ methods to discursive artifacts such as media reports and journalism. Such methods are well suited to the study of the ‘culture’ of journalism or trends within it. In relation to violence in Maluku, Patricia Spyer has done just this by soliciting the self-explanations of North
Maluku journalists for their minimalist narrative style (2003 & 2006). Similarly, Nils Bubandt is mindful of narrative potency: where stories originate and the disease-like manner in which their re-telling sparks further violence in different localities.

Bubandt’s study (2001) of religious war in North Maluku - where he had previously done ethnographic fieldwork - identifies empirical dilemmas for anthropologists that mirror exactly those faced by newsgatherers in their routine ‘fieldwork’. He laments “a severe lack of unbiased, first-hand accounts of the prelude and circumstances of most violent riots”.

[W]e are left with partisan rumour and interpretations, which are often secondhand at best. These partial accounts circulate on the Internet and in media reports as well as through local hearsay (230).

Unsubstantiated hearsay was reported in the national and international media for lack of other sources and often also because of political bias. In turn, media reports were incorporated, in an exaggerated and partial form, into local hearsay to support local apocalyptic interpretations of the violence (231).

‘Religious violence in Maluku’ came to evoke powerful unifying themes and imagery. This was so because news reports constructed the violence in both the south and north of the archipelago in similar ways. This was despite the fact that North Maluku involved a set of dynamics, motives, actors and representations that was unique to that region and vastly different from those in Ambon (Wilson, C. 2005). The question for Bubandt’s culturalist method converges with this study’s semiotic one. He is preoccupied not so much with “what the ‘truth’ about the violence in Maluku is, but rather how a particular truth about ‘the violence in Maluku’ was established” (Bubandt 2001: 231).
The bloodiest theatre of the Maluku wars was centred in the north on the large island of Halmahera. Seven months after the Ambonese spark ignited island-wide retributive violence in the south, fighting flared in the Malifut area between resident Makianese (migrants from Makian Island off the west coast) and groups indigenous to North Halmahera – the Kao and Jailolo people. The Makianese were Muslims who had established a settlement in 1975 as sponsored migrants after being forewarned of a volcanic explosion on their home island. The two indigenous groups were of mixed faith – the Kao predominantly Christian (Tomagola 2000) but including traditional animist worshippers; the Jailolo predominantly Muslim (Aditjondro 2001: 107) or according to Tomagola (2000) and Sidel (2006: 181), predominantly Christian. The mixed-faith indigenous Kao and Jailolo formed an alliance against the migrant Muslim Makianese.

The trigger was a decision of the North Maluku regency (kabupaten) based in Ternate to create a new subdistrict (kecamatan) which would encompass a majority of 16 Makianese villages against a combined 11 Kao and Jailolo villages (Wilson, C. 2005: 80-84). They feared the new boundaries would render them a minority on their own ancestral land. The initial clashes left hundreds dead on both sides with several church burnings and the Kao and Jailolo coming off the worse (Tomagola 2000). One study found that the resettlement of 6000 Makianese in 1975 was resented by the indigenous people including animist Togutil and as a result many returned to their home island while the Malifut location was also said to be incompatible with Makian traditions of mobility (Lucardie in Aditjondro 2001: 108-9).

The virulence of the August clashes was no doubt related to competition for revenue and jobs from the new Gosowong gold mine (Aditjondro 2001: 108; Alhadar 1999: 15). Changes to regional governance had sharpened rivalries

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90 Tomagola’s account is also summarised in ‘Konflik Maluku Dikendalikan Elite Jakarta’, Kompas, 6 January 2000: 3.
91 The Malifut location was seen by North Halmahera Christians as a Muslim attempt to stymie the southward expansion of Christianity (Tomagola 2000).
as local elected officials fought to control larger shares of revenue and
territory (Wilson, C. 2005: 77-79) and the Malifut gerrymander was
interpreted as an ethnic powerplay by Makianese influential within the
Ternate bureaucracy (CPI 2001).92

In the modern era, the four Islamic kingdoms (sultanates) – Ternate, Tidore,
Bacan and Jailolo – were regarded as purely historic, ceremonial relics and
practically moribund. But the sultan of Ternate - Mudaffar Syah – was
credited with calming the disturbances using his influence as the traditional
patron of Halmahera Christians.

However, such ‘peacemaking’ was misleading in the context of post-Suharto
political geography. The sultan was in fact a key Golkar powerbroker in North
Maluku who coveted the governorship of the about-to-be-created province of
North Maluku. The decision to give North Maluku provincial status was driven
by Habibie’s re-election imperative. As a non-Javanese Muslim without much
support on Java, Habibie focused his campaigning in the Outer Islands. Syah,
however, was challenged by another local politician - Bahar Andili – who held
the position of regent (bupati) of Central Halmahera, from where he drew his
largely Muslim support base, numerically greater than Syah’s Christian
loyalists based in the north. Andili was allied to the Sultan of Tidore, who had
been the Sultan of Ternate’s traditional enemy and rival since the 13th century
(Alhadar 1999: 16). Syah claimed the Malifut gold mine fell within his
sultanate’s traditional domain and vowed in his 1997 and 1999 electioneering
to drive out the Makianese settlers. So the political game was control of
religious territory for the purposes of electoral mobilisation. It had its roots in
territorial competition from the initial Dutch settlements and religious
conversions in North Halmahera (Bertrand 2004: 130). From the mid-1990s,

92 The Makian elite allied with the Tidore elite to oppose the sultan of Ternate’s
cultural revivalism (Alhadar 1999: 16).
the contest was organised around a traditional rivalry, but one framed by electoral machinations in Jakarta (Tomagola 2000; CPI 2001).93

About 2000 Makianese fled to Ternate after the August fighting with stories of ‘Christian’ atrocities. The second wave of killings was a much more severe attack in October-November by the same indigenous groups in alliance with Tobelo Christians - on Makianese settlers where all of their 16 villages in Malifut were razed to the ground. This time the Makianese deaths were far greater. The exodus of 16,000 refugees brought revenge attacks on Christian communities on Tidore and Ternate with a Protestant priest killed on the former and churches and homes burnt down on the latter (Tomagola 2000). The stream of Christian refugees from these reprisals was a multiethnic one as the Sultan of Ternate responded by raising a traditional army (pasukan adat) who committed atrocities against residents of Ternate in collaboration with the army. The resolution of the political rivalry between Syah and Andili was destined to be violent as the latter was alleged to be behind the corresponding revival of traditional troops under the authority of the Sultan of Tidore. The surface branding of ‘religious war’ in North Maluku was exposed as Muslim ‘foot-soldiers’ supporting rival sultans fought each other in the streets of Ternate. This was a proxy war fought on behalf of provincial powerbrokers using religious faith as a motif to re-draw political boundaries at a moment of de-concentration of power between centre and periphery.

The Sultan of Ternate’s troops were defeated by their Tidore rivals by the end of the year but not before violence flared again when Protestant Christians in North Halmahera attacked 7 villages in Tobelo and one in Galela, killing 800

93 The Sultan of Ternate – apart from the advantage of having many followers who believed he was invested with divine powers – was a beneficiary in the 1990s of the ‘Islamic turn’, which saw modernist Muslims affiliated with ICMI and Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (HMI) rise within Golkar and to the pinnacle of executive power. Syah was able to win the Golkar chairmanship by aligning himself with these modernist forces and blocking nationalist candidates of PDI persuasion. These alliances, however, ran counter to his (traditional) mobilisational appeal among the Christian minorities who were politically inclined to vote Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (PDI), and after 1996, PDI-P (see Tomagola 2000).
Muslims in 2 days, 200 in a mosque burning alone. After Christmas thousands were massacred in the area (Bertrand 2004: 129; Eriyanto 2000: 13) which led 75,000 to flee to the south of Ternate (Tomagola 2000). Meanwhile, in Ambon fighting broke out on Christmas Day and following the burning of two mosques, the Protestant Silo Church was torched: “Widely circulated media reports of these events, which fell on a major Christian holiday and in the midst of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, had helped to precipitate the massacre in Tobelo” (Sidel 2006: 182). Muslim villages were also attacked around the same time and mosques torched in Masohi in Central Maluku and on Tanimbar Islands in Southeast Maluku (Bertrand 2004: 131).

Several analysts record that some time after the initial clashes in August - when refugee accounts and rumours had been allowed to circulate within communal-religious networks (Central and South Halmahera, southern Ternate and Tidore for Muslims, and North Halmahera for Christians) – the conflict hardened into a religious opposition. Clearly news of the protracted fratricide in Ambon and surrounding islands solidified and simplified the basis of hostility.

Central to this discursive solidification is the construction of the religious discourses on violence achieved by the “intermeshing of local hearsay and national as well as international media reports” (Bubandt 2001: 231). A provocative and fraudulent pamphlet94 circulated at the time thousands of Makianese refugees had arrived in Ternate and Tidore fed this mediasphere. It has been fairly suggested a forged letter purporting to be signed by a key Protestant church leader from Ambon inciting Christians to ‘cleanse’ North Maluku of its Muslims had the markings of professional agitators who understood the religious faultlines in the region (Alhadar 1999).

The apparent crudity of such incendiary simplifications belies a more complex process of dynamic escalation. Within anthropological thinking, there are

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94 Referred to in Aditjondro (2001); Bubandt (2001); Sidel (2006); CPI (2001)
claims that standard ethnographic methods are stagnating in the face of contemporary barbarisms that are underpinned by polarising cultural identities. In relation to Maluku, Patricia Spyer asserts:

What tends to be passed over in foregrounding the influence of Indonesia’s major political players – the networks of militant Muslims, the nefarious wheelings and dealings of thugs, the inbred violence, corruption, and partisan affections of the police and the military, and the shadowy plots of provocateurs and puppeteers – is the character of the very space in which all of these figures, for better or for worse, deploy their schemes and make their dubious marks (Spyer 2002: 24).

Instead of reducing escalation to graphic but simplistic metaphors like ‘sparks’ or ‘triggers’, Spyer pays heed to the work of the imagination as it shapes ‘the character of the very space’ driving particular actions and those who carry them out. The intangible and unseen ‘atmospherics’ of violent places are constituted by an infrastructure whose fluidity renders it hard to deconstruct. This infrastructure is nonetheless real and includes “overt and covert representations and mobilizations of both mass and more small-scale, politically-driven ‘tactical’ media, the circulation and sedimentation of ideologically potent images and hard-edged reified positions, as well as rumours, graffiti, unknowables and even unnamables” (24).

The constant, rapid-fire generation of larger-than-life media imagery penetrates the smallest, most localised communicative realms of the Ambonese villager and as quickly, disassembles - only to be replaced by new layers for which extreme alertness is a contagious imaginative defence. Potent expressions, warnings of what might occur condition a heightened state of vigilance where the ambience of ‘threat’ so readily materialises around an ‘incident’. And so it was in Ambon that a routine, ‘secular’ dispute at a bus station triggered mobilisation of neighbourhoods behind ‘white’ (Muslim) and ‘red’ (Christian) insignias: “it is precisely this preparedness and
visible organization that each side holds out to the other as proof of their opponent’s preconceived plan to mount an attack” (27). Such preparedness was marked by command posts to monitor the other’s ill-intent, and soon after, the designation of religious sites (mosques and churches) as key communications infrastructure and strategic territory to rally the faithful along increasingly militarised lines.95

This pattern of mobilisation in Ambon where religious property was absent from the initial violence but where the defence of which soon became the overriding strategic concern saw village youth gangs emerge as the foot soldiers in broader acts of interreligious policing and warfare (Sidel 2006: 193). This process of communalisation saw youth protagonists in highly localised turf wars over local patronage on Ambonese streets make common cause with similarly localised struggles in the legislature, civil service, business, security force and criminal sectors. The consolidation of generalised warfare between religious faiths thus sprung from the impulse to defend local networks that represented the peripheral extremities of religious hierarchies, connected vertically to political patrons in Jakarta (187).

In North Maluku, religious communalisation took a different path although patterns of warfare came to be governed by a similar logic of militarisation and escalation. As Bubandt argues, the attacks on Makianese, while extreme, were not organized around a religious opposition: “No mosques were destroyed and locals of both Muslim and Christian faith partook in the attacks on the Makian people in Malifut” (2001: 232). But once traumatised refugees had brought their stories to Ternate, the antagonisms began to be structured in religious terms. Makianese - in Ternate and Tidore and across the north -

95 Sidel notes accusations against leaders from rival religious networks in both Central Sulawesi and Maluku: Al-Khaira’at (Muslim); GKST, GMIH & GPM (Protestant)(2006: 193).
turned their anger against ‘Christian’ targets. And yet these attacks, he states, were more to do with local politics tied to the new provincial status of North Maluku. The escalation of attacks in October-November 1999 against Makianese, however, followed a similar pattern to the initial clashes in August, but this time were more extreme and directly targeted the Makian settlement at Malifut for destruction. A more organised act of ethnic cleansing, the destruction of Malifut was led by the Kao in alliance with Christians from Tobelo. Alhadar notes the Kao held many meetings before burning Malifut to the ground (1999: 15); in other words, inflammatory pamphlets were superfluous. The temptation, therefore, is not to see the violence in religious terms at all. But by this time, political alliance-building was being ordered in ways that only religious solidarities could cement. Politics was re-organised religiously as constituencies coalesced around rival provincial power blocs.

These re-alignments had both temporal and spatial dimensions. Once reprisals against Christian loyalists occurred on Ternate, the sultan there saw an opportunity to raise a force of 4000 customary guards in the north of the island to defend the town/palace and its citizens/subjects. The troops had been used historically to enforce the sultanate’s rule over surrounding dominions (16). This time, the politically beleaguered sultan sought to recuperate his traditional authority and deploy it in the service of securing the spoils of political contestation following the weakening of metropolitan authority in Jakarta.

The resentment between the Ternatan population and the Makian refugees was thus an outcome of a reinvented ‘traditional’ enmity between the Sultanate of Ternate and the neighbouring sultanates......as well as the result of a struggle for political supremacy

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96 On Halmahera Makian descendents fought Christians in Payahe (10 Nov), Gane (11 Nov) with 55 deaths (see Bubandt 2001: 233).
in the newly established province of North Maluku (Bubandt 2001: 233).

So what was the appeal of a long dormant sultanate whose figurehead distributed the patronage of a party (Golkar) which -after the national elections in June 1999 - appeared to be on the decline? Clearly, any politician/ruler who can personally draw on 7000 'palace guards' must retain a certain charisma and spiritual potency among a hardcore of conservative loyalists; but conscious of the capacity to call on these forces, their aggressive reinvention was not a descent into unconscious primordialism but a “re-traditionalised, political struggle” (234) between the elites of the two islands that presupposed “an active reaching back to the past to draw upon ideational and moral resources” (Wie & Jayasuriya 2002: 489). However, drawing on these temporal dimensions of historical enmity occurred within the context of immediate and urgent claims on contestable collective property. The ploy of the Makian and Tidore elite to take advantage of devolved powers to stake a claim for territory and revenue (in Malifut) was a common affront to both Kao indigenes and their ‘traditional’ protector, the Sultan of Ternate.

It was, according to some Christian refugees from Ternate and Tidore, the Makian and Tidore elite who deliberately made the conflict into a religious conflict to shore up support against the Sultan of Ternate. By painting the conflict as religious, the Sultan of Ternate could be portrayed as a religious renegade who sided with the Christians (Bubandt 2001: 235).

Additionally, the spatial dimension to this very contemporary elite conflict turned on the cultural geography of the new province. The premeditated aggression of Christian and Muslim indigenes against Makian settlers was a

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97 This is the figure quoted by Alhadar (1999) for the number of pasukan adat available to the Sultan of Ternate.
sovereign assertion of rights to place and the resource claims attached to them (indigenism); indigenist ideology was deployed to block administrative manipulations (gerrymander) by ‘ethnic’ others who had ‘captured’ the regional government and commanded widespread support in a Muslim-majority province. An indigenist defence of one’s ancestral domain was clearly a more coherent strategy than demonising Muslims since no historical tradition of inter-religious enmity existed in North Maluku. Thus the conflict only became religious due to mobilisational imperatives over time. Much epidemic-like violence across the province was driven by vengeance satisfied by attacks at times and in places with religious salience.

It is here that the metaphors of a spreading contagion or an erratic wildfire start to become concrete where “highly emotional symbols of religious identity.....transform the imagined religious differences into visible, social divisions” (237).

However, identity was neither purely religious nor fixed over time. In Ambon, gang members at neighbourhood barricades who performed war dances (cakalele) and wore red headbands drew on cultural resources that spoke to Malukan traditions of war-making. As the crisis evolved, motifs were reworked according to, among other things, a militarisation imperative – the need for combatants on Ambon to distinguish themselves from the enemy: the ‘reds’ versus the ‘whites’ (Spyer 2002: 28). The connection to elite politics and electoral competition seeped through the colour code with red symbolising Christian affinity with the secular-nationalist PDIP and white (or green) recalling the purity of santri Islam and its political vehicles PPP, PAN and PBB. Similarly, customary troops raised by warring sultanates in the north were identified as pasukan kuning (yellow troops) for Ternate and pasukan putih (white troops) for Tidore, where yellow represented not only the exemplary
power of Ternate royalty but also its privileged position within the orbit of Golkar hegemony.\textsuperscript{98}

The re-traditionalisation of politics in the north saw communalisation become increasingly militarised with predictable consequences for the number of casualties. Potent cultural symbols were deployed to radicalise and concretise imagined differences that were not exclusively based on Christian-Muslim ones. For example, the resort to occult practices – such as sorcery and protective magic – while long part of Malukan social life, flourished during the crisis in North Maluku among worshippers of both faiths: “Religious and modernist doubts about pagan magic were thus swept aside as young men sought out the magic of their village elders before a violent clash” (Bubandt 2006: 423).\textsuperscript{99}

Re-traditionalisation in North Maluku needs to be seen as an urgent and opportunistic reaction to the sudden political openness imposed on political elites. In this sense, the symbolic re-empowerment of traditional geographic domains (marked by the presence of religious communities) is primarily a mobilisational tactic; religious competition – while constituting “symbolic action” in Geertz’s terms (1973: 10) and tapping primordial identities among faith communities – amounted to a form of cultural revivalism. The mobilisational imperative to unite geographically disparate but religiously bonded communities had been a struggle to claim the modernist high ground throughout the 20\textsuperscript{th} century (Adam 1995: 161-62; Aragon 2001: 47). A willingness to use warfare to defend one’s own or attack rival religious symbols and sacred places – “simultaneously sites of religious and modern identity” (Bubandt 2001: 241) – represented conscious religious chauvinism.

\textsuperscript{98} The Sultan of Ternate was both regional chairman for Golkar and its representative for North Maluku in the national parliament (DPR); the party’s emblematic colour is yellow.

\textsuperscript{99} Following Malinowski, Bubandt (2006) describes magic and sorcery as ‘social technologies’ (421). Despite magic’s illegality, the Maluku region is well recognised as possessing powerful magic and exports its protective goods to the rest of Indonesia (422).
on both sides and a belief that a millenarian resolution to the struggle was imminent.

The fighting for control of churches and mosques which was caused by the heightened sensitivity surrounding sacred sites, became dramatic enactments of the cosmic battle envisaged by the millenarian narrative. (247).

The phenomenological perspective on violence that focuses on group mobilisational dynamics rather than the motives of supposedly key actors avoids the neat over-simplification of “rational actors pursuing narrowly self-interested goals” or “committed believers in seamlessly coherent belief systems”. (Sidel 2006: 12-13). It also has the advantage of seeing violence as a performative act integral to identity formation involving efforts towards the re-definition of the self. Such acts articulated collectively have an eye to “an imagined broader audience and larger symbolic order” (15). While aspects of this symbolic order are at the disposal of diverse political actors, its discursive utilisation is neither stable nor predictable. As Rene Girard prophesies in *Violence and the Sacred*: “whoever uses violence will in turn be used by it” (1977: 261).


101 Similarly, instrumentalisation of ethnicity or religion reifies their attendant identities and reconstitutes them as static ‘resources’. Their ‘deployment’ towards political ends - which may take a violent form - assumes a control mechanism - e.g. between centres of authority and the periphery – that is incompatible with the above properties assigned to identity: incomplete, unstable and interactive. So Girard observes: “Although men cannot live in the midst of violence, neither can they survive very long by ignoring its existence or by deluding themselves into the belief that violence, despite the ritual prohibitions attendant on it, can somehow be put to work as the mere tool or servant of mankind” (1977: 268).
Sidel correctly dismisses explanations of (his religiously defined) violent perpetrators as afflicted with various psychological or pathological conditions. Following Girard, he contends violence does not arise from differences but from the loss of them (Sidel 2006: 13). From this follows the proposition that “religious violence....erupts amid heightened states of uncertainty and anxiety as to religious identities and their boundaries” (13); such states were the outcome of broader political, social and demographic shifts over which group interests asserted varying degrees of control.

Most saliently for Maluku, a “national conjuncture” brought public Islam to the pinnacle of political power in Indonesia. This ascendency necessarily disrupted patrimonial networks built on a fading political dynasty. It also created anxiety around the risks and rewards that would accrue to communal contenders from new relationships with new national elites and the state-provided goods they controlled. The opening of these power grids to political contestation fundamentally destabilised communal boundaries based on religious identity. Violent communalisation gave expression to a mobilisational imperative to restore certainty to these boundaries. The territorial patrols, expulsions, ‘ethnic cleansing’, forced religious conversions were overdetermined by religious opposition because religious identity in Maluku in 1999 represented the path-of-least-resistance for both electoral and military mobilisation (Bubandt 2001: 237-241).

[The]he fading of pogroms followed from the internal transformation of the violence itself: the successes of ‘cleansing’ worked to (re)establish religious boundaries and hierarchies and thus greatly reduce the anxieties so evident in 1998-99 (Sidel 2006: 194).

However, much of what Sidel astutely states about violence under a religious banner could equally apply to other violent acts and representations. Violence expressed in religious terms may or may not meaningfully constitute religious violence. Subjective explanations for violence using religious rhetoric may or
may not reveal a violent phenomenon in its full capacity and future trajectory. These will depend on the intellectual frameworks deployed and facts analysed to uncover temporal and spatial connections between diverse phenomena. That conflictual moments in news are habitually treated discretely by reporters – who lock on to primary encodings such as ‘religion’ or ‘ethnicity’ – makes the analytic exercise of going beyond self-titled emblematic appearances the more urgent. The logic of disavowal – as with the pre-1998 glorification of order - continues to haunt the mediascapes of post-Suharto transitional disorder. 102

The changing political dynamics of violence within different time frames and centre-periphery configurations have been successfully catalogued by numerous authors. But their definitional categories – ethnic conflict (Bertrand 2004), religious violence (Sidel 2006), instrumentalisation of primordialist social pathologies (van Klinken 2006) – are too narrow to show what is common to the range of violent phenomena in the 1998-2000 interregnum. The problematic nature of these less encompassing terms calls for a more flexible, open-ended category that encapsulates the essence of a great deal if not all the violent struggles vying for attention in the transitional period.

Phillip Winn’s notion of a ‘proliferation of sovereignty struggles’ captures conflicts as broad as separatist insurgencies in Aceh and Papua and their political spin-offs, the territorial pogroms of ethnic Dayaks in alliance with coastal Malays in West Kalimantan, the various forms of radical Islamic agitation and strife both in Jakarta and among militias in Maluku, the destruction of property and communal symbols belonging to identifiable

102 A Jakarta police chief redefined belligerent manoeuvres in Jakarta in early January 2000 by renaming command posts (posko) as ‘pos kemanusiaan’ (humanitarian post) though they became recruiting centres for volunteers to fight Christians. See quoted comments by Major-General Djajoesman in Kompas, 12 January 2000: 3.
ethnic minorities within the trading sectors or civil services of indigenous majority provinces or territorial domains, and the ubiquitous and historically persistent demonisation of ‘market-dominant’ ethnic Chinese. In Maluku as elsewhere, sovereignty – rather than ethnicity or religion, or even nationalism – is a more precise descriptor of what violent conflict is actually about in the context of the elaborate and permanently unstable matrix of Indonesia’s politics of difference.

What is arguably occurring in Maluku is a proliferation of sovereign assertions by diverse moral communities and with them, the boundaries of difference which also form the frontiers of moral exception that empower and underpin assertions of autonomy and moral authority.....That the long-term historical presence of Islam and Christianity help shape the envisaged nature of such boundaries.....is unremarkable and should not be understood in the simple terms of ‘religious conflict’. Violence in the form of exceptional suspensions of local morality across boundaries of difference is the defining biopolitic of sovereignty in all its forms (Winn 2003: 70).

Notwithstanding such violent proliferations with their diverse local and translocal causes, it has been agreed that the Maluku wars - to a greater extent in the south than the north - quickly hardened into deadly pogroms of inter-religious hatred. The process by which this battle narrative proved hegemonic and enduring hinges to a large degree on the role of communication infrastructure including the “intermeshing of local hearsay and national as well as international media reports”, as mentioned above. The emergence of a dominant inter-religious narrative straddling vast archipelagic territory was a product not simply of inherited conditions but of the way creators and messengers of diverse media – including news reporters – actively reassembled fragments of fantasy, desire, apprehension and fear into a compelling apocalyptic endgame that lent the violence its imaginative (temporal) and epidemic-like (spatial) qualities. But how these discursive...
resources were used in ways that fired rather than extinguished the deadly blaze cannot be apprehended without reference to how much the religious framing of conflict borrowed from the transnational public sphere.

iii) Localising global discourses on ‘holy war’

Significant change in Indonesia, after World War Two, at critical junctures has re-ordered the Indonesian economy’s relationship with global trade. At different times and places across the globe, investment strategies sought to strengthen market systems and protect US economic and political dominance. This had specific consequences for political regimes and their civic spheres. For example, fear of communism drove massive aid and investment in Asian economies to produce high-growth export powerhouses in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore. Driven as they were during the Cold War by security considerations, these policies privileged state intervention and a strengthening of domestic capitalist classes. This enabled the emergence of an Asian model which would later enter a crisis and come into conflict with neoliberal economics103 and its advocates in multilateral institutions.

Elsewhere, underdeveloped (global) peripheries remained (post-colonial) quarries for raw materials, enabling industrial expansion in Western economies. Similarly, once liberal economic regimes were broadly established, investment was driven by manufacturing capital’s imperative to lower costs and exploit low-skilled labour with new technologies, thus driving mass consumption and rising living standards in the West. Indonesia was so positioned in its relationship with Western and Japanese capital. Economic nationalist policies favouring import substitution resisted this status on the global economic periphery but such ‘nation-building’ was not accompanied by

103 Neoliberalism is defined as “a set of core policies that emphasizes the market, fiscal discipline, trade, investment and financial liberalization, reduced public expenditure, reduced taxation, deregulation, decentralization, privatisation, and a reduced role for the state” (Rodan & Hewison 2004: 388).
the same welfare policy trade-offs and social contracts prevalent in the West. The contrast between wealthy liberal democracies and low-wage authoritarian regimes was put down to the primacy of security during the Cold War. As Rodan & Hewison argue, it was the threat to capitalism – not democracy – that was the principal driver of foreign (economic and security) policy (2004: 386).

The Asian model was characterised by an authoritarian developmentalist state which intervened to shape the cost of different factors of production (land, labour, capital) and engineer particular economic outcomes rather than leave them to the mercy of the market; through periods of high growth rates in the 1980s and 90s, such regimes not only proved viable but created powerful conglomerates competing with the West (389).

The conflict between the interests of state-dependent domestic capital and international investors was contained within a hybrid system whereby national economies in Southeast Asia were split between those sectors exposed to international competition (tradeable commodities) and those that were protected under systems of political patronage (390). Political authoritarianism accommodated both sets of interests by providing stability, delivered through coercion (or its threat), itself integral to shaping the cost of (and access to) land, labour and capital.

Alongside the security argument for deferring democracy was a neoliberal justification that sought to insulate technocratic decision-making from popular pressures (Hadiz & Robison 2005: 223). At moments of crisis - in Indonesia for example - when oil prices collapsed in the 1980s, neoliberal reformers gained ground by using trade policies to break down state-managed monopolies. From a bureaucratic takeover of the economy (state capitalism), these shocks reorganised the state into a “mechanism through which monopolies were allocated to powerful private interests and their commercial success guaranteed” (oligarchy)(224).
By the end of the Cold War, the neoliberal agenda opposed the Asian model insofar as it protected domestic capitalists from competition and was based on corruption and cronyism among and between economic and political elites. But it did not regard *political* liberalisation as an end-in-itself; instead good governance and transparency were promoted as a means to enhance business opportunities and capital mobility (Rodan & Hewison 2004: 392; Schweitzer 2000). Banking and financial sector reforms in the 1990s – while designed to expand the private sector vis-à-vis state-run ‘nationalist’ projects – actually allowed bank owners to use their banks as cash cows to finance their own pet projects through foreign borrowings (Hadiz & Robison 2005: 224). Such projects were backed by little more than political guarantees but “international business had no interest in calling for fundamental reform to a system of centralised rent-seeking of which they were beneficiaries” (225).

Such collusion and self-interest between national oligarchs and their international financial ‘patrons’ ended in the 1997 economic meltdown. In Indonesia, the Asian crisis was seized on by neoliberals as proof that ‘Asian Capitalism’ had failed. They immediately pushed for a further opening of markets to international capital and governance regimes that challenged the positions of many of the region’s economic and political elites (Rodan & Hewison 2004: 384), thus engendering new conflicts.

The economic crisis destabilised the relationship between Suharto and his family-linked conglomerates. Neoliberal critiques of Asian crony capitalism fingered corrupt politico-business relationships as the cause of capital flight and monetary collapse. Domestic businessmen waged intensive political campaigns to protect their interests. These fed off the nationalist backlash that lamented national humiliation of which Suharto’s bowing to IMF demands in early 1998 was its most resonant and visible symbol. This backlash took a distinctly anti-Western and xenophobic turn when domestic groups – some with an Islamic hue – protested this humiliation by associating the IMF, the
United States and globalisation with neo-colonial aggression (Budianta 2000: 121).

The crisis also undermined the clientalist structures between national centre and regional periphery, which had co-opted regional elites into the system of centralised rent-seeking. For example, the IMF-driven removal of subsidies weakened the power of Jakarta elites to co-opt provincial powerbrokers; it also provided strong incentives for local power elites to resort to ‘identity resources’ as a way of maintaining control of revenue streams and ‘communal’ goods allocated from the political centre (Wee & Jayasuriya 2002: 478)

The breakdown of the developmentalist project opened the way for the reformation of new mobilising ideologies. Suharto himself had promoted national integration in millenarian terms. Before 1997, 2000 was marked as the year of economic take-off. The year 2000 was cited as the year for the apocalyptic showdown, preceded by natural disasters and monetary crisis. The millenarian association with this year was, therefore, not just Christian but part of New Order ideology (Bubandt 2001: 245). In the borderlands where New Order promises were most precarious – for example, Maluku - their evident dissolution with the onset of political and economic crisis cancelled out a developmentalist future in favour of “an imagined pre-capitalist past that is seen as a golden age” (Wee & Jayasuriya 2002: 482). Consistent with the Malay association of crisis with millenarianism, Malukan Christians saw their local struggle as cosmological. It was in global terms an apocalyptic disaster: “a cosmic battle to presage the end of the world” (Bubandt 2001: 243).

Apocalypticism in Maluku is, Bubandt stresses, not Christian in origin nor restricted to their followers but rather common to both faiths’ construction of the violence: “a central fear on both sides was thus that the other intended to annihilate one’s own group and that divine intervention to establish victory
was at hand” (Bubandt 2001: 244). News discourses that emphasised the power of unseen instigators and provocateurs harmonised with these apocalyptic narratives of a global battle over which locals had no control. Collective violence became a route to collective religious salvation (244).

Such discourses could not achieve their imaginative effects without the mediating role of journalists modifying their primary definitions in response to re-readings of the conflict - absorbed, as they were, into an ever-widening public sphere. Although closest to the action, local reporters were driven over time to legitimise in their own texts global discourses that were at odds with local understandings:

We’ve never considered it a conflict of religious followers. The conflict is between citizens (antar warga), horizontal or whatever....But the conflict continues and finally it’s not only the Ambonese who know, Jakarta people know, the world knows, this is a conflict between religious communities, so finally we adjust....Because it’s become global, finally we use ‘kelompok Islam’ (Islamic group), ‘kelompok Kristen’ (Christian group) (Pinontoan 2001).

While some (student) groups supported the IMF as a vehicle to remove Suharto from power, others blamed the government for over-reliance on foreign experts. Not for the first time had intra-elite turmoil engendered a xenophobic backlash (Makarim 1978: 267-8; Appardurai 1996: 32), particularly at moments of significant political change.

But the religious conservatism of the late 1990s had its origins not in ‘the nature of Islam’ but in the historical twists and turns of those Islamic groups that re-formed after the political purges of the early and mid 1960s. After the banning of the modernist party Masyumi, its offshoot Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation – DDII), surviving with “an austere program of religious predication and grass-roots
struggle” (Hefner 1997: 93). Retaining an internationalist approach to religious politics, geo-political events such as the 1967 Arab-Israeli war served to harden attitudes towards the US superpower. This was reinforced through the 1980s by Indonesia’s open door policy on global (US) cultural product and the related expansion of tourism, alcohol, drug abuse and pornography. This, Hefner believes, left Muslims deeply confused and many were convinced that the greatest threat from the West was not political but the “pernicious subversion of popular morality” (94).

During the 1990s, the modernist Muslims in ICMI did not oppose the developmental state but the stranglehold neoliberal technocrats had over its policies. In one sense, their pressure for change was a backlash to the racial consequences of New Order developmentalism; IMCI saw the alliance with international capital as holding back the _prihumi_ business class in favour of minority ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs (Liddle 1996: 619). This ‘economic nationalist’ challenge to the regime’s neoliberal compromise represented a self-confident, urban, Muslim movement of business professionals with historical parallels to the Sarekat Islam movement of the early 20th century. These middle-class Muslims who took advantage of Suharto’s Islamic turn saw beyond his reign and the opportunity to compete for mass support in the political domain to serve their class interests. The intra-elite conflict threw up different factions but religion was a primary mobilisational tool towards their political ends. And ‘Islam’ was wielded differently by different factions amid fast-changing alliance-building. For example, as Suharto had built his political regime on foreign debt he was in no position to reject Western aid outright (as Sukarno had done). But the conservative nationalists that rose to the surface during the monetary crisis and the last months of his rule were not so

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104 Hefner adds that the other transformation of Masyumi modernists was from cosmopolitan constitutionalists in the 1950s (when the party was legal) to shariah-minded conservatives during the New Order. The uncompromising approach to theological principles was itself driven by DDII’s move down-market following the decimation of the Muslim merchant class and small-scale industrialists in the 1950s and 60s. Its support base came to lie with the urban poor and lower middle class Muslims (1997: 94-95).
constrained. Islamic groups which had received Suharto’s patronage during the 1990s were likely to prove useful in preserving the regime without its longstanding head.

Hefner (2002) argues that it was agitation from the “small dissident wing” of ICMI that led the president to turn to ultraconservative Islam and two previously oppositional Islamic groups: DDII and Komite Indonesia Untuk Solidaritas dengan Dunia Islam (Indonesian Committee for Solidarity with the Muslim World - KISDI). With the onset of the monetary crisis and currency collapse in early 1998, these two organisations were instrumental in framing the crisis as orchestrated by ‘enemies of Islam’ (that is, Christians and Chinese) and their foreign lackeys. Suharto ‘scaled up’ these hardline groups both to coopt them and to give the besieged regime an aura of religious legitimacy. This strategy, Hefner says, mirrors the “same strategy of conservative Islamization adopted by regimes in the Middle East” (759).

Islamist intellectuals – aligned with the ‘green’ faction of the armed forces – devised virulent anti-Christian and anti-Chinese propaganda distributed through conservative Islamic networks at the height of the crisis. The rhetoric which blamed the economic crisis not on Suharto and crony capitalism but on ‘enemies of Islam’ had a strong anti-globalist, conspiratorial and hard nationalist edge. This xenophobia and scapegoating were expressed most intensely against ethnic Chinese. As Hefner observes, the urban food riots of early 1998 “targeted not regime officials but, rather, hapless Chinese storeowners” (759).

Pro-democracy Muslims lost out to conservative Islamic nationalism because of the break-up of the reform coalition in parliament prompted by the ethno-religious conflict in Eastern Indonesia. “Old regime stalwarts” as Hefner calls

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105 Davis suggests conservative Islam did a political deal of state patronage in return for defending the regime against moderate Islamic groups (2002: 14).
106 One such pamphlet, Conspiracy to Overthrow Suharto, gathered the CIA, Israel, secular Muslims and ethnic Chinese into a dark conspiracy. Western advocacy of human rights (e.g. East Timor) was similarly framed (Hefner 2002: 759).
them, and the neofundamentalists (DDII & KISDI) were not the only political players prepared to use ethno-religious strife to mobilise Muslims. So-called pro-reformasi Muslim democrats such as Amien Rais also supported jihad against Christians in Maluku (Davis 2002: 15). Further, Habibie’s presidential campaign was a bridge between ‘Islamist’ (green faction) generals and secular nationalist politician-generals such as Wiranto. And while Wahid’s impeachment was a victory for old regime stalwarts, he was not replaced by a modernist like Habibie but by the abangan nationalist Megawati. In post-Suharto transitional politics, all factions saw elections as a route to legitimate power and religion as a legitimate mobilisational tool. Election losers used the opening of democratic space to re-deploy some of the old-regime tactics of organisational fluidity and discursive ambiguity (such as Pemuda Pancasila). As Hefner himself notes: “Though small in number, neofundamentalists had created a disciplined national organization willing to cooperate with elite patrons when necessary but that otherwise displayed an ideological independence and mobilizational power of its own” (2002: 760).

As mentioned above, the catalyst for the New Order’s unravelling was the region-wide 1997 financial crisis that disrupted patrimonial networks and unleashed conflict between the destabilised guardians of Javanese centralism and newly empowered provincial elites. The pressure for reform of economic structures (vis-à-vis international finance) and domestic political governance – internally generated and externally hastened by the neoliberal critique of Asian crony capitalism – allowed at least one section of the intellectual class to propose that only political liberalisation could sustain and extend market systems over time. The political imagination of this unstable transition therefore included the possibility of a future free of authoritarian rule (Rodan & Hewison 2004: 391). But the primacy of economic liberalism vis-à-vis the nation’s peripheral dependence on global centres of in-bound finance was soon to reassert itself through the reorganisation of patrimonial politics – most notably through its decentralisation (see Hadiz 2003). This was a familiar pattern during the Cold War – not least in Indonesia – where
centralised authoritarian regimes were not only tolerated but promoted by their Western patrons as suitable for the protection and spread of market capitalism within a bi-polar global security order (Rodan & Hewison 2004: 385). Many post-crisis transitional states - shackled as they were to distinct phases of neoliberal globalisation – saw their democratic movements de-powered. They settled for a familiar political status reminiscent of ‘cold-war’ dynamics, namely, “a high level of tolerance for political regime variation in the interests of security” (397).

While global discourses like ‘free trade’ and ‘human security’ have gained ascendency in some elite quarters of policy making, they have hardly led to a grand convergence of ideas and institutions. In Indonesia, Robison & Hewison claim that since the economic crisis of the late 1990s, neoliberals have failed to convert their structural advantage into political ascendency, allowing established politico-business interests to reorganise their power around parties, elections and parliaments at the provincial and local levels (2005: 192). Crony capitalism – far from being sweep aside by a globalist agenda of market reform - is now conducted through the discourses of regionalism and democracy. According to Bubandt, sorcery and corruption are seen as conspiring to prevent the realisation of a (anti-centralist) millenarian ideal: that truly transparent regional democracy will emerge in the Indonesian provinces (2006: 419 & 427). Since the fall of bureaucratic centralism, regional elites have attempted to fill the political void through re-traditionalisation. Local political aspirants have not dismissed globalist ideologies of democratisation and transparency but incorporated them into the reinvention of their own traditional hierarchies (e.g. sultanates) as ideal models for regional political governance (Bubandt 2005: 290; also Appardurai 1996: 37).

It is this incorporation of the ‘big ideas’ of global society and their re-interpretation by local political interests that best suits an analysis of how
globalisation works.\textsuperscript{107} Global discourses like ‘holy war’ have undergone precisely this kind of discursive re-modelling at the hands of Indonesian religious and political leaders in the transitional period. This process took place in step with the transformation of national security agendas under new global political rules following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US, and in Indonesia, the Bali bomb explosions in October 2002 and the Marriott Hotel bombing the following year. Even so, the religious inflections of collective violence were well established in the immediate post-New Order period before 2001.

There have been numerous critiques of the transfer of power and wealth to private global conglomerates. Many of them constitute internal (Western) scholarly criticism of the cultural consequences of neoliberal globalisation, often called the ‘cultural imperialism’ paradigm (Schiller 1976; Mattelart 1979; Stevenson 1988); these have been followed by global humanist critiques (Hamelink 1994; Tehranian 1999) offering culturalist perspectives as a cure for tribal, ethnic and nationalistic enmity; others still retain the anti-imperialist thread but place media conglomerates at the centre of a political economy of ‘global culture’ and its discontents (Bagdikian 1990; Gerbner et al 1996; Herman & McChesney 1997). More recent discourse analysis has treated globalisation as a forty-year epoch that has run its course as the economic ideas supporting it have lost their potency (Saul 2005).\textsuperscript{108}

But parallel to these perspectives has been a ‘cultural imperialist’ critique with a distinctly Islamic epistemology. Containing many of the ‘anti-imperialist’

\textsuperscript{107} According to Boyd-Barrett: “globalization’ asserts the global-in-the-local, that is to say that the local is suffused and pervaded by a global which simultaneously extracts and selectively disseminates the local” (1998: 15).

\textsuperscript{108} John Raulston Saul says that “trade was at the heart of the global belief system” and that trade had failed to produce broad economic growth, spread wealth and reduce unemployment (2005: 141); he also draws a connection between the globalisation era (from the 1970s) and accelerated violence, citing war related deaths from 1945 to 1970 at 18 million and from 1970 to 2000 at 22 million (150-51).
elements of the above citations, this religious intellectual tradition in that it envisages a new world cultural order rather than a communication order (as in NWICO); it also sees globalisation as a form of Western cultural imperialism and pan-Islamic movements as primary sites of resistance (Mowlana 2000: 106). It too targets the media as a conduit of cultural oppression where coverage of Muslim regions and conflict remains trapped in a paradigm of secularism and electronic mass media, with an emphasis on Cold War/post-Cold War ideological agendas. Surface economic homogenisation, this view asserts, disguises the fact that the fundamental values, attitudes and morals of the Islamic world remain intact (110). Thus media globalisation – in a world where Islamic concepts of state, community and communication ecology are vastly different from those in the West – inevitably expresses a Western bias against Islamic sovereignty (108 & 110). Mowlana’s ‘pan-Islamism’ stresses the crisis of political legitimacy among secular regimes in the Middle East and contends that Islam is opposed to all kinds of ethnicity, tribalism, racism and even nationalism (109).

In this way, the secular nationalist and Islamic wings of national liberation movements and their persistence in the form of post-colonial cultural resistance represent fundamental historical cleavages. These divisions express – not least in Indonesia - enduring ideological differences over the nature of sovereignty, the future of national community and the possibility of democracy in a multiconfessional nation.111

109 Mowlana cites reformist religious and political leaders from the early 20th century – namely, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Fazlullah Nouri (Iran); Sayyid Abu al-Ala al-Mawdudi (Pakistan); Sayyid Qutb (Egypt); Muhammad Baqr as-Sadr (Lebanon); Ismail Raji al-Faruqi (Palestine); Ayatollah Imam Khomeini, Murteza Muttahari, Ali Shariati, Jalal Al-e Ahmed (Iran) – all of whom provide scholarly and political analyses of Western media and cultural domination (2000: 108).

110 He is concerned that Muslims in the Bosnian war were portrayed as another ethnic group alongside the Serbs and Croats which led to their religious persecution being overlooked (Mowlana 2000: 109).

111 Cleavages followed the Saudi foundation of the Muslim World League in 1962 as a buffer against Egyptian secular nationalism: “The resulting split between the two faces of Arab Islamic culture, represented by Egyptian pluralism and Saudi Wahhabism, persisted and widened” (Schwartz 2002: 142-3).
These cleavages re-surfaced in an acute way at the end of Indonesia’s *Pancasila* democracy. One manifestation was the emergence of violent paramilitaries, some avowedly Islamic ‘holy warriors’ such as *Laskar Jihad*. This group’s significance was in its dual role: first and most ironically, to assist nationalist politicians to unseat an elected president who had strong non-elite Islamic credentials and secondly, to give expression to their vision of a pan-Islamist solidarity movement.

*Laskar Jihad* was but one of many militant Muslim groups that filled the expanded political spaces during the *reformasi* transition. Its role in re-igniting the communal bloodletting in Eastern Indonesia from 2000 is best understood through inquiry first into its theological roots in pan-Islamism and second, its activation into a civilian militia force in support of political factions during the national transition.

*Laskar Jihad* was the military offspring of a neofundamentalist community in central Java known as *Ihya al-Sunnah* led by a religious scholar named Ja’far Umar Thalib. The group’s religious identity was closely tied to its leader’s involvement with international Islamist networks that proliferated in response to the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. It broadly followed and was integrated into the Salafi-Wahhabi\(^{112}\) movement that emanated from the Arabian peninsula and was financed by Saudi oil royalties enlarged by the trade boycotts of 1973. The international movement – to which Thalib’s group belonged - was closely merged with Pakistani political and intelligence interests which provided cover for the training and infiltration of foreign *mujahidin* volunteers into the Afghanistan war zone. Following political disintegration in the communist Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, Saudi funds and

\(^{112}\) The Wahhabi sect was formed out of an alliance between a puritanical preacher (Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab) and a warlord (Muhammad Ibn Saud) in central Arabia in the mid-18\(^{th}\) century. The Saud family conquered Riyadh in 1902 and through a British alliance during World War I took the sacred cities of Mecca and Medina. Wahhabism became the official state ideology of Saudi Arabia (see Buruma & Margalit 2004: 134-35).
operatives later infiltrated Islamic communities across Central Asia and Eastern Europe (Schwartz 2002: 180).

Although indigenous to Saudi royal courts of the 18th century, influential 20th century devotees of Salafi-Wahhabism emerged in Islamic centres outside Arabia, for example, in India and Egypt.113 Thalib’s own teachings drew their religious authority from these inspirational scholars and he himself benefited from Saudi patronage at home and abroad.114 A major point of entry for Middle Eastern doctrine into Indonesia was Dewan Dahwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII), an Islamist body established by Sukarno-era Masyumi leader Muhammad Natsir (151). DDII received funds from the Saudi-created Muslim World League which Hasan describes as “one of the principal organizations used by Saudi Arabia in spreading Salafi-Wahhabi propaganda” (Hasan 2002: 152). Thalib’s group was united theologically with resurgent elements of other Islamist movements in Indonesia - the Darul Islam rural rebellion of the 1950s and Negara Islam Indonesia (NII) - by their common support for sharia law. Thalib differed, however, with these militant groups by opposing the political preoccupation with an ‘Islamic state’.

Ihya al-Sunnah advocated a return to the practices of the Salaf al-Salih, the first generation of Muslims; this represented a search for puritanical authenticity known as Salafism. Thalib’s group also “avoided discussing politics, or more precisely, engaging questions of political power. Instead,

113 Sayyid Abu al-Ala al-Mawdudi (1903-1979), an Indian Muslim radical and founder of Jamaat-i-Islami was according to Schwartz “almost anarchist, but with a strong Wahhabist component” (2002: 143); he wrote in Jihad in Islam (1927): “Islam is a revolutionary doctrine and system that overthrows governments. It seeks to overturn the whole universal social order….and establish its structure anew….Islam seeks the world. It is not satisfied by a piece of land but demands the whole universe….Jihad is at the same time offensive and defensive….The Islamic party does not hesitate to utilize the means of war to implement its goal” (Mawdudi in Schwartz 2002: 143); see also Buruma & Margalit (2004: 121-22).
114 He attended the Institute for Islamic and Arabic Studies in Jakarta and later the Maududi Islamic Institute in Pakistan (see Hasan 2002: 151).
they concentrated on re-Islamicizing society at a grassroots level by insisting on the correct implementation of the *sharia* by individuals, particularly through preaching and the establishment of Islamized spaces” (154). Their doctrine taught followers that if they adopted *Salafi* ways and social restrictions, society would automatically become Islamic and the state would be transformed in the process. In this sense, they diverged from those political radicals whose primary goal was the constitutional overthrow of the secular state (e.g. NII).

The main sites of recruitment for *Ihya al-Sunnah* were the Muslim study groups across the campuses which were part of a post-1979 Islamic resurgence; their activities coincided with official restrictions on campus political activity (campus normalisation policy) and attracted mainly small-town, rural or urban lower middle-class students seeking sanctuary from culture shock and fierce competition for jobs.

The crisis of 1998, however, politicised the *Ihya al-Sunnah* into the *Forum Komunikasi Ahlu Sunnah wal-Jama’ah* (FKAWJ) and signalled its transition from (non-political) grassroots propagation to political activism. Such a transformation also rendered the new organization amenable to political collaboration. Accordingly, Thalib found himself with a ready-made support base with national reach from which to draw cadres into militant actions (157).  

115 Such politicisation, Davis implies, rested on the strategic imperatives of conservative Islam: the fall of its key patron while leaving in place the

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115 Hasan notes that Thalib rejected any speculation that FKAWJ was working with Wiranto (former minister for defence and military chief), Fuad Bawazier (former Suharto cabinet minister and alleged financier of LJ) or any other Habibie allies (2002: 159). Thalib has stated that most funding was from overseas sources: New Jersey USA, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Singapore (see Davis 2002: 19). Militancy surfaces with the establishment of *Laskar Jihad* on 30 January 2000 with an army-style command structure. Thalib was commander-in-chief of about 10,000 members and by September 2000, 3000 of them had seen combat in Maluku (Hasan 2002: 159); *Laskar Jihad* ranks were also swelled by *preman* who having backed Habibie in 1999 shifted to new employment with LJ the following year in time for deployment to Maluku (see Ryter 2001: 155).
alliance between the ‘green’ faction of TNI and conservative Islamic networks in civil society (Davis 2002: 14).

Thalib turned *Ihya al-Sunnah*’s theological publication *Salafy* into an overtly political mouthpiece for global conspiracy theories about ‘the enemies of Islam’ and against Western democracy (Hasan 2002: 161). A FKA JW gathering in Solo in February 1999 urged followers to wage war against any government led by an infidel. This call-to-arms echoed the doctrines of Sayyid Qutb116 and Sayyid Abu al-Ala al-Mawdudi, both Wahhabi acolytes of revolutionary Islamism. These two thinkers and their versions of political Islam helped to lend doctrinal justification to the equating of *jihad*-as-religious-duty with a militaristic call-to-arms.

However, Schwartz asserts political legitimacy has always resided for Muslims in the principle of acceptance of authority which almost never approved of insurrectionary actions.

The traditional Islamic definition of *jihad* is war against unbelieving countries in which few or no Muslims live, or in which Muslims are denied religious rights, not internal subversion in pluralistic, mixed societies, much less Muslim lands. The Ottomans were the greatest *jihad* power in their campaigns against foreign, Christian rulers. But these wars were fought by organized armies from without, not by terrorist irregulars from within (Schwartz 2002: 147).

Nonetheless, conspiracies grew among militant Islamic groups that the Maluku war was hatched by international powers to facilitate the disintegration of Indonesia and Christianisation of Indonesian Muslims (Hasan

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Press coverage of Muslim defeats in Maluku led to an explosion of rallies demanding the government act to curb the violence. FKAWJ’s organ Salafy published a number of fatwas (religious decrees) issued by Saudi muftis on the legal position of waging war in Maluku. These decrees authorised (indeed made it a duty to conduct) jihad for the purpose of defending Malukan Muslims. President Wahid’s prohibition of jihad in Maluku was judged to be unlawful: “The Laskar Jihad indeed portrays itself as being the defender and guardian of the umma, whose lives are in jeopardy, so long as the state does not have sufficient power and political will to protect them” (166). In this sense, it was a militarised religious-communal response to political disintegration or state failure.

Such paramilitary violence when combined with religious martyrdom, on one level, achieves a religious goal through militaristic means: the re-establishment of Islamized spaces. As a form of atavistic aggression, it matches Winn’s notion of sovereignty claims - on behalf of the ummat – asserted as a form of cultural resistance (Winn 2003: 70). A charismatic and millenarian leader (Thalib) mobilises his recruits by tapping the historical memory (or religious imaginary) of the Christian crusades and uses them as a buffer against the broader globalisation process: "Jihad is portrayed as a form of Islamic propagation intended to build an ideal society, an alternative society free from Western cultural stains” (Hasan 2002: 167).  

117 Buruma & Margalit (2004) also point to a contemporary Islamic apocalypticism: “Radical Islamists no longer believe in the traditional Muslim division of the world between the peaceful domain of Islam and the war-filled domain of infidels. To them the whole world is now the domain of war. There is hardly any country where God’s sovereignty has not been usurped by worldly regimes. If God’s sovereignty is to be restored, a state must be entirely governed by religious law. So everyone may be invited to be a believer, but it is an offer that no one can refuse with impunity” (126).

118 Laskar Jihad fighters established health clinics, refugee camps, schools, and mosques. By doing so, they saw themselves as integrating jihad with dawa (propagation), giving practical expression to their resistance to a globalised world order otherwise beyond their control (see Hasan 2002: 167). However, their primary mission has been paramilitary activity against Christians (see Davis 2002: 23).
Thus a religious movement based on the revival of the ‘purity’ of an ideal Muslim state in Medina at the time of the Prophet was revolutionised by the political turmoil of 1998; its mobilisational capacities appealed to political players whose interests were damaged by the elevation of a popular president, itself made possible by the sudden expansion of democratic space. Civil disorder between rival faith communities in the eastern periphery served the interests of old regimists whose political empowerment at the end of the autocratic era was seriously curtailed by the fall of their supreme patron. An alliance with a de-stabilising force of religious radicals controlled from Jakarta helped prevent a democratic dismantling of networks rooted in old-regime patrimonialism.119

The spiralling of communal conflict in Maluku was based on beliefs that spoke to real anxieties about the future of both communities – beliefs that fed off competing narratives of nation rooted in diverse experiences in Indonesian history. But, in addition, such beliefs localised civilisational narratives from the transnational public sphere. Although the causes of conflict in different locations were heterogeneous and culturally complex, once religion became a deterritorialised political resource circulating above the battleground, the primacy of primordial constructions of collective identity prevailed. Such religious discourses were intensely communicated in thoroughly modernist language: totalistic, universalising, essentialistic and absolutising: “the very pluralisation of life-spaces in the global framework endows them with highly ideological absolutising orientations” (Eisenstadt 2000b: 12).

Note also Thalib’s projection of a ‘religious imaginary’ into the public sphere, for example, his framing of the present (the year 1421) according to Islamic historical time (hijriah): “tahun jihad” (the year of jihad). See Kompas, 7 April 2000: 11. 119 While Laskar Jihad was a militant expression of long-standing grievances about the Christian influence during the New Order period, Davis argues that its creation was “based on calculation and opportunism, reflecting the political priorities of conservative Muslim groups following the 1999 elections” (2002: 16).
These communicative realms – once beyond communal control – fired the apocalyptic imaginations of both camps and helped channel their respective utopian visions (and anxieties) about the future into the political arena.

The re-stabilisation of fractured identities involved the ‘purification’ of social spaces. Such was the actuality of war. The failures of the state and its agents were more than failures of ‘the system’. These were interpreted in conspiratorial, existential ways. Equally applicable to the Malukan conflict zone, are Schrauwers’s remarks of religious communalism in another part of Eastern Indonesia^120-

Fears are not just about rival communal groups seizing control of the instruments of state....They are about a battle of faith, part of which is played out through instrumental politics, but much of which is carried out through unseen forces.....Christians do not fear simply the Islamicization of the state; they fear for their souls (2003: 132).

But as is evident across Indonesia itself, cultural agendas and movements can develop in more open, pluralistic ways as well as in confrontational directions that beget inter-religious conflict. Did reports produced by Indonesian journalists serve to influence these directions by strategically intervening in the construction of collective identities?

Consistent with the earlier attention to John Sidel’s work on religious collectivities, ethnicity (like religiosity) represents a form of social organization, rather than some intractable primordial essence. The contours of shared identity (its social boundary) define the group in relation to others, not the cultural content or lived reality of that group (Pistoi in Schlesinger 1991a: 153). This allows for cultural practices to recompose themselves in response to changing realities. Group consciousness coalesces as the boundary is redrawn according to different criteria at different times – for

^120 Poso, Central Sulawesi.
example, the perceived threat of a rival group or the repressive forces of the state (Schlesinger 1991a: 153). This paradigm explains group action at many levels - for example, nation-building in Anderson’s sense of an imagined community; or larger, more ambitious efforts to conceive of an ‘Asian’ or ‘European’ identity. Geo-political conditions conspire to thwart these imaginative projects until a reorganisation of power provides an opening or ‘space’ that a resurgent sense of shared belonging can exploit – as occurred with the release of ethnic and regional nationalisms at the end of the Cold War. Historical memory combines with an affective sense of place to drive social change, often violently.

But as Schlesinger reminds us, such spaces can be inclusive as well as exclusive, so one’s neighbour might constitute an old ally or a new enemy; the management of this space has important consequences for the boundaries of collective identities and occurs within arenas of contestation over precisely where those boundaries should lie (147). Hence, ‘cultural identity’ assumes diverse moral connotations present in all discourses from global anti-imperialist struggles down to the most localised movements for autonomy. Media practice is implicated in these active processes of historical recollection, spatial demarcation and the moral ambiguity of culture.

Before introducing a term like ‘primordialist media narrative’, we must clarify the various levels of meaning of the term ‘primordialism’. At its most general, primordialism is simply a strong sense of group identity based on some primary form of affiliation: primordial affiliations are “culturally encoded systems of meaning with implications for behavior and effect” (Hoben & Hefner 1991: 18). Primordiality is a permanent social and historical fact in all societies that transcends the simplistic duality of tradition and modernity. However, within some Western intellectual traditions, it acquired a negative meaning – a kind of social affliction where attachment to blood, language, religion and memory made groups violence-prone and indisposed to
embracing mature, modern civic order (Appardurai 1996: 143). This evolved as a social-scientific explanation for a myriad of social ills in postcolonial societies which were seen as obstacles to modernisation (see Chapter Four).

While discredited in social theory in recent times, the tendency to see allegiance to highly personalised institutions which predate modernity as a fundamental organising principle of regressive social action persists in modern belief systems. A form of cultural determinism, this primordialist thinking has been sustained and legitimated within popular culture, not least through media communication. It is a function of such primordialist discourses to blur the distinction between primordial attachments as a social fact and primordialist (moral and ideological) arguments that underpin mobilisational politics, social engineering and violent escalation.

Typically, nation-states keenly promote (invented) loyalties based on cultural attributes as if they were primordial – precisely because they appear original, timeless, enduring. Ritually mass communicated as ‘national’ identities, they serve as primary tools of nation-building: the ‘uniquely Indonesian’ Pancasila familial state is a case in point. These ‘Indonesian’ ideologies overrode local realities of diverse cultural attachments (class, region, ethnicity, religion); in this way, the lived primordialism of regional subjects was repudiated by the developmentalist state and its foreign financiers as anti-progress.

Primordialist discourses, in periods of growing state centralisation, tend to ascribe premodern attributes to local solidarities, especially when they pose resistance to this expansion. So, ethnic or cultural explanations for group

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121 For various case studies from Western and non-Western societies, see West & Sanders (2003a).
122 See Appardurai (1996: 146): “[M]any racial, religious, and cultural fundamentalisms are deliberately fostered by various nation-states, or parties within them, in their efforts to suppress internal dissent, to construct homogeneous subjects of the state, and to maximize the surveillance and control of the diverse populations under their control.”
behaviour often imply an *unconscious* primordialism, where actors are portrayed as lacking the calculus of modern rational thought. Where such explanations enjoy a common-sense popularity, they take on an ideological function, obscuring how symbolic resources are consciously instrumentalised by group interests (including state interests) within a dynamic, modern political context. Ideological messages (the power of symbols) depend for their efficacy on such symbolic obfuscations.

Paradoxically, the pragmatic functions of primordial symbol systems must be largely unconscious and unintended to those who believe in them. To the extent they are recognized, they tend to lose their efficacy (Hoben & Hefner 1991: 27).

The post-1965 Indonesian state characterised threats to its authority as ‘internal’ to the body politic. Its official defence was to stigmatise primordial identities – expressed through the euphemistic acronym SARA – as inherently irrational and dangerous. Part of the New Order’s ideological strategy, therefore, was to objectify local solidarities and declare their symbolic expressions taboo. Unreflexive, unconscious passions, if allowed to express themselves, the strategy implied, could unify groups, explode and run out-of-control; such powerful forces were to be feared and kept hidden in a dark place. Their inherent irrationality also meant they must also be denied political space.

Appardurai addresses the same question from a different angle. Primordial identities are powerful and potentially dangerous because they can be organised into *culturalist* movements. These are not unconscious outbreaks

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123 This was especially so when such expressions were politically salient; timeless, authentic, ‘folk’ traditions under official supervision, however, were promoted or even mandated in their Indonesianised form. See Schrauwers (1998: 204) and Budianta (2000: 116).

124 Appardurai uses ‘culturalist’ in a manner analogous to ‘primordialist’; this adjectival form connotes the ideologising of identity in the sense inferred by Eisenstadt (1996: 31-34).
of a primordial contagion but groups taking cultural difference as their conscious object (1996: 147). These politicised groups variously may seek recognition, autonomy, survival, operate locally or transnationally, but they all employ communicative tactics that seek to draw the media onto contestable moral terrain. In this way, media narratives become implicated in culturalist agendas and the conveyance of their ideological interests. News media especially must keep faith with their audiences (or language community) by remaining active and relevant in the public sphere but avoid capture by ideological interests whose narratives their audiences are likely to reject.

In this sense, a primordialist narrative might be a successful media strategy for reporting conflict because it resonates with an audience; but it might also offer little to explain the processes and events that are the subject of reportage. Indeed, a story grounded in a primordialist premise renders historical, contextual explanation redundant. Alternatively, reified, ahistorical (primordialist) constructions of collective identity might emerge as a preferred reading of events where other textual strategies are unsuccessful or untried. It is this falling back on a primordialist reading – in the absence of other textual strategies – that prevails in the news reportage of both Indonesian newspapers under study. In either case, media narratives will tend to naturalise primordialist readings of the physical and ideological dimensions of violent conflict, as will be seen in the following chapter analysing newspaper reporting in the time of the Maluku violence.
CHAPTER SIX

FRAMING RELIGIOUS CONFLICT:
PRIMORDIALISM WRIT LARGE

“The best place from which to tell the story of a war is close to the action but at some distance from the values.”
- Jean Seaton, Carnage and the Media (2005)

This chapter provides an interpretive content analysis of stories about violence in Maluku that were published in the Jakarta dailies Kompas and Republika July 1999 to June 2000. The analysis reveals discourses of distant suffering that fall back on unilinear narratives based on ethno-religious enmity. The new stories avoided framing their narratives in terms of centre-periphery politics; nor did storylines pursue the use of religious and ethnic animosity as a means to advance political agendas marked by corruption, opportunism and elite management of the media. In the meantime, the deluded footsoldiers kept dying.

On 7th January 2000, at the height of communal fratricide in North Maluku, the Jakarta-based modernist Muslim daily Republika published a news report entitled ‘Foreign troops involved in massacre’ that led with the less-than-revealing paragraph:
Foreign soldiers and a number of helicopters are believed to be involved in a massacre of Muslims in Halmahera.\textsuperscript{125}

It is a story – to use a cliché – that raises more questions than it answers. Nor were those answers to be found in subsequent editions; in fact, the story’s assertions never appeared again in the news pages. It highlights a general trend in both dailies under study: a lack of continuity in news narrative over time. Those readers looking for the latest developments from one edition to the next would often be disappointed to notice themes, actors, ideas emerge in one edition never to be seen again. This is not to say that the strategic advantage of daily publication – temporal continuity – is absent; rather, modes of news presentation serve to mitigate against close tracking of themes and angles - over more than one edition - that push a story towards some kind of narrative closure.

In reportage of both papers, for example, multiple authors are often involved; in addition, their respective contributions tend to segment themes with the effect that news presents itself – invariably within the one story - as a series of near-contemporaneous events whose connection to each other is not immediately discernible. For example, in June 2000 just after a civilian state of emergency is declared in Maluku, a Kompas front-page story with as many as seven authors canvasses the views of a university rector, political observer, sociologist, lawyer, two government ministers and the head of the national army.

Each of them in their turn address weighty themes – some of which connect to debates prior to the declaration – but the presentation of views does not clarify why these commentaries were sought for the one article. The reading experience is likely to seem like a ‘festival-of-opinion’ where the individual

\textsuperscript{125} ‘Tentara Asing Terlibat Pembantaian’ (Foreign troops involved in massacre), Republika, 7\textsuperscript{th} January 2000: 1.
identity, status and reader recognition of each source is of greater importance than narrative cohesion.126

This excess of under-contextualised facts contrasts with the Republika (foreign troops) piece’s deficit of established factual detail and its surfeit of tendentious speculation.127 To be sure, Muslim villagers in Halmahera – just prior to the foreign-troops story - had suffered a series of appalling massacres. It took more than a week for details to filter through; as they did, the grief and outrage rose from Republika’s pages with spokespeople directly addressing Muslim readers as a community of believers (ummat). In doing so, blame is directed at a ‘sluggish’ government and its ineffectual or ‘discriminatory’ (anti-Muslim) agencies; the terms ‘slaughter’ (pembantaian) and even ‘genocide’ begin to appear in the narrative and in quotations. In keeping with this direct address, conspiratorial themes - like foreign infiltrators - are given space: citing unnamed Ambon police sources, a Jakarta-based Muslim group claims Muslim security force personnel are being targeted as part of a radical movement to establish an interim government in the manner of the 1950s-era Republic of South Maluku (RMS). In doing so, the story attempts to re-draw inter-communal fighting in Ambon as a Muslim

126 Sometimes this reporting style takes the form of an oversupply of events within the one article. See, for example, ‘Sekitar 265 Orang Tewas di Maluku Utara’ (Around 265 people killed in North Maluku), Kompas, 31st December 1999: 1
127 The source of the ‘foreign troops’ allegation is a local jihad member contacted independently by the paper; he claims to have seen foreign troops in a village. The evidence offered to identify them as ‘foreign’ is his quote: “Their stripes were quite different and looked like stripes that I saw in the G-30-S/PKI film” (a ubiquitous New Order propaganda film that associates communists with foreign infiltrators). The source claims that ‘tentara asing’ (foreign troops) attacked Muslims together with ‘aparat TNI/Polri Kristen’ (Christian soldiers and police). The most egregious misuse of sourcing is that of comments by a respected academic expert (Tomagola): “Information about the presence of foreign troops and the involvement of helicopters was also received by….(Tomagola)”. However, this has nothing to do with the specific allegations in the article, but rather they are general comments about foreign infiltrators during the Maluku conflict. Ironically, Tomagola’s reference to boats and aircraft may refer to jihad training camps in the southern Philippines supplying foot-soldiers to the Islamic side.
nationalist struggle against renegade Christian separatists with foreign backing.\textsuperscript{128}

Both the Republika and Kompas stories just mentioned allude to the unseen workings of foreign hands; they tap the collective memory of past grievances spanning 50 years where injury to one’s Islamic sense of self is synonymous with threats to the sovereignty of the Indonesian state. There’s no question such stories serve as an outlet for Muslim anger when tolerance is most challenged and communicate deeply with a community of readers; they add fuel to an overheated mediasphere but as journalism, they run out-of-steam in a day. These widely read national metropolitan dailies must keep faith with their readers over time. At times, they can afford to be a ritual outlet for collective sentiment but becoming captive to the agendas of sources only undermines the mass loyalty of readers. The trick is to develop a brand of journalism both with ‘national’ sensibilities and one that has the story-telling skill to describe and explain how the nation is experiencing a civil war in one of its outer provinces.

Representing the Maluku wars as a ‘national experience’ was always going to be sensitive and tricky because they raised the spectre of national disintegration. In addition, the two news organizations respectively originate in different religious camps, both born at moments of profound political change, and both with their fortunes - like all Indonesian media businesses - tied to their interactions with the state. These factors help explain why both papers fell back on some of the integralist fundamentals forged in the pre-1998 period. Muhammad Qodari, in his own study of the Maluku press coverage, believes that these papers found a way to avoid direct reporting of the warring parties by sticking to civilian and military official sources:

\textsuperscript{128} ‘KISDI: Menapa Komnas HAM Diam atas Pembantaian di Halmahera?’ (KISDI: why is the Human Rights Commission silent on the massacre in Halmahera?), \textit{Republika}, 4\textsuperscript{th} January 2000.
Military and bureaucratic sources are far easier to obtain. Entering certain conflict areas endangers journalists. In religious conflict like Maluku, quotations from military sources and bureaucrats are considered more neutral since journalists can be shielded from the accusation of giving voice to one of the warring groups (Qodari 2000: 6, FN 8).129

Integralist fundamentals aside, journalists had a war to report. Just as a news reporter almost never witnesses a road accident, when assigned to cover physical strife, he/she must reconstruct an event from material evidence and a variety of accounts from witnesses, combatants or responsible officials. Most of the time, readers were shielded from graphic re-enactments of butchery, not least due to the preponderance of official sources and their anodyne language. But occasionally, a reporter attempts to surround readers with the atmospherics of battle and its immediate aftermath:

The fire rose up with smoke coming from the ruins of burnt out buildings as if it was enveloping a town in the midst of being overwhelmed by rioting. The burning of a number of buildings directly provoked the anger of one particular group (*sekelompok warga tertentu*).

The battle between both warring groups (*kedua kelompok warga yang bertikai*) continued until morning. The booming sound of homemade bombs and molotovs along with bursts of security force

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129 Qodari’s study covers news of the North Maluku conflict during the period 25th October to 15 November 1999 and apart from *Republika* and *Kompas* also includes *Suara Pembaruan*, a Protestant affiliated national daily.
and homemade gunfire reverberated in the air until it became
deafening.\textsuperscript{130}

While the battle itself is real enough to be seen, heard and smelt, the
combatants are not; they remain mere types – armed and dangerous – but of
indeterminate identity (see italics above). In certain fictional discourses,
characters shed their identities to highlight other aspects of the narrative; but
in news, such masking of principal players is problematic. If combatants are
not clearly described, the imperative to define the nature of their physical
engagement is less compelling; the organising principles (socio-political,
strategic) of how groups move to war with each other is likewise obscured.
What is striking is the extent to which both these very different newspapers
adopted this obscurantist approach. Before considering how this might have
come about, the following survey illustrates how pervasive this was in the
body of both sets of texts.

The data surveyed comes from clusters of news reportage chosen to coincide
with significant events and developments spanning an 11-month period from
the second major outbreak of riots in Ambon in late July 1999 to the
declaration of a state of emergency across the Maluku provinces in late June
2000.\textsuperscript{131} Within these clusters, 79 articles were surveyed – 43 in Republika

\textsuperscript{130} ‘Pertikaian di Ambon Terus Berlanjut, Lagi 34 Orang Tewas’ (Fighting in Ambon
still continues, 34 more dead), \textit{Kompas}, 28\textsuperscript{th} December 1999: 1 & 11. For a full
translation of this article, see Appendix I.

\textsuperscript{131} Survey periods are identical for each newspaper: 25\textsuperscript{th} – 31\textsuperscript{st} July 1999 (the week
immediately following a major outbreak in Ambon – the so-called 2\textsuperscript{nd} riot); 21\textsuperscript{st} –
25\textsuperscript{th} August 1999 (the period immediately following the first major outbreak on
Halmahera, North Maluku at Malifut); 26\textsuperscript{th} Dec 1999 – 8\textsuperscript{th} Jan 2000* (coinciding with
major and sustained outbreaks in Ambon on 26\textsuperscript{th} Dec, on Halmahera on 27\textsuperscript{th} and
easily the most lethal period of the war; includes the key gathering in Jakarta at
Monas on the 7\textsuperscript{th} Jan); 7\textsuperscript{th} – 8\textsuperscript{th} April 2000 (includes reportage on a major meeting and
demonstration in front of the presidential palace by Laskar Jihad paramilitaries); 24\textsuperscript{th} –
30\textsuperscript{th} May 2000 (period when Laskar Jihad troops were first present in Maluku); 24\textsuperscript{th} –
30\textsuperscript{th} June 2000 (period immediately following a major attack on police armoury in
Ambon and includes declaration of state of civil emergency on 27th). * For Kompas,
this period was extended to 10\textsuperscript{th} January 2000 as there was no edition on the 8\textsuperscript{th}.
and 36 in Kompas (The data relied on for this content analysis is compiled in Appendix II).

i) The unnaming of combatants

What follows is a quantitative tally of descriptors for combatants broken down into ‘generic’, where the basis of group affiliation is not revealed as in dua kelompok yang bertikai (the two warring groups) and ‘non-generic’, where group affiliation is explicit in the naming of combatants as in massa Kristen (the Christian mob). These naming conventions emerge either in a nominal form (e.g. two warring groups) or adjectivally, describing a conflict (e.g. the inter-communal fighting). Both types are recorded in these categories. Phrases such as tokoh masyarakat (community leader), tokoh beragama (religious leader) and references to agents provocateurs (provokator, oknum) are not counted unless it is clear they are directly involved in the fighting.

Table 1
GENERIC & NON-GENERIC DESCRIPTORS FOR COMBATANTS
July 1999 – June 2000 (selected periods)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>#articles</th>
<th>generic</th>
<th>non-generic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Republika</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>57 [59%]</td>
<td>39 [41%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kompas</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>53 [81%]</td>
<td>12 [19%]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2
GENERIC & NON-GENERIC DESCRIPTORS FOR COMBATANTS
26th December 1999 – 8th January 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>#articles</th>
<th>generic</th>
<th>non-generic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Republika</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26 [45%]</td>
<td>31 [55%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kompas</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29 [72%]</td>
<td>11 [28%]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clearly, the degree to which Kompas seeks to avoid descriptions that reveal a religious basis to hostility and war is very high and greater than Republika’s. This is broadly consistent with the results of news content analyses by Qodari (2000) and Eriyanto (2000) who examine the North Maluku conflict in two different periods. They found that generally Republika represented North Maluku as a religious conflict and openly judged the opposing sides; whereas Kompas adopted a ‘safe’ position and avoided passing judgment on either side (Qodari 2000: 8-9). The latter’s caution, they add, took the form of stripping coverage of the violence of religious references. This preference for generic language, the authors say, achieves a ‘neutral’ position where events are portrayed as “a normal quarrel among the population” that does not involve religion (9). However, it is doubtful whether simply removing references to religion achieves ‘neutrality’ in any meaningful sense. If the ‘safe’ descriptions drain the narrative of explanatory power, ‘neutral’ can become a cover for ‘uninformative’ or ‘inaccurate’. To be sure, the authors do identify problems with this textual strategy.\(^{132}\)

However, the contrast between Kompas’s caution and Republika’s privileging of Islamic viewpoints (enabled by greater use of non-generic language) in some respects is overdrawn. What the two Indonesian researchers (Qodari & Eriyanto) do identify are changes between the early stages of the war in the north (Oct – Nov 1999) and the period of its escalation after Christmas in the same year. Not only do the number of news reports increase in the second period, but also Republika’s coverage becomes more ‘fierce’ (galak) in style and content as the number of Muslim victims explodes (9). This is reflected in my own results for a similar period in Table 2.\(^{133}\) The sharp rise in Muslim deaths in the post-Christmas period coincides with an increase (14%) in

\(^{132}\) See, for example, Eriyanto 2000: 23-25.
\(^{133}\) This period of intensified violence in the north roughly coincides with Eriyanto’s sample period which covers 26 Dec 1999 – 15 Jan 2000, though his analysis applies only to reporting on North Maluku.
Republika reporters’ propensity to describe victims as ‘Muslims’ and their attackers as ‘Christians’. But more telling is the picture that emerges from Table 1, derived from data over the full sample period\textsuperscript{134} and encompassing reportage from north and south. In the 11-month sample, while not as pronounced as Kompas (81%), Republika’s preference for euphemism and sanitised language when describing combatants is significantly high (59%). Despite the different orientations of these papers, the challenge of reporting civil war produces continuities as well as divergence in reporting styles and professional outcomes. This is reinforced by the following comparative treatment of sourcing.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\caption{OFFICIAL STATE VERSUS PARTISAN SOURCES}
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Daily} & \textbf{#articles} & \textbf{official} & \textbf{partisan} \\
\textit{Republika} & 43 & 65 [48\%] & 72 [52\%] \\
\hline
\textit{Kompas} & 36 & 93 [87\%] & 14 [13\%] \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\caption{MALUKAN AND NON-MALUKAN SOURCES}
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Daily} & \textbf{#articles} & \textbf{Malukan} & \textbf{non-Malukan} \\
\textit{Republika} & 43 & 69 [43\%] & 93 [57\%] \\
\hline
\textit{Kompas} & 36 & 40 [32\%] & 86 [68\%] \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

The most obvious result from Table 3 is Kompas’s hyper-dependence on official-state sources, both civilian and military. Republika displays a much

\textsuperscript{134} That is, my selected dates over the full 11-month sample period.
more even distribution between official and partisan sources. However, sourcing preferences converge when both papers show a preponderance of sources from outside the conflict zone (Table 4). Kompas’s official-source dependency is exacerbated by its superior score for non-Malukan sources, producing Jakarta-centric, official discourses where storytelling from the conflict zone is muted, often inaudible. Republika’s apparent lesser dependence on officialdom is offset by a number of factors: first, its partisan sources are overwhelmingly Islamic and second, out of those partisan sources, a clear majority (61%) speak from outside the war zone (that is, Jakarta). This suggests an official-source dependency exists – though one less slavish than Kompas – with a tendency to be a reliable outlet for Islamic political agendas organised from Jakarta (The latter point is important to the later discussion of Laskar Jihad).

Kompas did not so much avoid Christian sources but partisan, self-consciously Christian ones. Conversely, while all its partisan voices were kept to an absolute minimum (13%), when partisan Muslim spokespeople did speak, they did so stridently and without balancing comment.

The textual suppression of the identity of combatants undermined professional obligations to explain the bases of hostility. This privileged primordialist readings of the apparently endless outbreaks of violence across time and space. The censorious instincts of editors, one theory suggests (Eriyanto 2000), are employed to dampen conflict, avoid aggravating partisan anger and enlarging hostility not just in the battle zones but also throughout the general population. While verifying whether this approach can achieve such goals may be untestable, it raises deeper questions of professional purpose: which aspects of journalistic narrative can be legitimately tampered with to achieve these avowedly higher goals?; by what criteria do editors mandate the selective removal of narrative elements for this purpose?; and in

135 Stark biases towards non-Malukan Islamic sources were found for both papers in Sudibyo’s research which surveyed the period 7th – 15th January 2000 (2000: 28).
a related sense, what commercial and professional considerations apply in editorial decisions that deem certain information needs of readers (e.g. knowing who is attacking whom) to be expendable? Such decisions also have implications for who is telling the story since such self-censoring often involves ceding narrative control to certain classes of story-tellers (e.g. official sources). One version of this theory – in relation to Kompas’s refusal to allow its news pages to be used as space for alternating provocations – is explained thus:

Too large a portion given to one news source can provoke protest and anger from the other side. This dilemma is overcome by Kompas by placing the same paucity of Islamic and Christian sources alongside greater official news sources. By this method, Kompas appears neutral and safe in the face of a public with diverse religious preferences (Eriyanto 2000: 14).\(^{136}\)

Attempts to answer some of these professional dilemmas appear in the next chapter in the context of changing political pressures within a transitional media environment. But it is not argued here that textual suppression and euphemistic language completely blinded readers from recognising the primary colours of the warring groups. One author suggests a familiar hangover from the New Order was at work: the soft (halus) breaking of harsh (kasar) news.\(^{137}\) Accounts of the fighting used different techniques to trigger reader recognition of group identity. This is illustrated from a comparison of the two papers’ reportage on an incident in Ambon in late December 1999 at the height of communal anxieties fuelled by rumours of massacres in the north (translations reprinted in Appendix I).

\(^{136}\) This statement is made about both Kompas and Suara Pembaruan. References to the latter have been removed from the quotation and the grammar altered accordingly.

\(^{137}\) Eriyanto mentions the New Order practice of announcing price hikes with the term ‘penyesuaian harga’ (price adjustment) where the real meaning is apparent to all (2000: 24).
In Republika’s version, far from being suppressed, group mobilisation along religious lines is integral to narrative movement. A riot is said to have been triggered by the ‘hit-and-run’ ‘kidnapping’ of a 13-year-old boy (recognisable as Muslim by his name). The injured boy is picked up by a vehicle heading in the direction of a Christian area. This arouses the suspicion of his anxious parents, a suspicion heightened when their son cannot be found after a number of hospitals are checked. Their concern about the Christian area (and in particular its general hospital) is said to be based on earlier ‘incidents’ at the hospital where ‘10s of Muslim patients were killed’ (impliedly at the hands of Christian medical staff rather than their wounds). The account of the subsequent riot (that took place during Ramadhan) is further inflected with a religious narrative by Islamicising time, marked by ritual such as the call from the mosque (tarhim) to signal early evening breaking of the fast (buka puasa). Similarly, Christian combatants engaged in shooting and discharging their bamboo cannons are described as ‘still celebrating Christmas’. The reporter connects with his Muslim readers by positioning himself at the site of a street battle alongside his Muslim brethren and security forces. Together they react to a sniper attack and together as Muslims, the sub-text implies, they must endure the ignominy of war during the observance of sacraments. The firsthand narrative grips the reader because it captures the mayhem through close observation, but identifies with one side (Muslims) - ‘the victims’ - whose trials are described in depth and with sympathy.

By way of contrast, the Kompas report of the same riot uses the imprecise and euphemistic ‘SARA’ acronym and various generic epithets such as bentrok antarkelompok warga (inter-group clash). Details of the riot are sourced to a

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138 ‘Ambon Kembali Panas, Wartawan Kena Tembak’ (Ambon heats up again, journalist shot), Republika, 27th December 1999: 1 & 9. Similarly, the following day’s report inscribes Muslim death during the fasting month within religiously marked timeframes, for example, victims began to fall at Subuh (early morning prayers) and a youth was shot in the head as he was about to eat his last meal before dawn (sahur). The imminence and inevitability of violence is portrayed in elemental terms: ‘like an ember in a husk’. See ‘Ambon Bentrok Lagi 51 Tewas’ (Clashes in Ambon again, 51 dead), Republika, 28th December 1999: 1.
military commander; military efforts under another named commander to prevent the clashes are recounted in detail. The background is unsourced (‘according to information....’) and describes not a ‘kidnapping’ but a transport carrier ‘colliding’ with a (named) child who subsequently could not be found at two of the hospitals. The transport driver is described as being ‘from a group on the opposing side to the victim’s family’, all under the sub-heading isu sepele (trivial issue). Amidst this cautious, ‘neutral’ language, the Kompas report still manages to convey aspects of communal identity in an otherwise anodyne exposition. Communalism is encoded in references to street, hospital and personal names, as well as the destination of a town bus (a Christian area). Through inference and guesswork, readers can identify at least a sketch of the contours of battle. Immediacy is created by focusing on the smoke rather than the fire of physical battle – the weapons, ruins and bursts of fighting spirit from unspecified combatants.  

If the dividend from oblique naming techniques is a non-confrontational storyline, the deficit is narrative clarity. It might be said that terms like ‘inter-communal’ in the context of news on Maluku would be recognisable by readers as an oblique reference to religious-based communal conflict; but in practice, this reporting style more often than not muddies rather than clarifies the factual situation. Eriyanto refers to this in his discussion of a Kompas story where it is reported that ‘fighting occurred between two (named) villages’: “Which one is meant to be the Islamic village and which one the Christian village?” he asks (2000: 25). Some (including the reporter) might discern this from the villages’ names but the general reading public would remain in the dark. Eriyanto also points to another problem that obscures reader comprehension: ‘inter-communal fighting’ can create confusion about whether the dispute – in this case on Seram Island – is an extension of the

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139 ‘Pertikaian di Ambon Terus Berlanjut, Lagi 34 Orang Tewas’ (Fighting in Ambon still continues, 34 more dead), Kompas, 28th December 1999: 1 & 11. On the latter point about immediacy, see the quotations referred to in FN 78.

140 The article is ‘Pertikaian Kembali Pecah di Halmahera Tengah’ (Fighting returns to shatter Central Halmahera), Kompas, 12th January 2000: 1 & 11.
war on Ambon or simply a normal conflict among locals unrelated to religion (25).

These issues come up earlier in Kompas’s coverage of trans-regional conflict occurring simultaneously in Ambon and North Maluku. On 31st December 1999, first mention of the post-Christmas mass killings of Muslims in Halmahera are made in the form of a casualty estimate; but Kompas reporters make no mention of who is killing whom, only that clashes were ‘between groups of different religions’. The ‘tragedy’ in Tobelo, the report suggests, is somehow related to a ‘big riot’ in Ambon just prior to it, but no light is shed on this connection so it remains speculative; in the lead paragraph Ambon clashes are described as ‘spreading’ to outlying areas, including North Maluku, overlooking the local history of the latter conflict. When details later emerge that these clashes were in fact one-sided massacres (pembantaian) of Muslims, Kompas’s habitual use of ‘safe’ terms like bentrokan (clashes) is exposed. So too is its ability to make sense of ensuing Muslim outrage and its mobilisational spin-offs compromised.

Similarly, editorial preferences to tell the Maluku story through official-state and Islamic political discourses centred in Jakarta left little room for accounts of the ground war in Maluku. When the civil emergency is put in place in June 2000, there is a rare and brief mention of ‘red and white troops’. It is revealing of Kompas’s studious detachment from the conduct of the war that these troops’ Panglima Perang (war commanders) – 17 months after the start

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141 Victims are described as ‘people from Tobelo’ (warga Tobelo, not warga Muslim Tobelo) and their attackers ‘the other group/the disturbing group’ (warga kelompok lain/kelompok pengganggu, not Christian attackers); attacks in Galela are referred to as kerusuhan/pertikaian (rioting/fighting) without naming the sides; only by naming the settlements that were attacked and the ones which were the subject of reprisal attacks might the reader be able to identify who is attacking whom. See ‘Sekitar 265 Orang Tewas di Maluku Utara’ (Around 265 people killed in North Maluku), Kompas 31st December 1999: 1.

142 Senior editorial & research manager at Kompas, Daniel Dhakidae, acknowledges that his paper was “not too successful” in explaining the Maluku conflict to its readers but attributes this to “ideological obstacles” rather than any skill deficiencies (Dhakidae 2001).
of the conflict – remain unnamed. In fact, both papers have little to report on the commanders’ leadership structures, recruitment, military tactics or strategic thinking.\textsuperscript{143}

ii) Reporting distant violence

No doubt official-source dependency and detachment from the ground war – in the Maluku case as elsewhere – are functions of the lack of access to the war zone and its direct participants (see Chapter Three, Section III). However, it is questionable – at least from this textual analysis – whether either paper sought to get close to the battlefields \textit{in order to} allow local dynamics and insights to drive their conflict narratives. Even when stories moved away from the rancour of Jakarta politicians or the minimalist expressions of military spokesmen, descriptive accounts of physical destruction and verifying the number of dead and wounded were almost always preferred to explanations of violent phenomena in their local setting. On the rare occasions when reporting space was given to analysis, commentators opined from Jakarta, not from the heart of the action.

So, when violence erupted in Malifut on Halmahera island on 19\textsuperscript{th} August 1999, Kompas all but ignored it, missing the first page of a new chapter of the Maluku wars. It gets one paragraph in the form of a casualty report within an article about two other lethal clashes in the south. No attention is drawn to the fact that this is a new theatre of violence, implying by default that it is an undifferentiated extension of Ambon’s feuding. Nor is there any follow-up clarification in subsequent editions. Republika’s account of the same event carries more detail and context. At least, we learn – in a separate report - something about the actual dispute: a bomb was exploded near an official

\textsuperscript{143} See ‘Kontrol Tetap Diperlukan’ (Control still needed), \textit{Kompas}, 29\textsuperscript{th} June 2000: 1 & 11.
party of the North Maluku regional assembly attended by the Sultan of Ternate. As background, it mentions 5 Kao villages were being incorporated against their will into a new ‘Makian’ sub-district. The fighting went on for 4 days and Makian refugees had already arrived in Ternate and a much larger number of Kaonese from the resisting villages fled to their own sub-district. The villagers are described as *warga Kao* (Kaonese) and *warga Makian* (Makianese) with no mention of their religion, which is clearly not an issue. The origin of the dispute is correctly described by a police spokesman as the administrative division of a piece of land falling between two districts occupied by two distinct ethnic groups, but he insists the incident is ‘purely criminal, definitely no suggestion of SARA’. The term ‘SARA’ is used here in its New Order primordialist sense, designed to dilute the dispute’s broader political appeal by de-communalising it. Notwithstanding his legalistic description (*kriminal*), the dispute clearly carried strong elements of ethnic (*suku*) opposition and was no isolated, apolitical act of criminality.

An intellectual framework that might suggest broader forces were driving this ‘incident’ with the potential to develop a violent life of its own does emerge in some academic commentary. The University of Indonesia’s Thamrin Tomagola was frequently used by both papers. His analysis of the cultural politics of North Maluku and its ties to political contingencies in Jakarta was summarised in their news pages. However, there is little evidence that these perspectives seeped into the way reporters probed and framed northern violence over time.

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iii) Security personnel and their media masks

If the advantages of official-source dependency include easy access to officials, the downside is that it hampers the development of consistent storylines and the ability to pursue them through to independent conclusions. Nowhere is this more apparent in the survey sample than in coverage of the role of state security forces (SSF). A persistent question thrown up throughout the 79 news articles is: ‘are the security forces part of the solution or part of the problem?’ This complex theme infiltrates a broad array of conflict events in the archipelago and efforts at all levels of the political centre to restore order to its fracturing eastern periphery.

The ambiguous and sometimes renegade role played by SSF presents itself throughout the texts under study; but these in the main consist of passing references rather than systematic inquiry. Consequently, one of the key political and strategic issues behind Maluku’s communal wars receives a fragmentary treatment in news discourse. Partisan security personnel (whether TNI or police) are generally referred to as oknum (rogue elements); sometimes the term provokator is used indirectly but never explicitly to describe aparat (security personnel). Such SSF behaviour is usually described as memihak (taking sides) but the basis of partisanship (for example, religious identity) is rarely spelt out.

At times, the inability of SSF to restrain hostile groups is highlighted, while at others, the practice of shooting into warring mobs with resulting casualties is mentioned in dispatches. The riot that followed the disappearance of the injured Muslim boy cited above was, according to one commentator,

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145 For example, see ‘Takkan Ada Keadaan Darurat’ (There will not be any state of emergency), Kompas, 30th December 1999: 1.
146 See ‘Kerusuhan Ambon Meluas, 11 Tewas’ (Ambon rioting widens, 11 killed), Republika, 28th July 1999: 1; and ‘Orang Luar Dilarang Datang ke Maluku’ (Outsiders banned from entering Maluku), Kompas, 24th June 2000: 1.
precipitated by SSF selling their ammunition to combatants.\textsuperscript{147} The military’s reassurance to politicians and the public that 15 battalions had been deployed to the province\textsuperscript{148} is contrasted with reports of villagers rejecting TNI protection and forming their own security posts.\textsuperscript{149}

The SSF’s apparent tactic of discharging their weapons to disperse or separate warring parties sometimes becomes confused when locals are reported accusing ‘rogue security personnel of taking sides with certain groups’ (\textit{oknum aparat memihak kelompok tertentu}). This presents openings for narrative inquiry but in one case, it is not until the final paragraph we are presented with a powerful image around which a single storyline might have been built:

The security forces - both TNI and police - appeared to be having increasing difficulty dispersing the attackers who were equipped with weaponry almost the same as possessed by the security forces themselves.\textsuperscript{150}

When, occasionally, the primary news angle involves ‘\textit{oknum aparat’}, there is no independent information to compare with the SSF accounts. We read only that TNI or police suspects are being investigated, for example, for the shooting of 21 victims in an Ambon village: a TNI commander suggests his suspect personnel were provoked by the sniper killing of a colleague.\textsuperscript{151} Even more intriguing is an unsourced report accusing a police lieutenant-colonel of

\textsuperscript{147} ‘Pemerintah Jangan Ragu Bertindak Tegas’ (Government shouldn’t hesitate in taking firm measures), \textit{Kompas}, 30\textsuperscript{th} December 1999: 1.
\textsuperscript{148} ‘15 Batallyon Ditugaskan ke Wilayah Maluku’ (15 battalions deployed to Maluku area), \textit{Kompas}, 12\textsuperscript{th} January 2000: 3.
\textsuperscript{149} ‘Korban Tewas dalam Lima Hari 453 Orang’ (Victims killed in 5 days: 453), \textit{Republika}, 31\textsuperscript{st} December 1999: 1.
\textsuperscript{150} ‘TNI akan Bertindak Lebih Tegas’ (TNI will take firmer action), \textit{Kompas}, 25\textsuperscript{th} June 2000: 11.
\textsuperscript{151} ‘4 Anggota TNI Jadi Tersangka Kasus Penembakan di Galala’ (TNI members become suspects in shooting incident in Galala), \textit{Kompas}, 19\textsuperscript{th} August 1999: 17.
orchestrating riots clandestinely, whose case is being handled by TNI. Another report has agents provocateurs acting on behalf of ‘national political constellations’ posing in SSF uniform with false rank. When a report of a seminar airs serious allegations of SSF institutional corruption (rather than the errant behaviour of individual ‘oknum’), the TNI response is to demand proof: “logically, it does not enter our minds to engineer riots”. This important theme is not interrogated in subsequent editions of either paper within the survey sample.

There are very limited references linking rogue behaviour to the religious faith of SSF members. Nor in the sample is there any analysis of the ethno-religious make-up of SFF units, their geographic origins or the timing of particular deployments in relation to the conduct of the war. This is in keeping with the minimalist approach to reporting the religious affiliation of combatants. Occasionally, when the link is made, they remain uninterrogated, such as ‘oknum Brimob Kristen’ (rogue Christian riot police) or ‘tembak di antara aparat TNI yang berbeda agama’ (shooting between TNI personnel of different religions).

Precise connections between SSF, the complicity of ‘rogue elements’ in criminal activity and the religious-communal partisanship of such elements are subject to deepening confusion in reportage of a major security debacle in Ambon just prior to the state of emergency in June 2000. Following clashes described vaguely as having elements of SARA, the riot police’s armoury at 152 ‘Diselidiki, Aktor di Balik Pertikaian di Ambon’ (Investigated, actor behind fighting in Ambon), Kompas, 23rd August 1999: 11.
153 ‘Pemda Minta Pusat Atasi Kemelut Ambon’ (Provincial government asks the centre to overcome the Ambon disaster), Kompas, 16th August 1999: 12.
154 ‘Penilitian PSPK Indikasikan TNI Terlibat dalam Kerusuhan Ambon’ (PSPK research indicates TNI involved in Ambon riots), Republika, 27th May 2000: 2.
155 ‘Tobelo and Galela Jadi Ladang Pembantaian Kaum Muslim’ (Tobelo and Galela become killing field for Muslims), Republika, 5th January 2000: 13.
156 ‘Menneg HAM Akui Pemerintah Kurang Koordinasi Soal Maluku’ (Minister for Human Rights admits lacks of coordination on Maluku problem), Kompas, 7th January 2000: 11
Tantui is ransacked by ‘a mob’ and their living quarters burnt to the ground with SSF fleeing the mayhem. A police spokesman admits the possibility of rogue elements of TNI/national police being involved. Amidst the growing rancour of calls from Jakarta’s political circles to end the conflict, a journalistic disentangling of so demoralising an event could have helped to reveal what the central government and its disorderly security apparatus were truly facing in restoring peace in the periphery. Instead, readers suffer endless repeats of military officials pledging ‘firm action’, ‘upholding of the law’ and ‘arrests of provocateurs’. Meanwhile, an embattled president issues tough but impotent warnings to unnamed ‘big shots’: “Your actions have gone too far. If we run out of patience, look out! There are limits...Those who have high rank, large wealth will be run over by the people.”

iv) National news media and paramilitary mobilisation

It wasn’t long before post-Christmas escalation in North Halmahera was being described – accurately - by Republika as ‘slaughter’ (pembantaian). But this term, compared to others such as ‘pembunuhan’ (killing) or more vaguely, ‘bentrokan’ (clashes), carries important connotations for the reader: cruelty, a sense of ‘cleansing’ and the notion of large numbers killed in a planned way (Eriyanto 2000: 19-20). The parts of speech employed in news can also be significant in conveying meaning. The nominal form ‘pembantaian’ can enlarge a discrete event such that it becomes a general symptom or condition; so, when an area is said to have become a ‘ladang pembantaian’ (killing field) for Muslims, the subject-object (perpetrator-victim) is collapsed into the one generalised term (van Dijk in Eriyanto 2000: 20-21).

Likewise, when framing collective action, reporters inscribe events with agency; but in the process agency can be obscured in expressions like

157 ‘Orang Luar Dilarang Datang ke Maluku’ (Outsiders banned from entering Maluku), Kompas, 24th June 2000: 1.
‘pertikaian antardua kelompok yang berbeda agama’ (fighting between two
groups of different religions) as Kompas did to a greater extent than
Republika. Alternately, inscriptions can become overdetermined by religious
identity, as occurred in Republika’s reportage following the massacres
mentioned above. In this style of reporting, “the border between conflict that
may have occurred as a result of normal conflict and conflict that really
results from religion becomes hazy” (Eriyanto 2000: 22). What is actually
happening here is communalisation being worked out on the page. As all
agency becomes sorted into religious categories, this textual communalisation
mirrors – and legitimises – the material (re)organization of physical warfare
along religious lines. The interplay between the real (ground) war and its
mediation on the page reproduces a primordialist framework for ‘reading’ and
‘knowing’ the conflict over time.

This is by way of background to how the progress of this new phase of war
was spurred on by the reporting strategies of newspapers. Media depictions
of enmity and victimhood within the Indonesian public sphere now included a
new threatening element in the form of Laskar Jihad.158 By April 2000,
volunteers were being recruited and trained before being sent to wage ‘holy
war’ on Malukan battlefields.159

158 The make-up of Laskar Jihad’s putative 3000-10,000 membership varies
depending on which sources are accepted: 80% are serving TNI members; the group
contains large numbers of foreigners; membership is a cross-section of Indonesian
society; members are recruited from sympathetic pesantren (boarding schools); most
are university students (Davis 2002: 22). According to Davis: “Laskar Jihad is
drawing on the efforts of….DDII and KISDI, both of which have long cultivated
followings on university campuses and in pesantren for their campaigns against
pluralism and Western political values, such as liberal democracy and human rights”
(22).
159 According to their own mission statements, Laskar Jihad have three goals: Islamic
propagation, humanitarian services (social, educational, health) and ‘a security
mission’ (quoted in Brauchler 2004: 270); its titular head has described his members
are religious preachers, whose military training in ‘self-defence’ is to protect them in
hostile areas. Their purpose there is basically “looking after the children and wives of
‘martyrs’,…conducting mass circumcisions, cleaning the streets, building temporary
schools, rebuilding destroyed mosques, providing support in the economic sector, and
guarding the Muslim population in general” (273).
The shift of media focus to the northern atrocities was an opportunity for Islamic groups outside Maluku to garner support for all Malukan Muslims, not just victims in the north. The chance was taken up at a rally at the National Monument (Monas) on 7th January. This event was a fulcrum for grassroots mobilisation of Muslims and gave momentum to emerging calls for an offensive ‘jihad’ to be waged inside the conflict arena. Critics, including the president himself, regarded the gathering as part of a strategy to topple his government. The conservative Islamic forces that organised it were able to momentarily attract the support of some more liberal Islamic voices, including parliamentary leader Amien Rais. Even before the Monas rally, he presaged external militant action when he warned that without central government action, ‘the community will make their move’, underpinned by the spectre of disintegration: “This is the beginning of the death-knell for this Republic,”

Further elaboration to its ‘security mission’ was provided on its own multimedia web portal which was used to track events in the battle zones as well as solicit new recruits and donations. In Brauchler’s review of its online content, she notes: “[T]hey (Laskar Jihad) are also very proud to promote their military achievements. On maps presented on their web site, they show exactly which villages on Ambon island are already in Muslim hands and which ones still have to be conquered. They also feature pictures of destroyed Christian buildings, like the Christian University in Ambon town, as a sign that the dominance of the Christians is crumbling. Further, they compare the number of victims on both sides so as to triumphantly demonstrate when there are more Christian dead” (273).

Despite their defensive posture, Laskar Jihad fighters are recorded to have attacked Christian communities with a view to “displace and expel Christians from Maluku and thus alter the region’s ethno-religious balance” (Davis 2002: 23). Their security mission also encompasses the apparent goal of religious polarisation where tactics included “the group’s use of snipers in Kota Ambon, who target civilians and thus reinforce the atmosphere of fear and suspicion which pervades both communities in the town” (23).

Even though the North Maluku massacres were the impetus for paramilitary mobilisation on Java, the eventual deployment of Laskar Jihad troops involved very few of them going to the northern zones of conflict (See Davis 2002: 25).

Following the June 1999 national elections, Rais had been elected head of the People’s Consultative Assembly (MPR), the highest constitutional authority and one that elects the president and vice-president; he was the former chairman of Muhammadiyah, a modernist Muslim social organization. He was also alleged to be close to Fuad Bawazier, a former finance minister in Suharto’s cabinet who has been linked to funding both Rais’s party PAN and Laskar Jihad. See Hadiz (2003: 599) and ‘Fuad Akui Masuk Daftar akan Ditangkap’ (Fuad admits inclusion on list of those to be arrested), Republika, 29th June 2000: 1.
Rais says in a Kompas report.\textsuperscript{162} A few days later at Monas, he repeats his threat in language that invokes religious nationalism while harmonising radical action with defence of the fatherland: If the president can’t resolve the country’s problem, Rais says, then the people will guarantee its continuation.\textsuperscript{163}

Beneath Republika’s main photo of the Monas gathering of ‘hundreds of thousands of Muslims’, the caption reads: “They yelled laudations and invocations of ‘Jihad’ to end the slaughter of Muslims in Maluku. They also demanded the government end the conflict that has already killed thousands of Muslims.”

While recent mass killings in the north were the impetus for such responses in Jakarta, war continued to rage in all parts of the eastern province with victims of all faiths continuing to fall. The caption performs two linguistic sleights-of-hand: first, it colonises the word ‘pembantaian’ (slaughter) and reserves it for Muslim victims, wherever they fall and second, non-Muslim victims are elided from ‘the conflict’ such that the message conveyed is: ‘this conflict only produces Muslim victims’.

The long report strings together the utterances of a range of Islamic speakers of more conservative persuasion, mostly steered towards nationalising this outer-island conflict such that the fate of Maluku rests in the hands of ‘umat Islam Indonesia’ (Indonesian Islamic community). It justifies to non-Malukan Muslims the waging of religious war (Jihad) in Maluku ‘to end the slaughter of Muslims in Maluku’. The summarised speeches bring together two interrelated appeals: religious war (waged on behalf of threatened Muslims) is a legitimate response to state failure to end the conflict and may even constitute a resolution to it. Rais’s strident rhetoric against the president

\textsuperscript{162} ‘Hentikan Pembunuhan’ (End the killing), \textit{Kompas}, 5\textsuperscript{th} January 2000: 11.

\textsuperscript{163} ‘Abu Lahab dan Abu Jahal Ambon akan Kita Gulung Bersama’ (Ambon’s Abu Lahab and Abu Jahal will bring us together), \textit{Republika}, 8\textsuperscript{th} January 2000: 1.
combined with warnings that the *umat* is being pushed to breaking point are delivered at the spiritual centre of nationalist struggle (Monas). The speech fragments (and the enthusiastic crowd responses to them) build to a single call-to-action, concentrating mass resentment and channelling it toward paramilitary adventure under the guise of religious mission and patriotic duty.

In the shorter Kompas report of the same rally, various threats, allegations and ultimatums are flung at high-ranking officials, the most notable that Muslim parties will soon move a motion of no-confidence in the president. In reported speech, Kompas readers are assailed with the term ‘pembantaian’ and its abstraction ‘pembantaian umat Islam’ (slaughter of the Islamic community) but the mention of ‘Christians’ is assiduously avoided: “The conflict between religious communities in Ambon and other areas that have been going on for a year has already torn out the souls of many Muslim believers.” Almost as an afterthought an unnamed preacher drops in with a call to set up command posts (*posko*) at mosques for the recruitment of volunteers wanting to wage jihad in Ambon.

Following the thunderous show-of-strength at Monas, calls for ‘jihad in Maluku’ underwent some discursive refinement, not least from Islamic intellectuals seeking to shave the harsh edges off such a formidable display of religiously inspired aggression. In each case media reportage served to deflect attention from the material war preparations that had begun in earnest. Much of this took the form of learned opinion on the nuanced interpretations of ‘jihad’ as religious duty; and most took the form of a ‘defence’ of Islam, implicitly admitting its image was being tarnished by public calls for ‘holy war’ to be visited on fellow Indonesians. Public disquiet was hosed down by statements such as: “The calls were a form of solidarity and in

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164 ‘Umat Islam Desak Gus Dur Segera Selesaikan Masalah Ambon’ (Islamic community asks Gus Dur to immediately end the Ambon problem), *Kompas*, 10th January 2000: 1.
accordance with Islamic teachings”\textsuperscript{165}; “A Jihad includes serious efforts to avoid what is wrong and evil (\textit{munkar}). It is wrong to interpret a Jihad as a real war”\textsuperscript{166}; “A jihad itself means a move to collect donations to help Muslims who have fallen victim to the violence”\textsuperscript{167}. Even security officials felt obliged to engage in some image manipulation by objecting to the term ‘posko Jihad’ (Jihad command post). The \textit{posko} springing up around Jakarta after the Monas rally, a police chief urged, should be re-named ‘pos kemanusiaan’ (humanitarian post) since the word \textit{posko} has a military usage and could inflame community emotions and trigger security disturbances.

Six months after Laskar Jihad fighters were deployed to the war zone, one of the group’s senior officials was back in Jakarta spruiking its humanitarian credentials: “"We have a duty to correct the public misperception that \textit{jihad} (meaning holy war in Arabic) is associated with physical warfare," he told the \textit{Jakarta Post}.\textsuperscript{168} While the group saw it as necessary to conduct these periodic public relations exercises with mainstream newspapers, it was ably supported by religious intellectuals in civil society and a news media that reproduced their statements faithfully without making the necessary links that would reveal their broader role in the war-of-ideas waged above and often away from the battlefield. Both the theological clarifications quoted above and Laskar Jihad’s humanitarian posturing enter the public sphere as valid opinion, but left unprocessed by any narrative synthesis to lay bare their ideological function, such opinions converge over time into a seamless logic of disavowal and constitute a form of war propaganda.

In his news analysis of coverage immediately following the Monas event, Agus Sudibyo found Kompas to be extremely wary in reporting the call for

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\textsuperscript{165} KISDI’s Achmad Sumargono quoted in ‘Jihad doesn’t mean war, say leaders’, \textit{Jakarta Post}, 11\textsuperscript{th} January 2000: 1.
\textsuperscript{166} Umar Shihab, head of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) quoted in ‘Jihad doesn’t mean war, say leaders’, \textit{Jakarta Post}, 11\textsuperscript{th} January 2000: 1.
\textsuperscript{167} Azyumardi Azra, rector of the state Jakarta Institute of Islamic Studies quoted in ‘Government told to take action in Maluku’, \textit{Jakarta Post}, 27\textsuperscript{th} January 2000.
\end{flushright}
jihad (seruan jihad) and in fact, rarely used the term ‘jihad’. Although it did publish some reports critical of the Islamic initiative, he says it failed to develop any clear orientation for or against the call (Sudibyo 2000: 29). 169 His analysis for Republika, on the other hand, found the paper tended to ‘recommend’ the call-to-action, and in this sense, its news became a vehicle for spreading the emotional dimensions underpinning it (33).

War preparations involved a major religious meeting (tabligh akbar) in Yogyakarta at the end of January, the establishment of posko Jihad and a military training camp in West Java. Another mass gathering followed at Jakarta’s Senayan stadium in early April; those attending proceeded immediately to march to the presidential palace. All of the above took place under the auspices of Forum Komunikasi Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama’ah (FKSWJ). Republika’s report 170 on the Senayan gathering has Umar Thalib - FKSWJ’s Panglima Perang (war commander) – flanked by a former TNI brigadier-general and announcing the dispatch of 3000 Laskar Jihad members at the end of the month to be followed by another 7000. The rhetorical presentation of this ‘war party’ mixes casual contradiction with military spin: the Maluku situation must be ended through the application of law, says a preacher from Ambon, but the Panglima Perang says they have lost faith in the SSF; the military spokesman does little to restore it by urging a ‘persuasive approach’ (to prevent the mission) but in any event defers to the police. Their

169 Consistent with this non-committal approach, Kompas also avoids exploring divisions within Indonesian Islam over the call-to-action. For example, it reports the views of an MUI leader from Jakarta who says a localised jihad in Maluku is justified but the spirit of jihad does not need to be brought to Jakarta as this would threaten the unity of the nation: ‘Jangan Terbawa pada Kebencian’ (Don’t be drawn into hatred), Kompas, 12th January 2000: 1 & 11. The rare appearances of dissenting Islamic voices in newspaper narratives were subsumed beneath the louder exhortations to wage ‘holy war’. The opportunity to elaborate moral and intellectual dilemmas in the framing of news was passed up in favour of reproducing ‘war rhetoric’ conveyed directly to readers from stage-managed hotbeds of grassroots mobilisation. See, for example, the lone religious opinion insisting a jihad action does not require sharp weapons: ‘Laskar Jihad Unjuk Rasa di Depan Istana’ (Laskar Jihad protest in front of the palace), Republika, 7th April 2000: 1.

aggressive intentions are veiled behind a language of ‘defending the umat’. Avoiding open declarations of war, these intentions are conveyed through a negative construction: ‘unless hostility towards the umat becomes visible, we have no right to attack’. The report does not question the contradictions in the speakers’ rhetoric but rather gives full voice to its threatening symbolism. It leaves undiscussed the implicit message that the failure of state forces (reinforced by an unconvincing TNI) opens the door for imminent paramilitary intervention.

The Kompas report\textsuperscript{171} focuses on the militants’ meeting with the president and the protest outside the palace. There is an account from both sides as to what transpired at the meeting which lasted only five minutes. At the preceding Senayan rally, war commander Thalib’s speech is conveyed as a direct call-to-arms to the umat to meet their religious obligations to defend the nation against ‘the foreign threat that wants to bring disorder to the country’. He outlines plainly plans to train and dispatch troops to Maluku, referring to the key staging posts for the mission.

The language of Thalib’s reported speech is an exemplary case of war communication, afforded uncritical media space and left to rally and traumatised respective audience groups. Tapping atavistic urges from the ‘sacred’ past, his words position his force as ‘heroic’ propagators of a xenophobic religious nationalism. Recalling the tactics of \textit{Pemuda Pancasila}, he projects a public face for his \textit{pasukan jihad} (jihad troops) as a grassroot uprising of Muslim youth, insisting they are not trained by TNI.\textsuperscript{172}

\textsuperscript{171}‘Enam Wakil Laskar Jihad Bertemu Presiden’ (6 Laskar Jihad representatives meet the President), \textit{Kompas}, 7\textsuperscript{th} April 2000: 1 & 11.
\textsuperscript{172}The former president explained TNI-militia logistical collaboration thus: “Enjoying powerful clandestine support, Laskar Jihad had actually established a military training camp less than 60 miles from the capital, Jakarta. When national police broke up the camp, Thalib promptly announced that Laskar Jihad would sail for Ambon and wage jihad there. I (Wahid) ordered the army generals in East Java to prevent them from sailing and ordered the navy to intercept them if they did. I also ordered the governor of East Java to guard the docks and prevent Laskar Jihad from boarding. But these presidential orders were ignored by a military that refused to
Similarly, Amien Rais without endorsing directly their mission, meets with
them and prefers to warn the government not to treat Laskar Jihad’s spirited
‘idealism’ as inconsequential. Kompas here summarises three distinct views
from leading legislators, of which Rais’s is the only one that validates their
militancy. And yet it is this view that is given prominence in the lead
paragraph, not the one that challenges a belligerent militia’s right to speak on
behalf of the umat. The description of the jihad troops on display at the
parliament is heavily coded and in one sense speaks more forcefully than the
words of legislators. The white-robed, turbaned troops - battle-ready (siap
tempur), armed with swords and bamboo sticks – signify the power of
religious solidarity to bind warriors in readiness for war.

In summary, for large parts of the sample period both daily newspapers
under study fell back on ‘safe’ integralist principles when reporting the
progress of the protracted Maluku wars. Both sets of reportage were content
to cede intellectual initiative to established state information sources,
preferring civilian and military officials to mediate between communal strife
and their reporters. This approach underpinned narratives which lacked
continuity over time, suppressed the identity of combatants (and their
authentic voices) and left unexplored their complex relationship to their
enemies, including themes unrelated to religion. As a direct consequence of
this narrative distance, the news pages were filled with ‘talking heads’
expressing Jakarta-centric political manoeuvres and agendas, stressing
partisan political feuding outside the Malukan battle zones. Malukan cross-
accept civilian control in the newly democratic Indonesia. An unholy alliance of
fundamentalist jihadists, Islamist generals and people close to the Suharto family
ensured that thousands of Laskar Jihadists poured into Ambon and the Malukus”
(Wahid & Holland Taylor 2005). An alternative theory is that fearing Laskar Jihad
would make good its threats to wage jihad on Java if prevented from traveling to
Maluku, the government tacitly “sanctioned police inaction in the interests of getting
Laskar Jihad out of Java” (Davis 2002: 19).
communal solutions and peace initiatives were all but invisible in the news pages of both papers.

Undercontextualised facts and opinion underpinning this style of ‘talking journalism’ (*jurnalisme omongan*) were preferred to narrative inquiry building towards transparent conclusions.

Changes in the balance-of-forces on the northern front of the battleground did not prompt reporters to re-capture narrative initiative from official sources but rather amplified the disadvantages of distance from the battlefield. Nor did it shift focus from Jakarta official discourses to ones inside Maluku’s combat zones. Instead, an intensification of the war in the north (including atrocities against Muslims villagers after Christmas 1999) led to an enhanced media focus on Jakarta-based agendas, but now involving paramilitary mobilisation. Both papers eschewed narrative complexity in favour of reproducing (mostly uncritically) the simplistic war rhetoric of paramilitary leaders and their (sometimes unwitting) ideological supporters. Republika used its reports to encourage its readers to identify as vicarious victims of (unexplained) ‘Christian aggression’ in an outer province. The call for jihad from Jakarta allowed it to affirm its nationalist credentials by giving voice to resurgent elements of Islamic nationalism. Neither daily seized the chance to interrogate the national implications of a deployment of fighters to an already war-ravaged region of the republic.

Primary vehicles for agendas at the political centre – official state sources and state-aligned Islamic political contenders – secured largely unfiltered access to the news pages and were thus able to present their own crafted spin on Maluku violence that harmonised with their own political strategies. This cancelled out independent framing based on narrative continuity by offering vested interests wedded to prolongation of the war direct lines of access to national audiences.
Both papers promoted primordialist perspectives of violent conflict by offering no consistent alternative readings in their news discourses. But each paper did so by way of different discursive methods. Kompas’s official-source hyper-dependency soaked up drip-fed statements from the security forces to produce a minimalist, context-less and truncated presentation of separate ‘eruptions’ breaking out around the archipelago. Undernourished by a lack of strong narrative threads and denied the chance to engage with the realities of distant violence, Kompas readers were left to ponder each eruption as unexplainable, and therefore as confirmation of irreconcilable religious differences. The integralist certainties that obscured the bases of hostilities in 1999, following escalating conditions at year’s end, produced confusion about what was actually happening on the battlefield and cluelessness about likely responses from Jakarta. Away from the confusion of distant combat, Kompas’s hand-off ‘neutrality’ was exposed as it continued to let its sources dictate narrative movement. But this time initiative was ceded to Islamic militants whose war rhetoric reverberated largely unchallenged into the homes of the republic’s largest newspaper readership.

Republika, likewise, facilitated the militants’ war communication by giving it direct access to its language community. Framing the intellectual and moral dilemmas of militant intervention to its educated Muslim readers was passed up in favour of a simpler reading experience - sharpening their sense of enmity and victimhood. This served the political interests of the militants and a supporting cast of religious intellectuals. While reaffirming its readers’ separate Islamic identity, Republika failed to assert autonomy from those same interests. Readers were unable to use their newspaper to experience religious or national belonging outside those mandated by sources to whom the paper was captive. Alienated from the suffering of all victims as fellow citizens by adherence to a narrow religious nationalism (complete with fears of ‘separatist’ disintegration), Republika’s middle-class umat were targeted with the same polarising symbolism that galvanised Laskar Jihad’s foot-soldiers. Republika preferred to shield its readers from the hard questions
about the political hands behind Laskar Jihad and the likely consequences for Malukans already at war of imminent paramilitary deployment.

Unsurprisingly, after minimising religious-communal oppositions in deference to entrenched reporting taboos inculcated during the previous era, both papers were found wanting when these questions pulled rapidly into focus in 1999 and sharpened at the beginning of 2000. Consequently, the reportage of both papers was tightly anchored to the vicissitudes of elite politics at the centre and cut adrift from the extreme suffering in a politically marginal province, whose crisis was alleged to have so preoccupied Jakarta’s powerbrokers.

What neither paper attempted was to disaggregate the complex entanglement of interests and players working between the centre and periphery and between the combat and non-combat spheres. The fragmentation of security forces was only going to be intelligible if it was informed by the long and bloody history of civilian militia forces (some formed along religious lines), created and commanded by, and cooperating with Indonesian army and police. But instead, both papers – either actively or by default – became vehicles for mining a far simpler and accessible corner of national historical memory – base religious primordialism.

Religious enmity was presented as natural, inevitable and without end and so lacked explanatory power. By privileging this aspect of religious experience in the news text, their stories could not begin to decipher the interactions of rogues, warriors and Jakarta-based war beneficiaries that prolonged the war. In its place, the Maluku maelstrom was portrayed both actively and unwittingly as a war-without-end, above the manipulations of political agency. The media’s failure to address shifting power relations between political elites in Jakarta and Maluku was a spectacular failure of journalism that did nothing to assist a negotiated peace and may have contributed to the war’s significant escalation. Unwittingly or not, both newspapers analysed in this study
produced storylines that reinforced the rhetorical logic of warmaking. In the next chapter, alternative strategies and trajectories are considered.
CHAPTER SEVEN

WAR AND PEACE JOURNALISM

“This situation is truly horrifying. It seems as though freedom has given birth to anarchy. More than one hundred political parties have emerged to press shamelessly their own interests, while almost all the phrases of political discourse uniformly represent the crowing of fighting cocks before they lunge at one another.....The hundreds of newspapers sold on the streets are full of slander and abuse. Politics has become a giant, red-hot frying pan, but not everyone realizes it. Critical activists are now more often emotional than calmly analytic. It's as though Indonesia fulfills not one single criterion for its own salvation, possessing only the conditions for destruction....[T]hose who are now contributing to the growth of Indonesia are precisely those who restrain themselves from adding to the textual confusion in the huge flow of narratives. We need tiny rays of light in the dark corners of history.”

- Seno Gumira Ajidarma, Indonesian writer (1999)

i) War, identity, economy

When it comes to violent conflict, journalists have not been well served by the traditional academic disciplines. Their critical framing and naming decisions that shape news discourses owe little to neo-classical economics which bypasses violence as outside the realm of rational choice; political science, with its focus on formal procedures (elections) and tactics, has likewise been unhelpful, as has military history with its focus on the state as a ‘winner’ or ‘loser’ of international or civil wars.

With so much conflict involving states whose role is at best ambiguous and often opaque, intellectual light surrounding the complexities of internal conflict rarely emanates from a single discipline. Consequently, journalists are the first to impose their own conceptual coherence on violent outbreaks when they surface:
When ‘messy’ phenomenon like contemporary civil wars have not fallen easily within the orbit of these ‘disciplines’, the temptation to wheel out the labels of ‘chaos’, ‘breakdown’ and ‘collapse’ has sometimes been irresistible (Keen 1999: 98).

Commonly, such disintegrative phenomena are portrayed as relentless and irredeemable. The markers of unconventional warfare – child soldiers, civilian massacres – confirm a contemporary butchery that can only be explained as a perverse blossoming of how people ‘really’ are, their inner ethnic core (Seaton 1999: 43). Regardless of whether they are instinctual or learned, such professional judgments about distant violence seep into popular understandings and commonsensical wisdom. And, as Seaton notes, a great deal hangs on them –

[T]he media...act as agents of war and the press and broadcasting increasingly have become the institutions that accord wars legitimacy, and judge their outcome...[T]he media have become one of the primary means of assessing the effectiveness of intervention by outside forces, whether humanitarian or military (1999: 44).

If ethno-religious identities are re-invented (as earlier noted), so too do ancient, timeless hatreds resurface, and symbols of potency are resurrected. But it is the argument of this chapter that such metaphors are mere surface descriptions that reveal more about media vocabularies and narrative styles than the ‘essence’ of a particular conflict. Too frequently these tags conflate and reproduce discursive patterns that reflect the mobilisational dynamics which actually move groups into hostile contact with one another.

Typically, news narratives depict these hostilities as historically dormant, activated by events that release long-suppressed passions onto a battlefield; these ‘ethnic’ explanations satisfy the reader’s demand for internal coherence based on cause-and-effect by representing significant change as the removal
of external constraints to the violent expressions of enmity (‘eruptions’) that are without beginning or end.

Uncoincidentally, these media representations mirror persistent intellectual traditions tied to modernization theory that attempt to explain both resistance to modernization and ethnic violence as irrational behaviour – behaviour which at various stages has been called primitivism, tribalism or primordialism.

Universalist assumptions behind the primordialist argument have been dismantled by Appardurai (1996: 140-49). In place of the view that the seeds of primordialist passions (including violent ones) have a temporal origin in a group’s distant collective past, he marshals a body of scholarship that stresses “the role of the imagination in politics” where “conceptions of the future play a far larger role than ideas of the past in group politics” (145). Furthermore, ethnic animosities, he argues, arise not ‘from within’ but are mobilized “by or in relation to the practices of the modern nation-state” (146-7); using French poststructuralist theory he summarizes that emotion is culturally constructed: “[B]odily techniques and affective dispositions often represent....the inscription upon bodily habit of disciplines of self-control and practices of group discipline, often tied up with the state and its interests” (148).

In a similar vein, Hoben & Hefner (1991) have discredited a particular social-scientific conception of primordial identities that anchored modernization theories of the 1950s and 60s and which, they say, relied on “a misleading theoretical dichotomy between tradition and modernity” with primordial affinities firmly located in the realm of the former. An undifferentiated social order, a social structure that hindered individual reflexivity and excessive particularistic loyalties based on language, religion, region, race, ethnicity and custom were all seen as evidence of the incompatibility of traditionalism and rationality (19). Even pioneering anthropologists such as Clifford Geertz, they argue, failed to completely break from the modernization paradigm and as
such were unable to recognize “how flexible, adaptive and ‘untraditional’ tradition often is” (23). Rather than being a kind of social pathology of underdevelopment, primordial ties are universal human symbolic resources not confined to any stage of development. They are driven or intensified by practical self-interest to cope with calamity, war and other risks. They are adjusted, reshaped and invented largely where group interests fall within the orbit of political and economic contestation. Primordial sentiments flourish where traditional institutions, however modified, provide “a framework for communication and trust in countries where neither is assured by common culture or national institutions” (26).

Another reason why such media narratives abound is a central assumption about state power and its overarching constraint presumed to separate interethnic peace from conflict and chaos. Much of the 1990s produced wars tied in some way to the collapse of state power and the mobilization of combatants along ethnic lines. From continent to continent, Hobbesian fear gives way to nationalist paranoia and then to warfare. Ethnic mobilisation is a response to political disintegration, to the collapse of state order and the interethnic accommodation that it makes possible (Ignatieff 1998: 45).

While this sequence is broadly true and came to define popular accounts of the Balkans wars, it does not account for the complex agency that drove the parties to war in the Balkans and in other wars tied to state collapse. For example, Sofos (1999) details the role played by government media in the cultivation of nationalist ‘injury’ and heightening paranoia over many years prior to the violent ‘eruptions’ that accompanied the disintegration of the Yugoslav federation. Far from Hobbesian state power constraining the release of ethnic savagery, Yugoslavia was already from the 1970s a highly devolved federation of near-sovereign republics. Ethnicisation was as much a cause as a consequence of federal institutions disintegrating as the state-controlled media became tools in the hands of ethnic nationalists.
This was aided and abetted by expatriates in the so-called ‘external republics’ who helped isolate the republics by encouraging and financing ethnic separatisms at home. Global media exchange, often praised as strengthening diasporic communities, was a powerfully destabilizing force in the Balkans conflicts (Seaton 1999: 47).

Local mass media supported and amplified Serb nationalist definitions through their coverage of public rituals and crime (Sofos 1999: 165). Broadcasts in the Serb media of ‘national’ events such as mass baptisms by the Orthodox Church and the parade of Prince Lazar’s173 ‘remnants’ through the terrain of ‘lost’ Serb territories (e.g. Kosovo) recreated the spiritual boundaries of Greater Serbia (167). Rape became ethnicised and rape victims were defined as Serbs rather than women: Serb mothers or wives as reproducers of the nation. Women became symbols and property of the national community and their violation transformed into an act of ethnic violence (172).

While military historians study wars with questions like ‘who won and how?’, cultural theorists and anthropologists have asked ‘what does all this violence represent?’ Scholars of late 20th century internal, identity wars of the kind described earlier in this chapter still struggle with answers to ‘what’s it over?’ and even ‘who’s it between?’ The former usually involves debate over the strategic goals of a conflict, whether they are material/territorial, symbolic or a combination of the two. The second question often requires close scrutiny of professed goals and the shadowy forces lending combatants material and ideological support.

173 Prince Lazar was a 14th century symbol of Serb victimhood, a saint of the Serb Orthodox Church who fought and died at the hands of Ottoman (Muslim) forces at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. The Orthodox Church has invested his memory with mystical dimensions (see Sofos 1999: 169).
Ethnic and religious identity are important to war-making not because they are timeless or primordial, but because – as bases for mass action - they work. Group differences seem real to group members and as such are a powerful spur to action. Such identities as a means of advancing group interests are effective because they are seen as ‘primordial’ by those who make claims in their name (Stewart 2005: 167).

What is common to both these messy ‘ethnic’ wars and the hi-tech, bureaucratic campaigns against foreign powers is an assertion of sovereignty and self-determination. While displays of group solidarity and power are primary to war’s politics of meaning, men still fight over fundamental issues of distribution and exercise of economic and/or political power. Where cultural differences coincide with political and economic differences, violent struggle often follows. When shared culture is geographically distinct, these struggles can become separatist (168).

Ted Gurr has classified 233 politicised communal groups in 93 countries according to political, economic and ecological differences and found most groups suffering horizontal inequalities had taken some action to assert group interests, be it violent or otherwise (Gurr in Stewart 2005: 172). Differential suffering is a powerful motivating force to fight, especially in societies with sharp divisions in social class (e.g. Central America; Nepal; Indonesia). Sometimes, the state becomes the target when vertical inequalities are exposed and services breakdown (Stewart 2005: 169); at other times, ethnic groups are scapegoated (horizontally) because of their perceived ties to predatory elites (Chua 2004).

Group grievance may also result from political disenfranchisement where majoritarian states have been captured by one ethnic or religious group (e.g. Sri Lanka; Northern Ireland) prompting guerrilla war and political violence.
Wars may be fought along ethnic lines but initiated by a desire for private gain. Economic advantages can be the underlying cause to fight when they outweigh lack of opportunities. They may begin as insurgencies based on ideology but transmute to being primarily venal (Stewart 2005: 169). A forty-year communist insurgency in rural Colombia now relies on revenue from kidnapping and control of populations from whom it extracts rents.\textsuperscript{174} Notwithstanding ideology, similar dynamics sustain several insurgencies in the Philippines where the political economy of war is a key explanatory framework for their longevity.\textsuperscript{175}

There is a strong association between civil war and mineral resources. While the carnage often results from medieval forms of warfare, the killing is linked to the international political economy and the global demand for high-value products such as diamonds. The breakdown of civil order allows for the devolution of the means of violence and for warlords to assume economic power protected by armed gangs maintained on the cheap. In a state of lawlessness, the manipulations and profiteering can begin. Violence against civilians may not be an accidental by-product of warfare between rival factions but a main tactic – to weaken civilians associated with a rebel faction (e.g. Sudan) or to polarize civilians to the benefit of extremists (e.g. North Ireland, East Timor)(Keen 1999: 88). Militant Islam also employs this latter tactic.

Ethnic hatred can also be used instrumentally, updating the colonial tradition of divide-and-rule. So economically marginalized Baaggara tribesmen in Sudan were turned against the politically marginalized southern Sudanese who were blocking oil wells in the south. In this way, the state can prosecute its war against rebels by channeling class tensions into ethnic conflict (88).

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{174} See, for example, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Colombia 2006, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US State Department, March 6, 2007
http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78885.htm
\textsuperscript{175} For discussions on the political economy of war, see the series of articles in Fischer & Schmelzle (2005).
\end{footnotesize}
Just as attacking civilians can be a deliberate tactic, so too can expelling them. Militia, paramilitaries or regular forces can depopulate resource rich areas so as to exploit them (Sierra Leone; Sudan; Somalia; Indonesian Papua); in East Timor, civilians were deported from the province in 1999 as punishment for supporting secession and as pawns in post-ballot image politics.

In cases of forced migration, local warlords will have a vested interest in manipulating aid convoys and humanitarian workers (88); and political appeals by combatants for outside intervention is a favourite negotiating ploy: “a dependency syndrome sets in….in which the failure of interventionists is taken as a moral excuse to keep on waging war” (Ignatieff 1998: 159).

With a disintegrating state, cheap weapons and ‘boy soldiers’ at their disposal, the postmodern warrior combines war with banditry. Ignatieff reminds us that atrocities in Vukovar (Croatia) were carried out by paramilitaries under the command of warlords and criminals with connections to politics, business and the Belgrade underworld (1998: 128). Balkan private armies were historically distinctive armies, he says, in that instead of being coopted and tamed by the state, they were covertly instigated by their states – Serbia and Croatia – and subcontracted to perform atrocities (ethnic cleansing); their violence was not an unintended consequence of drunkenness and indiscipline but a deliberate military strategy (131-2).

A failure by news media to delineate the social complex of gangster politics alongside collapsing states will increase the chances of delivering readers narratives of war that reduce historical causes to ethnicity and religion, thus depoliticizing them. Base and venal motives do not harmonise well with normative explanations of war based on a sense of cultural mission or destiny. They also deprive the audience of making an emotional investment in stories which have civilisational inflections (a contest of values), inviting moral empathy with insider as opposed to outsider groups. Seaton believes the
instrumental rationality of some groups who prosper from savage civil conflicts is so at odds with how wars have been described that the conflict appears all the more strange, and irrational – in other words, ethnic (1999: 57).

ii) The underground press surfaces

The democratic stirrings of the Indonesian press were no doubt influenced by the relative political openness (*keterbukaan*) of the early 1990s, the banning of three print weeklies in June 1994 and a liberal stream within ICMI that resisted Suharto’s co-optation of political Islam prior to 1997 national elections. Some of the resurgence was carried by journalists asserting their independence in opposition to the spirit of the *Pancasila* Press. This included elements of the Islamic intelligentsia who would normally be designated ‘santri’ and thus politically conservative.  

Angela Romano, in her survey of Indonesian press culture, found elements of liberal-democratic ideology among Indonesian journalists, with professional dissatisfaction heavily focused on restrictions on freedom of speech, imposed both by government and media owners (2003: 62). One outlet for this dissatisfaction was - for some - affiliation with a growing social movement in which media activists were at the forefront. Menayang et al (2002) characterises this oppositional media force in the late New Order as emanating from the legal campus press, pro-democracy non-government (NGO) media and the illegal underground press inspired by the 1994 bannings (142). The underground press was an important wing of the reform movement. Its close alignment with *reformasi* political goals meant a partisan approach consisting largely of opinion pieces and editorials (148). Indeed, *Kabar dari Pijar* (KdP) – which went online in June 1996 – was openly confrontational:

176 For example, Republika journalists. See Footnote 11.
PIJAR indeed launched a polarization process right from the start, demanding instant allegiance from the parties involved, who could either be part of the solution or part of the problem. KdP played this confrontational game to the hilt, and therefore did not appear to set much store by common journalistic standards (151).

Such groups maintained a network of sympathetic journalists in the mainstream media, some of whom were working in both camps. As the regime faced its endgame, reportage in the legal and underground spheres converged, cemented by cooperation between students, media activists and mainstream media practitioners (154).

Polarisation was also evident among the regional media: activists and students filled the ranks of reporters in provincial city newspapers and campus radio; the pressure to air news about student demonstrations came from the students themselves (Gazali 2002: 133). As the regime came under increasing pressure prior to May 1998, some regional papers took a stand by aligning themselves with the reform movement, while others were compelled to follow as the tide turned against Suharto (132).

Clearly, there were progressive elements scattered throughout the Pancasila Press who – at the fall of Suharto in May 1998 – were well positioned to lead a transformation of press culture away from its historical legacy of patrimonialism and periodic repression – a revival, if you like, of perjuangan press values for a new era. Such a transformation was likely to be facilitated by the widening of the political sphere and expanding media markets driven by demand for skilled media workers to broker information between the increased number of political contestants and their empowered publics. It was

177 Gazali’s research also cites the example of a commercial ‘youth’ radio station in Bali where student groups pressured programmers to air coverage of student demonstrations (2002: 133), an example of ‘communal’ pressure applied to alter content.
also conventional wisdom that decentralisation policy was linked to democratic development at the local level (Hadiz 2003: 600), in which independent media activity was a crucial part. The emancipation of the media was marked by some highly symbolic policy gestures such as the abolition of the licensing system\textsuperscript{178}, the end of mandatory membership of the state-sanctioned journalists’ union (PWI)\textsuperscript{179} and later (under Wahid) the dismantling of the Department of Information. From the moment of Suharto’s departure, open consultation to develop a set of broadcast and press laws for the new era was under way with media advocates vowing to seize the moment and restore long-eroded freedoms (Kitley 2000).

However, after the change of president in mid-1998 and before formal licensing requirements were lifted, there was an explosion of new press licences - 718 in 12 months (Neumann 2000: 16). Politically partisan agendas were pursued without restraint. Just as an agitational press culture had evolved out of the various African independence struggles (Hoff in Onadipe & Lord 1999), the success of a pro-reformasi press movement in hastening the removal of the dictator encouraged new media players to attack and expose their political enemies, but with much less skill.

So, amidst the intensive discussions between media agencies and lawmakers over how to re-regulate the media, a number of uncomfortable truths surfaced. Democratic euphoria coexisted with confusion as journalists struggled to report on the 48 political parties contesting the June 1999 national elections. Reporters experienced all sorts of communication problems with their sources, the most serious of which led to attacks on the journalists themselves. In the extreme case of East Timor’s 1999 referendum, loyalist militia ran riot attacking media installations, killing journalists and driving out witnesses in accord with the military’s scorched-earth policy following the

\textsuperscript{178} See ‘Government to abolish media controls, says Minister’, \textit{Associated Press}, 29\textsuperscript{th} July 1999.
\textsuperscript{179} See Neumann (2000: 15).
August ballot. An Indonesian non-government report found that the newly liberated Indonesian media barely covered the military’s orchestration of the violence (Neumann 2000: 23-25); meanwhile, back in the capital, police were bashing reporters at demonstrations\textsuperscript{180}; a senior military figure took advantage of the sector’s growth by buying interview time on a new TV station\textsuperscript{181}; and analysts pointed out that among the 1200-odd print publications and a similar number of radio stations, “the rampant violation of ethics” was gathering momentum.\textsuperscript{182}

Alongside the outbreak of slander and abuse identified by Ajidarma in this chapter’s opening quotation, a few of the old New Order habits not only persisted but spread and mutated. Instead of journalists simply receiving envelopes of cash from officials for dutifully attending press conferences, some were found to be actively extorting money from their sources as criminal fraudsters.\textsuperscript{183}

As Romano notes in her study of the internal workplace culture of Indonesian journalists, even before the 1997 monetary crisis journalists were in a state of personal economic recession; ‘no-envelope’ policies were resisted by journalists who believed they had a right to a portion of the largesse trickling down from state offices. Revealingly, her respondents found envelopes to be demeaning of the profession but did not brand journalists as personally corrupt for accepting them: “most news organizations with ‘no-envelope’ policies have failed dismally to alter their organisational culture because they fail to support their policies or support their staff with adequate salaries”

\textsuperscript{180} See ‘Radio journalist recounts beating by police’, Indonesian Observer, 10\textsuperscript{th} March 2000.
\textsuperscript{182} See ‘Status quo forces exploiting press freedom: Gus Dur’, Jakarta Post, 13\textsuperscript{th} July 2000.
\textsuperscript{183} Mater, G. ‘Indonesia’s free press not a trouble-free press, correspondents say’ <freedomforum.org> (19\textsuperscript{th} August 2001). This form of extortion was carried out by both journalists and those posing as journalists and is known by the Indonesian term \textit{bodrek}. 

299
(Romano 2003: 157). This underlying political economy continued to shape media culture in the *reformasi* era, despite the political transition being dominated by opposition to KKN (acronym for corruption, collusion, nepotism). The explosion of media entities actually increased rent-seeking practices like *bodrek* (extortion) and campaigns to educate journalists by The Alliance for Independent Journalists (AJI) were resisted in favour of the short-term salve to meagre pay packets (162).

The New Order had been characterized by elaborate networks of patronage. The ‘envelope culture’ (*kebudayaan amplop*) was just one constituent of the glue that held the *Pancasila* Press together by binding press activity to state interests. The press model was itself one element of a larger patrimonial political culture, held together by equally elaborate policies aimed at keeping civil society disorganized. Entrenched media practices – post-1998 – were not swept away on a tide of reform but reconstituted themselves on a much pluralized playing field.

The vibrant public sphere spurred on by media liberalization led to a proliferation of journalists’ groups but few unions with industrial strength. In this environment, integralist thinking trumped workers’ rights and family-style business culture obstructed professionalisation (Romano 2003: 170). The reinvention of New Order personnel within a competitive political sphere of parties and parliaments had squeezed journalists between the lure of old habits and new, unfamiliar challenges to their professionalism, physical safety and their employers’ institutional survival.

iii) *Pancasila* Press goes ‘communal’
The previous chapter’s analysis of the print news of two national dailies referred to the ‘cautious’ approach taken by Kompas in reporting the Maluku calamity. However, if ‘cautious’ means adopting the language of euphemism and abstract description of violent protagonists, much of the reporting by Republika within my sample period prior to Christmas 1999 also fits this category. This approach might more accurately be termed being ‘cautious without being careful’, since ‘care’ ordinarily connotes some responsibility on the part of reporters. No valid argument has yet been advanced to show how obscuring the identities of combatants or failing to provide balanced, credible and primary accounts of the lead-up to, actual engagement and aftermath of battle serves any responsible purpose, least of all one consistent with professional standards of journalism.

Much closer to the fields of battle, Malukan journalists were faced with the same dilemmas. They were acutely aware of the emotional impacts of their published words and the communal pressures bearing on those professional judgments. One reflective editor from the north even admitted the folly of the cautious approach.

We thought that in order to reduce the tension, we would try to write our reports not directly connected with this conflict in the hope that a grassroots conflict won’t explode. But in reality, delaying the time bomb that was already set in motion – by not reporting what we witnessed – was a mistake (Djalil 2001).

However, he adds: “But I have a good excuse – I cannot give a guarantee of safety to my reporters in the field. In fact, there were several journalists forced to flee from Maluku, purely on the basis that a report on conditions in North Maluku was regarded as backing one side into a corner.”

Protecting the lives of your reporters does not really constitute a ‘dilemma’. But there are seemingly mundane reporting duties – e.g. publishing a victim
list - that still have the capacity to steel the collective emotions of traumatised villagers, ever alert to the next raid. One Ambonese reporter deals with this tension in her work by embracing her professional code.

For example, a riot occurring in Southeast Maluku, victims from the Muslim side, how many? And from the Christian side, how many? We include their names on the front page, how many died. How many lightly injured. We print it in a box and write their names. Even though there are many, we must be honest and transparent with the community.

One side suffers and it brings emotions to the surface because the victims are many. But we must be realistic and we must still in our profession leave behind our narrow primordialism. We must still act with neutrality in the accuracy of our data. So, [for example] as the number of Muslim victims increases, so do the emotions of the Muslim community. But that’s the controversy we must deal with....That [data] is exactly what we want to deliver, what the community wants to know (Matakena 2001).

This same reporter acknowledges that such reporting can play to the worst emotions within communities-at-war, but this should not trump core professional obligations.

There are some voices in the community that are out-of-tune who say ‘thank God’ their (Muslim) casualties are higher, although alternately those on the Muslim side says ‘thank God’ the Christian victims are many; but we cannot pass judgment on a community that considers something to be good news. We try to provide to the community information that is actual and factual, where the data is true and complete (Matakena 2001).
Local editors and reporters – including the one quoted above – all spoke about not backing one group into a corner \textit{(menyudutkan)}: “We look for a sentence construction that can cool the community down so as to avoid provocation and cornering one group” (Matakena 2001).

In the case of Jakarta dailies, some of the reasons put forward to explain this cautiousness are revealing in themselves. Eriyanto (referring to both papers) suggests cautiousness \textit{(kehati-hatian)} derives from fear, because, he says, they did not want their reporting to provoke the other group (2000: 23). In the case of Republika, by early 2000 (and perhaps earlier) this was questionable given that provoking the Christian side seemed the least of their concerns. Stanley notes that “clearly the media have the potential either to put a brake on conflict or to spur it on” (2006: 204). He ties the latter effect to an intensification of an issue or conflict which can exacerbate it. But a conflict’s worsening or escalation may or may not be spurred on by intensified reportage. A deepening focus might conceivably provide more light than heat, depending on what aspects are emphasised or illuminated. Does the form of media scrutiny, for example, disrupt or reinforces those parts of public discourse that frame a particular opposition as everlasting? In some circumstances, reportage – intensive or not - may have no discernible impact on a dispute’s abatement nor its inflammation.

Similarly, other Indonesian researchers propose that the press in the midst of post-New Order conflict faced a new reporting dilemma: they know that the act of reporting can have a direct impact on “the raising and suppressing of community emotion” (Qodari 2000: 11). Sudibyo frames the dilemma as a choice between “reporting what is going on assuming it will inflame the mob and the imperative to create conditions conducive to resolving the conflict” (Sudibyo 2000: 33). This imperative presumably refers to a professional obligation and in this sense implies an ethical framework for action. These authors argue that Kompas was “too careful” \textit{(terlalu berhati-hati)} in reporting
the Islamic side, such that it failed to present a comprehensive and balanced discussion of the ‘jihad’ initiative (33).

Eriyanto, likewise, believes the media faced two equally hard choices: to report the events with input from opposing camps and bear the risk that ‘excessive reporting’ may aggravate the conflict in and beyond the battle zone, or to censor itself when reporting news that can be judged capable of bringing the conflict to a head (2000: 17). Framed in this way, reporting decisions weigh professional obligations to inform with the potential for reporters’ words to become implicated in violent outcomes.

Stanley accuses Kompas of “excessive self-censorship” and Republika of intensifying accounts of the conflict. In this way, neither “positions itself as a part of the process of solving this conflict” (2006: 200). Faced with such unprecedented religious turmoil, he argues, all media reacted with timidity “caused by confusion not only about where to position themselves in the midst of the conflict so it will not escalate, but also how to situate themselves publicly in order to guarantee their own survival” (203). This captures a practical dilemma which is both a professional and an institutional one: within the reporting environment of a conflict-ridden period of political fluidity, whether an act of reporting might inflame communal tensions involves highly sensitive judgments and must factor in how its particular line of reporting might impact on institutional self-preservation. And yet, professed media concerns about acts of reporting fuelling the violence were less convincing once militant Islamic forces seized the initiative in 2000, as both papers showed themselves willing to provide the militants’ belligerent declarations with wide, unfiltered distribution.

The media itself was not immune from being targeted with similar declarations and threats, sometimes backed by direct harassment and physical attacks on the agency or its workers. The corrosive influences of such threats assumed greater importance as New Order tactics of direct
bureaucratic interference receded. This was demonstrated in a dispute between *Laskar Jihad* militants and the English-language daily *The Jakarta Post* in early 2001. Before giving the details of the dispute fought out in the republic’s ‘information capital’, it is worth looking back twelve months earlier at a similar struggle on the periphery over the nature and definition of the militants’ impending mission. While the *Jakarta Post* editorial attempted to strip the outfit of its religious aura and expose its militaristic agenda, an Ambon newspaper – *Siwalima* – staffed by Christians was trying to forewarn provincial authorities of the dangers of an influx of Laskar Jihad foot-soldiers, before it occurred.

Our newspaper was extremely persistent in reporting the entry of Laskar Jihad [before their arrival]. We have a strong network with TNI, with Intel, so there is knowledge and anticipation that they will enter in the month of April, May. After reporting on TV that Laskar Jihad will visit Maluku, we see that government officials are overwhelmed in the face of our reporting. We realised the government had no policy to eliminate them or even anticipate their entry to Maluku. We were extremely disappointed that the government (the Maluku governor) cannot anticipate, but instead they accuse us of provocation, and after there is information in the newspaper that president Gus Dur banned them from coming to Ambon, they raise their thumbs to our paper that we got it right (*Matakena* 2001).

The *Jakarta Post* editorial entitled ‘Soldiers of Fortune’ drew on police claims that a suspect in the Christmas 2000 church bombings two weeks earlier had fought in Afghanistan against the Soviet army. It linked these “Indonesian mercenaries” fighting with the *mujahideen* to unsourced claims that these same “former Indonesian mercenaries” had the previous year

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given basic military training to young volunteers responding to the call of Laskar Jihad to fight Christians in Maluku. It supported the use of the term ‘mercenaries’ thus: “Ideology may have played a part in their decision to join the war, but at the end of the day, they were still mercenaries, fighting someone else’s dirty war in return for money.”

The following day, the newspaper’s office received a visit by ‘a busload’ of Laskar Jihad supporters protesting against the editorial. That event was itself reported in the next day’s edition in which the group was given a right-of-reply in which it described the contents as ‘an insult to Muslims in general and to former Indonesian volunteers in the Afghan war in particular’.¹⁸⁵ The militants’ delegation made it know that it believed the editorial had stated that Laskar Jihad ‘was a creation of the former Afghan militia’; it also feared that the editorial could lead to ‘the mistaken opinion that Lasykar Jihad members were involved in the [church] bombings’. Named members of the group were quoted refuting the editorial’s assertions with terms such as ‘vulgar attack’, ‘slanderous’, ‘great insult’. They deplored the description of former Afghan fighters as ‘mercenaries’ saying those who fought and were killed there included Indonesian Muslims who went to help their Muslim brothers and became victims of violence by Soviet troops.

According to the associate editor at the time (Bhaskara 2001), the paper apologised to the group for any offence, to which the group asked the paper to make corrections; the above right-of-reply was then published the following day in its news format. However, one week later, the Jakarta Post published another ‘correction’, but this time, a full retraction in editorial form¹⁸⁶. It apologised that it had fallen short of its own principles of ‘fairness, impartiality and accuracy’ but that the offence caused was neither intentional nor malicious. So complete was the retraction that it chose not to defend any part of the original editorial. However, the associate editor recalls, the full

retraction followed a second visit after the publication of the right-of-reply. He says the paper did not want to give an ‘editorial correction’ but simply release its ‘right-of-reply’ news story. He admits that had Laskar Jihad chosen not to enter their offices and instead issue their objections by some other method – for example, a letter of complaint – the paper would have reacted differently.

So, by turning up in numbers (twice) at the paper’s headquarters, the militant group was able to negotiate a capitulation that it would not have been able to achieve if it had submitted its complaints by correspondence. The paper admitted in its retraction that the matters to which the group objected were ‘mere speculation based on unsubstantiated and unauthenticated reports’. One of these – calling foreign fighters ‘mercenaries’ – is not really a matter of factual authentication, but a normative judgment about the use of foreign auxiliaries in war. Furthermore, the paper apologises for a statement it never made – that is, it never refers to Laskar Jihad members as ‘mercenaries’. Nor did it suggest that its members were involved in church bombings the previous Christmas. And the editorial at no point says that ‘mercenaries’ or veterans from the Afghan war created or gave birth to Laskar Jihad. But in the end, the paper acknowledged: ‘we were honest enough to admit we had gone too far’.

The paper’s same editorial staff member believes normally if someone is not satisfied with a right-of-reply, they can take it to court. The Indonesian situation is not normal, he says, because ‘for 30 years many groups in the community have been pressured by the past government’ and those that have felt that pressure now feel released. Having become conditioned to censorship over 30 years, he is aware that mob pressure can constitute

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187 This is the paper’s view expressed in the interview with Mr Bhaskara, not a quote from the published retraction.
'censorship in another form’ more dangerous than before. While the form may be new, he stresses the censorship is not.\textsuperscript{188}

Research by Gazali of regional press and radio reporters revealed a fear of ‘mob dictatorship’ in reaction to news content. He cites “at least five serious cases of a massive mob attack against a media office” occurred between July 1999 and February 2000 (2002: 136)\textsuperscript{189}.

These cases of communal threats to media help illustrate that the collapse of both formal media restrictions (e.g. licensing) and the ‘telephone culture’\textsuperscript{190}

\textsuperscript{188} Historically, media censorship took a number of forms; apart form direct military-bureaucratic interference in the New Order period, there were precedents during the same period for ‘communal’ pressure applied to media organizations. For example, a number of demonstrations were held by The Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation (DDII) against Republika. Two protests in particular – 17\textsuperscript{th} April 1995 and 30\textsuperscript{th} December 1996 – were conservative efforts to stem more open expressions of theological debate by the newspaper and the perceived drift of some of the paper’s reporters towards ‘left-leaning’ positions which challenged government action. The more politicised dispute was the latter one involving critical reporting of the 27\textsuperscript{th} July attack on the Jakarta headquarters of the PDI by a mix of security agents and hired thugs. On one level, it reflected the split between cosmopolitan young reporters attempting to widen the public sphere to its middle-class Muslim readers and conservative ulama backed by DDII activists riding the wave of Suharto’s ‘Islamic turn’. Republika was faced with a sustained critique by Media Dakwah, DDII’s media organ, which repeated earlier criticisms that the paper was “too cosmopolitan, prone to celebrity-mongering, and insensitive to Islamic morality” (Hefner 1997: 99); the main line of attack, however, was directed at Republika’s coverage of the attack on the PDI headquarters. It was alleged to be sympathetic of the democratic reform movement and critical of the pursuit of left-wing activists subsequently accused of formenting riots after the July 27 raid. Hefner notes that the DDII campaign at the time was believed to be organised by a small faction within the intelligence services (101). In any event, the dispute disrupted alliances between conservative Islam and the armed forces: “[A]fter years of marginalisation, the DDII leadership has concluded that it must take full advantage of the thaw in relations with (some in) the government, and to do so means taking a hardline on recent political events” (101).

\textsuperscript{189} In August 2001, the largest daily newspaper in Aceh, Serambi Indonesia was threatened by a separatist group with having its premises burnt down and its workers killed and as a result, suspended publication (Mater, G. ‘Indonesia’s free press not a trouble-free press, correspondents say’ <freedomforum.org> 19\textsuperscript{th} August 2001). See also ‘Attacks against journalists continue’, AJI/IFEX press release, 13\textsuperscript{th} March 2000.

\textsuperscript{190} A New Order practice where threats were delivered to editors by phone from military officers. It was known in media circles as ‘kebudayaan telpon’ (Romano 2003: 62).
led only to a partial transformation of press culture. Aspects of the *Pancasila* press model persisted in the *reformasi* period but their modes of expression had altered.

Stanley argues attacks on media facilities and property involve a transfer in the capacity for repression from ‘the state’ to ‘the people’ but media repression, he admits, comes from groups who possess a direct relationship with state elites (2006: 195). Yet, even during the New Order, much political repression in general was subcontracted to groups straddling the political and criminal realms - some of it to civilian militia ‘irregulars’ under military patronage. The *reformasi* era’s much more contestable political terrain saw these coercive resources transferred to political parties through their paramilitaries and civilian militia (Hadiz 2003: 603). Hadiz notes also that “selective mass mobilization of the urban poor” by elite competitors has extended to organised labour. The legal Muslim Workers’ Union (PPMI), for example, had links to the Islamist Crescent and Star Party (PBB) and was headed up by Eggi Sudjana, who previously commanded Laskar Jihad troops in the field (606). Failing to make a decisive break with the past, the new era of competitive politics reproduced patrimonial ties between elite patrons and politically directed mobs with the capacity to convey community outrage against offending targets, including the media. The capacity to turn violent was ever-present.\(^\text{191}\)

iv) transitional media ethics

Just as Indonesia underwent profound political change after the collapse of autocracy, the media was also poised for a transformation, most crucially in its relationship with the state. There was, however, a sense that the nature of political reform set limits to what media reform could achieve in the short-

\(^{191}\) On the post-Suharto re-alignment of political forces and their repressive apparatuses, see the end of Chapter 4.
term. According to Hadiz & Robison, dismantling of Indonesia’s highly centralised authoritarian regime “failed to produce a swift and unambiguous transformation towards markets or liberal modes of governance” (2005: 230). They conclude that for this very reason, predatory interests linked to the former regime have been able to capture the new democratic institutions and run them according to the logic of money politics and political thuggery (Hadiz 2003: 594).

Indonesia is no longer in transition at all. The pervasiveness of money politics – and political violence – in post-New Order politics should not be understood as the mere growing pains of a slowly maturing liberal democracy. Instead, they are more fundamentally inherent to the logic of power relations that define an illiberal form of democracy already consolidated and entrenched (Hadiz & Robison 2005: 230).

Such a conclusion implies much about the future of Indonesian democracy; but it also uses the Indonesian example to highlight deep contradictions between its transition from authoritarian rule and the large body of literature which analyses ‘democratic transitions’ around the world. Four years after Indonesia’s authoritarian regime collapsed, democratic theorist Thomas Carothers (2002) declared the ‘democratic transitions’ paradigm dead. Although a number of his targets disavow the paradigm that he dismantles (or deny such a paradigm exists)(O’Donnell et al 2002), Carothers’s critique adds value to an understanding of Indonesia’s post-authoritarian trajectory.

Accordingly, I choose not to use the term ‘democratic transition’ in relation to Indonesia because even though formal democratic institutions were activated and diffused throughout the provinces, the nature of any transition depends on what actual political arrangements emerge, not on assumptions about the path of consolidation that such institutions are hoped to engender. In this sense, Indonesia is not ‘on the path to democracy’ any more than Egypt or Russia. The central dynamic of post-Suharto politics has been the reinvention
of old predatory power relations within the new vehicles of competitive parties, elections and parliaments (Hadiz & Robison 2005: 231). Rather than real contestation between reformist forces and their adversaries, state and business oligarchies dominate the political system and have infiltrated all the major political parties which now serve as “tactical alliances that are largely concerned with new ways of organising control of and access to the spoils of state power” (233).

On the broader question of democratisation, O’Neil asks whether during transitional periods the media can serve as an instrument of both democratic consolidation and pluralisation – tasks that may be at odds with each other (O’Neil 1998: 10). Based on the above appraisal of Indonesia, the latter has not always aided the former. Market freedom proved a necessary but insufficient pre-condition for embedding democratic norms within formal institutions. Accordingly, John Keane in The Media and Democracy is correct to suggest that “[n]ew justifications of the intimate relationship between ‘liberty of the press’ and democracy are needed” (1991: 175). Such justifications must necessarily fall within a normative framework just as classical notions of liberty-of-the-press relied on European and American civic values and presupposed a public sphere which stood in direct antipathy to despotism (Keane 1991: 25).

The ideal of an intimate relationship between press freedom and democracy has been ruptured during Indonesia’s chaotic transition as protracted civil strife flared across the republic. The basic problem was similar to other societies attempting to institutionalise freedom of communication peacefully among citizens in dispersed, complex civil societies (41). In the Indonesian transition, polarising ideologies like Islamic nationalism were popularised by national print (and other) media; their discourses helped brandish the formative symbols of the emerging non-democratic tactical alliances mentioned above.
It was not apparent to a literate public and even less so to those communities with first-hand experience of violence that the media was using its freedom to facilitate peaceful political change. It was this general perception of a liberated media as an agent of communal discord or self-interest rather than peaceful resolution that provided cover for communal attacks against ‘unrepresentative’ media.\textsuperscript{192} Media practitioners seemed to be aware of their ability to aggravate disintegrative impulses along politico-communal faultlines. But squeezed between government threats and communal pressure, they appeared to frame professional dilemmas simplistically by falling back on minimalist readings of factual reporting and balance.\textsuperscript{193}

However, while some Malukan media paraded their impartiality by pointing to the lack of communal protest from the ‘opposing’ side (Touwe 2001), others confronted their vulnerability with professional defiance anchored in ethical attachment:

\begin{quote}
Our capacity to criticise goes up and down....but if we buckle under pressure we cannot give voice to what the community desires....So we are not influenced by intimidation, certainly not afraid, but we still operate according to the journalists code of ethics (Matakena 2001).
\end{quote}

Earlier in this chapter\textsuperscript{194}, professional choice of reporters covering Maluku was depicted as limited between two poles: inflaming communal tensions or self-censorship designed to avert their aggravation. This binary framework is

\textsuperscript{192} See the quotation by Ajidarma that introduces this chapter.
\textsuperscript{193} The editor of Ternate Pos admits to adopting a reporting strategy that carries similar problems to the ones encountered by Kompas who avoided engaging with the religious dimensions of group enmity and relied heavily on non-religious officialdom (see Chapter Six, Section One): “To avoid taking sides with one group, we only use one government version. We are then accused of being a mouthpiece for the government by the Islamic group. In the conflict area it’s possible the only neutral source is the government one. Because they don’t take the side of one group or the other, for us government of security forces are still very neutral” (Djalil 2001).
\textsuperscript{194} See the previous section ‘ Pancasila Press goes ‘communal’’. 
less clear-cut when considered in relation to actual pressures and limitations brought to bear on the entire reporting enterprise. While there may be circumstances where withholding a report could be considered justifiable in order to avert a worsening conflict scenario, adopting a general policy of minimalist reporting is more likely to lead to confusion and obfuscation of the real events, which itself can help to enhance a communicative environment more conducive to violent escalation.

Minimalist reporting or complete self-censorship (non-reporting) over time is more typically a defensive reaction by the media to perceived threats to their own interests, real or imagined. In such circumstances, it may be more diplomatic to defend professional prevarication by presenting it as a responsible refusal to add to already overheated public emotions. More seriously, embracing a ‘minimalist’ reporting philosophy in the face of persistent violence risks transforming timidity into paralysis and calling into question the integrity of the reporting enterprise as a whole. While this study includes no textual analysis of the Malukan news media, it still appears that minimalist reporting was an easier fit for the two national dailies analysed in the last chapter. This may be related to the fact that these national papers had larger institutional interests to protect than the smaller entities more sharply aligned with the group interests at war and operating much closer to the physical heat of battle.

If minimalism is rejected as an excuse for self-censorship, an ethical framework for resolving those same reporting dilemmas thrown up by the Maluku firestorm is thus called for. What is required is a framework for decision making that transcends the binary one cited above and which moves beyond the idealist (and sometimes universalist) pretensions of the liberty-of-the-press model, while preserving the principle of ‘freedom of communication’. What Keane calls democracy’s ‘crisis of legitimacy’ is intimately related to communicative practices in thrall to technologies of political power (1991: 94-108).
The inequalities and distortions of communicative freedom are most acute and do most harm at times of violent civil breakdown. I use this statement to premise a transitional media ethic that marries two normative principles, the first of which is:

*democratic scepticism* which acknowledges the facts of complexity, diversity and difference....and harbours doubts about whether any one person, group, committee, party or organization can ever be trusted to make superior choices on matters of concern to citizens (Keane 1991: 167)[my emphasis].

The second principle is a body of knowledge loosely known as ‘peace communication’. Its ethical precepts have already been operationalised for professional reporters as ‘peace journalism’ (Lloyd & du Toit 2000; Lynch 2001; Lynch & McGoldrick 2005), or ‘conflict-sensitive journalism’ (Howard 2003).

Peace communication is defined as a non-dogmatic framework for interpretation which allows space to explore conflict dynamics in ways that discourage movement towards violent resolutions. Such perspectives do not preclude discussion of coercive or militaristic strategies, but nor do they privilege them. The framework is not formulaic and depends for its validity on an analysis of actual conditions – hence, the primacy of ‘conflict analysis’, which is the principal intellectual tool of ‘peace journalism’.

Indonesian journalists and intellectuals have been influenced by a school of thought that falls within this general field. ‘Peace journalism’ grew out of peace studies institutes in Europe\(^{195}\) and a disillusionment with the violence

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\(^{195}\) One of the pioneers was Johan Galtung; see, for example, Galtung (2006).
and disintegration of the former Yugoslavia.\textsuperscript{196} Earlier still, supporting principles made it into two key UNESCO documents (Irvan 2006: 35).\textsuperscript{197} Peace journalism counterposes its values with ‘war journalism’. War journalism is characterised by a zero-sum approach to conflict: a bi-polar game between two parties contesting a single goal where victory followed by ceasefire equals peace (Lynch 2001: 16). Its interpretive framework is more rigid in the sense it is not designed to offer the journalist any insight into the circumstances under which violent conflict might remain unresolved and re-surface; peace is simply the absence of war.

War-journalism discourses tend to deal with elite people in elite countries and rely heavily on official government sources. This is especially so during military action when such tendencies are complicit in government-military efforts to keep reporters away from the battlefield, depriving them of primary observation and independent sources of information. War journalism employs storytelling forms that increasingly align themselves with the strategic logic of warmaking. War journalism implicitly recognises that for every victory on the ground, a corresponding ‘media war’ must be declared, fought and won.

With respect to the above definition implying a preference for peaceful rather than violent outcomes, there has been much written about processes leading to ‘resolution’ of a given conflict. But as Galtung notes, conflicts are generally not resolved (in Mitchell 2002: 1), and the terminology has evolved to encompass and sometimes favour ‘conflict transformation’. Mitchell suggests this change is due to the misuse of the term ‘resolution’ to mean “anything

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{196} Note Indonesians have a word they apply to their own society’s disintegrative forces: ‘balkanisasi’ (Balkanisation).

\textsuperscript{197} The Mass Media Declaration of 1978 speaks of the media’s role in countering “incitement to war”, “aggressive war” and promoting “the reduction of international tension and the peaceful and equitable settlement of international disputes”. The International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism adopted by eight journalism federations (representing 400,000 journalists) in 1983 calls on the journalist to abstain from “any justification for, or incitement to, wars of aggression…and all other forms of violence, hatred or discrimination” (Irvan 2006: 35).
\end{flushleft}
short of outright victory, defeat and revenge as an outcome, as well as for many processes involving overt violence” (2002: 1). In regard to cultural conflict, Shinar has questioned the efficacy of the concept of resolution when it equates with ‘end-of-conflict’. Such approaches are often associated with peace agreements and settlements which deliver ‘reconciliation’. He believes that these approaches are ill-suited to be applied to cultural conflicts, marked by intractability, durability, low-intensity, unconventional ‘battlefields’ and the use of ‘irregulars’ as fighters (2003: 2-3). Peace documents may be signed but the fighting continues (e.g. Israel-Palestine; Northern Ireland).

By adopting the prevailing model of elite peace-making, the media contributes to a ‘crisis of expectations’ when such agreements fail to ‘stick’. Shinar makes the point that while reconciliation is newsworthy, this media frame was a mismatch for the conflict under his study (Israel-Palestine). So, following the 2000 Intifada (Palestinian uprising) hopes were dashed and the media reverted to focusing on the escalating violence rather than the causes of protracted, cultural conflict (9). This is a useful example of war journalism resulting not simply from a loss of faith in reconciliation after being overrun by events, but from an analytic failure of the profession.

The importance of news discourses providing something other than a mirror of elite agendas is demonstrated in the case of Maluku where the ‘resolution’ was framed in terms of decisive government action. As pressure mounted on President Wahid to ‘end’ the conflict, some of his political opponents used the communal war to urge escalating military intervention as the preferred solution. Wahid resisted this knowing an empowered armed forces - whose powers his government was trying to curtail - was as well positioned to escalate the fighting as it was to ending it.199

198 On this theme, see Wolfsfeld in Irvan (2006: 36).
199 Parliamentarians such as the PPP’s Hamzah Haz were calling for a military emergency to be imposed in North Maluku from early 2000. See, for example, ‘Abu Lahab dan Abu Jahal Ambon akan Kita Gulung Bersama’ (Ambon’s Abu Lahab and Abu Jahal will bring us together), Republika, 8th January 2000 and ‘Umat Islam Desak
Indeed, there is some evidence that Malukan journalists have responded to the prolonged carnage by adjusting their news reporting with these principles in mind. After some conciliation work among Muslim and Christian journalists from Maluku on Java in 2001 and following the Malino Accords in early 2002, there was a marked cooling down in the local media war (Basorie 2005: 66-67).

Wars – especially those fought with distinct political goals in mind - are open to the manipulations of media diplomacy. Internationalising local struggles spotlights not only powerful national and transnational negotiators but sub-national armed groups. Those intent on ‘making’ the news will always internalise media narratives as part of their negotiating arsenal. Lynch describes the process thus: “Every time anything is reported, another layer is deposited in the collective understanding of the kind of facts likely to be reported in future – an understanding which then forms the basis of calculations by newsmakers.” (2001: 11)

Thus, the alternative framework of interpretation – peace journalism – is contingent on an accurate, thorough analysis of the conflict at hand. In the Maluku case, this meant understanding volatile centre-periphery politics including the context of attempts by old regimists (including abangan and Islamist generals) to de-stabilise the civilian government. To follow this approach, reporters would need to find ways to extricate themselves from elite agendas and their mouthpieces and focus on the longer-term prospects

Gus Dur Segera Selesaikan Masalah Ambon’ (Islamic community asks Gus Dur to immediately resolve the Ambon problem), Republika, 10th January 2000. Even when a civil emergency was introduced across the entire Maluku region in late June 2000, a full military emergency was still an option, according to the coordinating minister for political & security affairs; see ‘Gubernur Maluku berlakukan Jam Malam Maluku’ (Governor brings in Maluku curfew), Republika, 28th June 2000.

Basorie cites research on Ambon’s print news media by the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) which showed that “not one provocative or sensational news item appeared in five Ambon-based dailies published from January to June 2003” (Basorie 2005: 66).
for inter-communal peace in the region, irrespective of who was in power in Jakarta.

It also explicitly rejects the minimalist reporting model favoured by some media outlets and critiqued in the last chapter as ineffectual and corrosive of professional norms. Some Indonesian journalists have come to understand the efficacy or otherwise of such models from firsthand experience.

Don’t bury the facts that are so sacred to journalistic reporting. Peace journalism is a method of reporting the human side of warfare, but it is not a licence to delete the facts that arise in a war. It used to be said not to report blood and bombs, but these things are certain to appear in reports (Djailil 2001).

These reflections emerge from the hard lessons of war reporting. They are an attempt to face professional dilemmas head-on. And they address the theoretical concern of Keane whose earlier quotation suggests that liberty-of-the-press and democratic norms are no longer such an easy fit. Rather than abandon the argument that the two are inseparable, the case for inseparability, as Keane himself states, must be re-argued in light of contemporary conflicts.

Instead of retreating to a safe ‘minimalist’ reporting ethic and shielding behind the serial excuse of ‘neutrality’, journalists must acknowledge the fact of their political engagement while avoiding partisanship towards any party to a conflict. This engagement is a status that is earned by virtue of mastering the intellectual heights (conflict analysis) as well as an ethical attachment to lasting non-violent outcomes. Such a media ethic involves a new way of imagining professional responsibility and cannot be fulfilled within a media-repressive environment. Reporters can retain their traditional scepticism but this orientation towards ‘the facts’ is driven by a profound suspicion of power.
Democratic scepticism thus serves as a barrier to political partisanship, unwitting or otherwise.

Just as all codes of ethics should be voluntary, peace-journalism ethics are to be internalised and adopted by choice as a guide to professional practice. An ethical embrace of these principles brings journalists closer to the subjects of their reporting (the community). Paradoxically, their detachment from their subjects does not diminish their (non-partisan) engagement. Freedom of the media commits journalists to respect the right to free expression of their sources, a right which the very act of reporting enables. It also implicitly acknowledges that such rights and freedoms are meaningless if communities are sliding into chaos. Accordingly, ethics and freedom converge to guard against irresponsible detachment, borne of professional self-interest and elitism.

There are, however, a number of barriers to shifting professional paradigms towards a new transitional media ethic. Firstly, the news value of war and violence is extremely high and as noted by Shinar, further intensified when warfare is enacted on a primordialist stage (2003: 5). Secondly, violent conflict has not always been well served by the news format. The failure of two national dailies to develop continuity in news narratives was reviewed in the last chapter. More generally, news reportage of Maluku lacked analytical depth, especially at moments of escalation. Missing were the firsthand accounts by combatants and civilian victims from all sides, from which these dailies might have develop sophisticated vocabularies to map conflict dynamics over time. In their absence, the newspapers’ language communities were left vulnerable to the superficial, zero-sum primordialism that came to infect news discourses.

201 For examples from international news, see chapters 2 & 3 in Lynch (2001); see also Kamalipour & Snow (2004).
Clearly, this second barrier has something to do with the structured limitations imposed by the *news form* on routine newsroom production. The political economy of commercial news does not favour process-driven public debate and analysis but rather event-driven, conflict spectacles (Irvan 2006: 36). There is some quantitative evidence that Asian newspapers have a tendency to privilege war journalism (Lee & Maslog 2005). Peace journalism also presents a disruption to the news’s dominant socialising role and a challenge to its narrative rigidity which acts as a constant signification of official interest (Koch 1990: 182). There may, therefore, be incompatibilities between peace journalism and news as a storytelling medium.

Historically, print forms served to unify political space in a manner that encouraged homogenisation and hierarchy (Panayiotou 2006: 27)\textsuperscript{202}. As earlier noted in the discussion of ‘imagined communities’ (Chapter Two), print news transmitted in the dominant language was a core ideological engine of nation formation. Unsurprisingly, its national distribution has been a key mechanism for spreading nationalist norms. The adoption of or acquiescence to nationalist ideas has been necessarily conflictual, often accompanied by victimisation and coercion.

Following Geertz, to be powerful, such ideas need to be carried by powerful social groups (1973: 314). Twentieth century conflicts where nationalist movements have triumphed generally involve the imposition of a high class culture on the lower classes (Gellner in Panayiotou 2006: 28); for example, hierarchical norms of Javanese *priyayi* culture were transformed and elevated within the New Order’s modernising nationalist project. National media that cross-cut primordial identities (class, religion, ethnicity) were more likely to secure a future within Suharto’s *Pancasila* democracy. Private media like Kompas proved that a pluralist pitch and profit were compatible.\textsuperscript{203} National print distribution was a perfect fit for conveying nationalist ideology. By

\textsuperscript{202} Panayiotou here acknowledges the work of Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan.
\textsuperscript{203} For a discussion, see Bayuni (2005).
individualising the reception of the message and bonding readers who would never meet, its modernist, linear logic eroded localised (vernacular) language communities (Panayiotou 2006: 29). Globally, national print media has been at the forefront of galvanising national sentiment, for better or for worse. Its successes have led others (often government broadcast media) to mimic its content.

Print forms have also served in bi-communal societies like Cyprus to facilitate de facto segregation in school education and newspapers (28). During the Maluku crisis, one print proprietor was able to profit from his Ambonese operation when his local newspaper split into two with Christian and Muslim journalists dividing into two camps and servicing their separate religious communities (Spyer 2002: FN 16204; Pinontoan 2001205)

Peace journalism has sometimes been broadly conceived to include moments in history when press movements produced counter-narratives to nationalist rhetoric. This is said to be the role played by the leftist Greek Cypriot press from 1940 to 1960 (Panayiotou 2006: 30); its promotion of cross-communal cooperation confounded the nationalist tendency towards separate public spheres based on Greek or Turkish communal identity.

Not all forms of nationalism reliably privilege the discourses of war journalism. In the Western press tradition, notions of ‘civic’ or ‘public’ journalism have emerged in ways inconsistent with neither national integration nor popular

204 Unlike the Cyprus example, where separate public discourses were conducted in different community languages, the media polarisation between Suara Maluku (Christian) and Ambon Ekspress (Muslim) occurred under the same owner and through the same language medium (Bahasa Indonesia).

205 Pinontoan’s account as coordinating editor of the paper that split (Suara Maluku) emphasises the physical dangers of Muslim and Christian journalists operating from the one premises (located in a Christian area) rather than any breakdown between the journalists themselves; he stresses attempts to guarantee the safety of Muslim journalists failed due to pressure on Suara Maluku’s Christian staff from their own community.
democratic sovereignty. A media movement in the US in the early 1990s, led by some newspapers and supported by elements of academia, sought the revitalisation of national public life by consciously shifting power back to the civic sphere. According to Jay Rosen, the movement was a revival of a democratic idea espoused by John Dewey: truth was constructed in the public domain through the cut-and-thrust of public dialogue. This implied obligations for intellectuals to develop ‘public’ identities beyond their professional ones based on disciplinary expertise. Its philosophy of action required scholars to develop a common language with journalists who themselves must do the same with their readers. Journalists constitute an early warning system for society and thus must have access to more advanced understandings than their own. Knowledge devolves to the point where it becomes ‘embodied intelligence’ not

...through some magic medium of public communication, and not all in one place, through some all-embracing public sphere, but via many encounters with many publics at many levels, all governed by rules of engagement that constitute the society’s shared public ethic (Rosen 1994: 368).

The struggle to arrive at public truths involves active citizens and is, in fact, the essence of democratic politics (367). Gunaratne (1996) has convincingly argued that the principles behind ‘public journalism’ as a Western democratic revival have much in common with ‘developmental journalism’ espoused by developing countries ten years earlier. Notwithstanding different permutations of the latter (discussed in Chapter Three), both situate journalism within the discipline of communication and “both concepts aim to accomplish similar goals in dissimilar socio-cultural environments” (72). The environment for public journalism has been one where disillusionment with politics drove a need to reconnect citizens with public life; development(al) journalism was in part a reaction against Western models of professional detachment and passive reception of technocratic knowledge towards a “catalytic role to stir
up people into being active participants in nation building” (Black in Gunaratne 1996: 70).

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the broader policy movement was known as ‘development communication’, which sought to redress global imbalances in information flow by building alliances among ‘peripheral’ developing nations. As it was, geo-political conditions conspired in the early 1980s to thwart development communication as an influential global movement; however, its spirit as a ‘communication rights’ ethos re-surfaced in the 1990s under changed geo-political, technological and operational conditions. A global policy movement has been reinvented and formalised under the World Summit for the Information Society (WSIS), albeit under government auspices.

Current WSIS debates do not just revolve around media content, but extend to fundamental issues of access and control of communication technology. These arguments are central to this chapter’s conclusions about communication infrastructure – if peace journalism is to have practical meaning in provincial areas – falling under community control.

v) Reviving development communication

Following discussion of development journalism in Chapter Three, the notion that journalism could somehow organise its professional duties in ways that enhance community, national, regional or even global development was a casualty of Cold War politics. In any event, the new world information and communications order (NWICO), while strong on vision, had policy ambitions that were all-encompassing: just distribution of information; preservation of unique identities and culture; access to technology from the North; comprehensive national communication policies; reform of global financial arrangements and so on. These ambitions were impeded by political
opposition derived partly from the close identification of information with security agendas. Press models that did not conform to strictly Western liberal precepts were slated as either authoritarian or communist (Stevenson in Gunaratne 1996: 69) and any hint that communication was being linked to economic development issues was denounced as an attempt to control the media (Mwakisha 2005). In the end, the NWICO was a creature of its time and a number of its theoretical assumptions have been revised: media imperialism, the ‘bullet’ theory of communications and an essentialist idea of culture (Lewis 2005: 8). While the MacBride Report (1980) was supportive of local and community media, it did not link them with the global cultural economy, even though the poverty of the former mirrored the global disparities complained of in the report (8).

In present digital times, the concentration of media ownership persists but communication battles have been re-drawn: the privatisation of frequency spectrum, the role and viability of state and community-owned media, the status of cultural product within international and regional trade agreements, global media governance and so on. All these issues have been influenced by the new generation of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Accordingly, there has emerged a split between the government and non-government (‘civil society’) wings of the World Summit for the Information Society (WSIS). No one disputes the glorious vision of the information society but implementation is subject to competing discourses. The government discourse emphasises the spread of and access to ICTs; the civil society wing with its anti-globalisation posture promotes ‘communication rights’. The former is more technocratic focused on the provision of infrastructure and related products and services (access-oriented), while rights advocates recognise the political dimensions of policymaking (participation-oriented):
Access can be a gracious concession from above. Participation, on the other hand, re-aligns the axis of decision-making from the power of the few to the consensus of many (Gumucio-Dagron 2005).  

At this point, it is possible to frame a ‘development communication’ perspective that is insulated from the historical charge of being anti-democratic and media-repressive. By promoting information cultures built on broad-based community participation, the creation, filtering and dissemination of messages becomes subject to consensus decision-making. The freedom to access information is supplemented by the right to operate and control the technology that produces it (*right to communicate*). In this sense, media markets are democratised and information filtered according to the push-and-pull of community consensus, rather than dictated by the market position of remote centres of media production. Within this formulation, WSIS issues such as bridging the ‘digital divide’ and choice of new technology cannot be discussed outside the democratisation of society (Gumucio-Dagron 2005).

Such a movement also acknowledges that development conditions such as poverty are complex and involve “issues of voice, empowerment, rights and opportunities as well as material deprivation” (Slater & Tacchi in Lewis 2005: 15). Internet infrastructure, for all its communication possibilities, is a necessary but insufficient condition for the problem of harnessing knowledge towards development goals (Girard 2001: 3).

[T]he essence of what is required is not technology, but relevant and meaningful content, digital or not. Escaping from poverty requires knowledge, and knowledge is transported in content. It is also

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206 The same article can also be found at Gumucio-Dagron, A. (2005), *From the summit to the people: The upper floor and the lower floor*, paper to the V Congreso Internacional de Radios y Televisiones Locales Públicas y Alternativas ‘Un solo mundo voces Múltiples’, Seville, 23rd -26th February.
becoming clear that the distribution systems for that content are most effective when building on the local information systems currently in use (3).

The politically and economically marginalised communities within the Maluku archipelagic region carry the legacy of top-down information culture and press restrictions but they are now being transformed within a post-authoritarian political and policy environment. ICT development also allows existing knowledge infrastructure (e.g. radio stations) to be not just multimedia in form but to extend the type and range of functions at the service of the community. Radio’s personalised two-way communication allows for a ‘community telephone’ function, an educational medium and – when harnessing the internet – a point of contact with the global knowledge infrastructure. It is easy to imagine how a local knowledge infrastructure, utilising a range of mediums and introducing content experientially, could form the basis of a non-coercive, participatory sphere for informing and giving voice to those who have a stake in policies, actions and decisions.

Admittedly, this perspective allows for the possibility that the circulating of messages could conceivably facilitate a consensus decision for one village to attack another. However, consensus decision-making and community control of media within agreed rules and ethical systems – once functioning - are just as capable of ensuring local information networks distribute content in a form and manner that privileges the peaceful working through of issues and disputes.

Jay Rosen highlighted intellectual exchange relations between academics and journalists as a vital connection between intellectual and public life (1996: 368); in the US context to which he refers, the information systems (including functioning telecommunications) for discursive exchange and data transfer can be taken much for granted. All that is required is for the professors and media people to be willing to network and act according to a shared public
ethic. However, the same resources of money, skills, technical infrastructure are in short supply in the often remote, marginalised and peripheral communities that are the focus of this study. Such deficits are further exacerbated by their experience with communal war.

Moreover, concepts applied to the use of communication technology in poor communities may be applicable to those threatened by communal conflict. The congruence is derived from common development values and the possibility of poor communities also being vulnerable to disintegrative forces.

Borrowing the concept of ‘community intermediaries’ from Richard Heeks (1999: 18) and applying it to Indonesia’s conflict-prone provinces, a community’s avoidance or non-violent management of conflict is a function of its communication networks operating as an early warning system against escalatory social dynamics. A community intermediary is a generic description of individuals or institutions which bridge the divide between distributive media systems and the public, thus enabling the circulation of meaningful content. Individual intermediaries might be local journalists or leaders or even rural extension workers; institutions could be local print media operations, multimedia centres, radio stations or other local bodies functioning to produce and share useful knowledge.

Who these people and institutions are matters a great deal if they are to be effective links between the community and its discursive resources. The ideal intermediary will combine technical knowledge of how media technologies function with contextual knowledge about local conditions, cultural norms, power configurations and so on. It also helps if they are from the locality and reside there. These ‘organic’ leaders are best placed to use organic information systems or indigenous knowledge (17) to the benefit of community goals. They possess qualities that make them suitable for mediating disputes: they know their fellow community members and know
how to negotiate among equals without imposing their opinions on others. They are chosen by consensus because of their

...voluntary transparency, helpfulness and relevance in addressing delicate issues. When problems and conflicts occur, these leaders are usually contacted – prior to formal chiefs or local bureaucrats – and asked for a voluntary and wise solution (Bakti 2000d: 47).

A media worker, information broker or organic leader can bring what Heeks calls ‘embedded resources’ to the task of community mediation. So, for example, a reporter and his/her newspaper need to operate in such a way that they are regarded as trusted sources. They need to be seen as knowledgeable in the sense of knowing where to find useful information (research) and how to assess it for its validity (interpretation). They also need to know how to apply and adapt it to changing circumstances. When inviting community participation, they need to make users feel welcome and confident in their use of communication channels (ownership)(Heeks 1999: 8-9).

The communications environment described above is one where a ‘democratic’ form of communication is compatible with the peaceful handling of community discord. This is so because such a milieu enables people to connect to frameworks of interpretation that help them solve problems, reach consensus and act collectively to develop their communities. The latter recognises that ‘development’ requires not just a collective vision of change but also experiences that affirm shared beliefs and make participants aware that change can occur non-coercively in harmony with community goals.

The roles ascribed to community media could apply equally to activists and ‘organic’ (public) intellectuals who contribute to the public sphere and potentially influence public action. This ideal sketch, of course, needs to be fleshed out by applying a normative framework. The one I recommend is the
one outlined earlier which marries peace communication with the value orientation of democratic scepticism. Local versions of this media ethic can fruitfully be applied to states emerging from authoritarian rule if they wish to staunch bloody cultural conflicts, reverse the emasculation of democratic structures and avoid the kind of political turmoil that makes a return to dictatorship and repression more likely. A citizens’ coalition bearing these values is now needed in Indonesia where intensified political conflict in the provinces – punctuated by periodic elections – is threatening precisely this kind of scenario. The situation is more pressing now that predatory patterns of state-business relations are replicating in the provinces and growing more or less autonomously (Hadiz & Robison 2005: 235).

The purpose of democratisation, Bakti argues in the case of Indonesia, must go beyond political change at the centre and extend to human development in rural areas.

Centralization, elitism, authoritarianism, and monopolization as practised by past governments, which weakened the democratic system could advantageously be eliminated. As well, the democratic elements available in the communities which have been suppressed during past governments will be revived. The coopted leaders….can be made functional again (Bakti 2000d).

Journalists, like extension workers, need to ditch the developmentalist ethos and replace it with a democratising one. They can adopt an objectivist, truth seeking orientation to the facts and still be committed to and guided by this reinvented ideal. They should, as Shinar puts it, “produce persuasive symbols of security” as alternatives to those of war and “construct credible realities of change in the roles played by arch-enemies” (2003: 6). Moral and intellectual succour can be provided by professional comrades in Jakarta; however, the intellectual demands of conveying more complex, less event-driven storylines
will be much enlarged. Equally, selling more abstract and nuanced coverage to audiences weaned on the climactic simplicities of violent events will be much harder due to lower news values.

This is one reason why it is the local provincial media employing a peace-oriented professional ethic who are best placed to offer coherent narratives over time. Coherence requires a contextualised knowledge of unfolding events and the ability to apply this ethic to the in-bound flow of media product, especially those that embody elite agendas forged at the political centre. The protection of culturally diverse communities depends on it. The building of loyal, responsive local audiences will be possible if local media orient their reportage to exploit and celebrate the shared sense of local identity. But it needs to appeal to a different mobilisational logic than the one that hastened the segregation of religious communities during the Maluku wars. Localism in place of primordialism is one possible direction. Such coverage that avoids demonisation of subjects will win over audiences because they trust and rely on the medium just as the community trusts chosen ‘organic’ leaders to be impartial adjudicators of local disputes. Such is the unfinished business of development communication in the Indonesian provinces.

Just as sources of communal pride and traditional authority have historically been coopted by outsiders, there will be inevitable attempts to domesticate peace journalism and weaken its institutional supports. This must be resisted, ideally by a press movement evolving its own public, ethical justification and promoting these principles among its solidarity networks. In a conflictual climate, peace journalism ethics will need to be applied robustly in the face of physical threats but flexibly enough to use non-news forms and sensitive narrative approaches to make tactical retreats at opportune moments.

Innovative training programs to inculcate core ethical habits into the intellectual routines of newspeople and content providers can begin right away. The success of such efforts to build a media ethic around peace and
development – barring outright repression – requires constant renewal to avoid a similar fate to that suffered by the perjuangan press movement in the long developmentalist epoch. By replicating these values nationally and seeking professional solidarity beyond their provincial borders, Indonesian journalists can call up the spirit of their dead cousin – pers perjuangan – and use its powerful symbolism to guard against this new media ethic sliding into another corrupting, self-serving orthodoxy.

vi) Summary of conclusions

In common with material artefacts, journalism as a discursive phenomenon qualifies as, in Clifford Geertz’s term, ‘symbolic action’ and therefore constitutes a form of expression which is both cultural and necessarily public. In this study, discourse analysis has been the preferred framework for tracking how a particular canon of journalism – Indonesian-language metropolitan daily rep ortage – assigns meaning to violent conflict, in particular communal war in the republic’s eastern periphery at the end of the long developmentalist epoch (1966-1998).

Ethnographers and journalists share some professional dilemmas when confronted with the aftermath of violent conflict. Primarily concerned with the cultural dimensions of conflict and how they are communicated, this study recognizes that ethnographic methods applied to cultural artefacts imply theorizing communication because they are concerned with cultural expression as it is shared, disseminated and celebrated. It is no surprise, therefore, that some anthropologists have applied these methods to media artefacts as part of their fieldwork (e.g. Spyer 2002 & 2006).

Media discourses are embedded in these dynamic processes and convey ideologies - which function not to transmit truth or falsity but to engage receivers in a contest over their truth or falsity. Ideological contestation is at the heart of
cultural conflict where beliefs tied to interests clash, sometimes violently, driving social change. Within media discourses, it is journalists who apply professional routines and standards to negotiate meaning from competing voices vying to be heard. Journalists therefore occupy a privileged and strategic position in the public communication of conflict.

The creation of meaning in news texts is not an autonomous process crafted by news workers; rather it relies on the interpretive power of language communities (audiences) who read texts in particular ways. Media narratives sometimes solidify into *languages of power* when the tone and style of language converges with content to mobilize opinion. As a cultural practice, newsmaking has the capacity to assign meaning in ways that bind a community-of-interpretation (Said 1981) towards collective action, motivated by shared beliefs. Because this study is about the capacity for media narratives to contribute to the escalation of violent conflict, textual strategies which serve to bind a community of believers towards aggressive ends have been subjected to detailed examination in the previous chapter. Conversely, those learned routines and strategies that position communicators to provide an early warning system against violent escalation have been surveyed earlier in this chapter.

The capacity to bind believers towards collective action demonstrates how news mediates the politics of identity. It feeds the anonymous mass ceremonies where shared beliefs are celebrated and group memory affirmed. But media messages also feed markets. They must reach their target audience before sentiments and the groups who hold them can be mobilized towards a common purpose. In the context of cross-border information flow, media diplomacy recognizes the media’s role in managing the dynamic between ‘ritual’ communication, which connects mass audiences as communities-of-interpretation and the ‘transmission’ of content, which unites audiences in a common experience or ‘reading’ of the text, wherever they are.
This empowerment of disparate members of an audience may take place on a national stage, enabled by national media’s distribution systems. This occurred in 1999 when Indonesian media rallied behind the nationalist cause to prevent the fracturing of the unitary state at its moment of weakness in August when East Timorese voted for separation from the republic. While these nationalist media campaigns failed, they did provide cover for post-ballot violence and collective punishment instigated by departing security forces.

Likewise, as detailed in the last chapter, national print media failed to forge alliances with local Malukan media to provide an early warning for escalating violence played out in the eastern province. The analytical failure – guaranteed by a preference for minimalist reporting practices – was compounded by newspapers allowing themselves to be captive to militant groups and interests and from early 2000, opening their pages to the war rhetoric of their leaders. This did nothing to mobilize national audiences in opposition to the war and in fact, enjoined readers in western Indonesia to a larger national campaign in support of paramilitary intervention.

If journalists are to fashion their narratives in such a way as to avoid driving conflicts towards a violent endgame, understanding conflict dynamics (conflict analysis) must be the first tool of choice for the professional reporter. Scholarly works that were reviewed in Chapter Two add to this understanding. Those authors who were most helpful in answering the research questions were those who adopted an historical and materialist approach. Modern nation-states did not obliterate cultural norms but transformed the way culture came to be used. National ideologies sanctioned by the state became dominant but were made emotionally convincing by tapping traditional ideas and identities prevalent in pre-modern societies. The harmonious Indonesian village became the model-for-reality for those who found themselves encompassed within the ‘village republic’ and buttressed an official ideology that rationalised citizens’ ties of loyalty to the new nation.
Pancasila as state ideology was non-negotiable within an all-powerful state that suppressed sub-national identities and beliefs precisely because its ideologues knew that such beliefs contained the seeds of political mobilization against the state.

Within a non-liberal information culture with realpolitik conducted from the centre, culture took on a nationalist form but with significant variations between secular and religious elements. Primordial identities such as ethnicity and religion were a source of dread within the unitary state. National culture was glorified over all other forms. The fact that Indonesia contained hundreds of ethnic groups and a complex history of religious politics was overlooked in favour of de-politicisation. The fact of difference was coopted to promote the ‘unity-in-diversity’ republic. But these repressive policies only served to sharpen ethno-religious identities.

The observation by Kamrava (1999) that creeping authoritarianism produces an accelerated manipulation of cultural values fits the Indonesian reality. Identity within this system is a political game to be played by centrally managing discursive resources around ethnicity, race, religion and class.

This ‘cultural-politics’ framework is fleshed out when applied to the (mis)management of communal conflict. A New Order policy of suppression, cooption, manipulation and victimization towards sub-national groupings and their aspirations was unlikely to eliminate grievances; in the absence of political outlets in Jakarta to channel them, aggressive energies were directed back into the community. The roots of communal discord - tied as they were to the economics of population movement and changes in state patronage - were neglected and hidden behind a veil of official and unofficial repression.

So-called ‘culturalist’ explanations of conflict have been examined but found to be wanting in explaining how groups become hostile towards each other and ‘resolve’ their differences on the battlefield. The deficiencies here seem to originate in insufficient emphasis on the mediation of conflict. Communication networks have
the capacity to keep identity formations fluid, opening space for dialogue and acting as a brake on polarization. Focusing on how groups mobilize and interact with the state and its overarching agendas (cultural politics) better reveals the functioning of such networks. As a communication environment changes, collective identities can harden, discursive spaces close and groups organize themselves in preparation for combat using the communication channels they know will be effective.

Other culturalist studies of contemporary political conflict (Huntington 1996; Mowlana 2000) turn on particular views of the underlying cohesiveness of large cultural groupings. This thesis concludes that these ‘big-picture’ studies are revealing of cultural dynamics over time but fail to place them firmly in the context of political contestation. They are also pitched at too high a level of abstraction to reveal how religious values, for example, are coopted and managed by those actually in power. For example, the rising influence of modernist Islam in Indonesia in the 1990s was crucial to the de-stabilisation of the republic at the end of that decade. However, it still had shallow roots in rural heartlands where most Muslims lived and faced an array of political competitors including other Islamic contenders. Its elevated status was as much a result of an ageing autocrat’s political manoeuvrings as it was the popularity of its urban preachers and their brand of Islam.

Likewise, Huntington’s ‘clash’ thesis fails to make the case that civilisational conflict is the primary driver of social change and relations between states. It lacks a micro-analysis of how states use cultural values to project their power into transnational spheres. Image politics is highly mediated and with varying degrees of success falls under the control mechanisms of state agencies. Culture becomes inseparable from its mediated communication. Its meaning and discursive power emerge from the cultural politics of a given place and time.

This study questions the certainty that is often applied to cultural factors. Most commonly, culture becomes an ideological resource to advance group interests.
This is true of religious communities, including those that fought a protracted war in the Maluku archipelago after the collapse of political dictatorship.

Sidel (2006) correctly identifies a central dynamic of collective violence: violence erupts amid heightened states of uncertainty about the boundaries of group identities. In this sense, it is the collapse of these markers of difference, not the differences themselves, that triggers violent breakdown. The actuality of violence and its eventual subsidence serves to restore those same boundaries. Restoration, as warfare in Maluku well demonstrated, can take the form of territorial expulsions and eliminating the enemy by means of mass slaughter (pembantaian).

However, Sidel’s analysis places too much emphasis on the coherence of religious identities. As the critique in Chapter Five argues, primordial ties to a faith community are just one aspect of identity. The dispute that started the war in North Maluku had no religious dimension and involved a number of ethnic groups (of mixed faith) banding together to protect their ancestral land from outsiders. Similarly, the Islamic king (or sultan) of Ternate was a Golkar politician who saw fit to revive his traditional authority among a largely Christian constituency on Halmahera Island. The violent endgame saw his palace guards in pitched battle with troops of a rival sultanate, that is, Muslim-on-Muslim violence.

And in Ambon, again it was encroachment by outsiders (enabled by government policy) that triggered resistance from Ambonese of both religious faiths. The complex motivations, alliances and interests of combatants – in Maluku and elsewhere – cannot be subsumed under the rubric of religious enmity. More satisfactory is a conflict analysis based on the shifting power configurations between centre and periphery at a time of political transition, as undertaken in Chapter Four Section II. The real significance of religious identity at this time was its capacity to mobilize, spread and prolong a conflict, in the interests of political contenders at the national, provincial and sub-provincial levels.
In Indonesia’s newly empowered ‘transitional’ democracy, these contenders were acutely aware of their direct interest in how the media portrayed communal war over time. A well-established infrastructure for information control commanded from Jakarta and well-practised bureaucratic manipulations imposed limits on the ability of journalists to construct deeper narratives away from the base primordialism that fell back on storylines playing to religious prejudices; this was the case despite greater professional freedoms. Closer to the heat of battle, Malukan reporters managed to devise more sophisticated accounts but were constrained from using them because of the risks associated with operating under conditions of territorial segregation.

Chapter Five concludes that communal violence is so often preceded by elaborate cultural symbolism which distracts journalists from what is actually at stake. These rituals are best seen not as ethnic or religious chauvinism but as assertions of sovereignty (Winn 2003). They are part of a political process that attempts to resolve conflict without the resort to violence. Violent breakdown occurs when these cultural exchange mechanisms fail to protect group interests as they perceive them (sovereignty). Such dynamics involve a failure of communication that conflict-sensitive reporting tries to forestall.

The attribution of ethno-religious causes to violent conflict in media texts matches on the page the very same mechanisms which serve to bring groups into hostile contact with one another. Once contact has been made, the avowed ability to control and limit violence (and for violence to achieve precise goals) is habitually exposed. However, these unilinear narratives are no match for the phenomenology of violence – the tracking of how violence actually rises and falls, and recurs. Primordialist media narratives – so favoured by national print media – are unilinear and in the case of Maluku served to lend ideological support to the rhetorical logic of warmaking (war journalism).

This study supports a revival of development communication but calls for its principles to be re-defined for communities vulnerable to episodes of transitional...
violence. Peace journalism provides an ethical framework for a new ‘transitional media ethic’. It presupposes a re-thinking of professional responsibility that eschews the serial excuse of neutrality and acknowledges the material impact of media communications. It advocates not a rejection of libertarian principles but their re-statement in light of contemporary culture wars. This concluding chapter argues that libertarian values - so cherished by journalists - need to be extended to the very people who form the subject matter of reportage. This peace-journalism ethic, if seriously embraced, has the potential to re-arrange professional priorities and by implication media production processes. This is of consequence not only to media management but also to training strategies, including the important issue of winning audience support for the new orientation.

But like the Malukan communities who were poorly served by their national media and ill-equipped to manage non-violently the local political conflict traceable to Jakarta, vulnerable communities should not wait for assistance from their metropolitan colleagues. The complex genealogy of violence detailed in Chapter Four demands that these communities factor in to their development plans communication infrastructure that allows such plans to fall under the scrutiny of community-controlled media. Clearly, such initiatives stand a greater chance of success if they are part of a nation-wide movement. So too is it wise to convince policymakers in the capital that they are necessary pre-conditions for peaceful development in the regions.

However, it is also advisable to promote and entrench these ethnical principles in the development thinking of provincial leaders rather than wait for capital-city technocrats to roll out their preferred model based on the controlling instincts of their political masters.

***
APPENDICES

Appendix I

English translations of Fauzan’s ‘kidnapping’ story
(see Chapter 6, pp4, 8-9)

Kompas Daily (28.12.99), Pertikaian di Ambon Terus Berlanjut, Lagi 34 Orang
Tewas: pp1 & 11

Fighting in Ambon still continues, 34 more dead

Communal rioting and fighting with ethnic, religious, racial and intergroup (SARA) overtones in Ambon that broke out again Sunday (26/12), kept going until Monday (yesterday). As many as 34 people from both sides died. Others received light and heavy injuries. It was a concern that the number of dead would increase in the future because there were still many whose condition was critical.

Apart from that, four security force members from the Marines, the Medan Artillery and the Airborne Infantry Brigade also suffered shooting injuries. They are now being treated at the military hospital (RST) in Ambon.

Following this riot, all community activities are paralysed, starting with general buildings, self-service and traditional markets. “All office blocks, both government and private, are closed. Government bank transfers have been forced to be cancelled, because all bank offices are closed,” said Luki, an Ambonese.

This time the riot simultaneously destroyed a number of buildings and residences in various settlements occupied by families of both warring groups. At a minimum, hundreds of structures and houses were burned, among them four houses of worship and state security living quarters that were already home to residents of Benteng Atas.
The location of burnt out settlements are around the Kramat Jaya settlement (Gunung Nona), Pohon Pule, Anthony Riebok Street, AM Sangaji Street, AY Patty Street, the Paradise Settlement, Sedap Malam Street and Col Pieters Lane, Dr Soetomo Street.

Fires rose up causing smoke to come from the ruins of burnt out buildings like it was enveloping the town in the middle of being hit by the rioting. The burning of a number of buildings directly incited anger among one group of people in particular.

The residents of Kramat Jaya settlement since Monday morning have been forced by security forces to flee to prevent further casualties.

“Up to now, several burnt-out houses inside the security force’s compound are still being investigated,” said regional military information head (XVI Pattimura), Lieutenant Colonel Iwa Budiwan to Kompas in Ambon, Monday (27/12).

According to Iwa Budiman, the moment the riot struck, the head of the regional military command (XVI Pattimura), Brigadier General Max Tamaela had just arrived from official duties in Jakarta. “The commander is now at the AL Halong military base,” Iwa Budiman added.

Concentration of people
The inter-communal fighting since Sunday afternoon struck around 16.30. This was a result of a concentration of people gathering at a number of sensitive points around Diponegoro and AM Sangaji Streets, Pohon Pule, Dr Latumeten St, Baru and Soabali Streets.

The security force led by sectoral command head, Colonel (Inf) Irwan Kusnadi had already tried to chase the group away so that they would not be amassed at sensitive spots. As a measure of anticipation, an armoured vehicle was put in place, but instead the mobs from both sides attacked.

The mobs no longer paid attention to the security officers' orders at the point between Diponegoro and AM Sangaji Streets. Above all, those of them who had equipped themselves with various sharp weapons and homemade firearms were in far greater numbers. On the first day of fighting, two security personnel fell. One
officer from Armed was hit in the head by a rock and a member of the Marines was hit in his left leg from a bow and arrow.

Apart from that, a journalist from *Suara Maluku* who was in the middle of reporting these events was also hit by a hot chard. "But now he can already walk again after the object lodged in his leg was successfully removed," said *Suara Maluku*'s coordinating editor Sien Luhukay when contacted Sunday evening.

The battle between the two warring groups continued until morning. The booming sound of homemade bombs and molotovs along with bursts of security force and homemade gunfire reverberated in the air until it became deafening.

*Trivial issue*
According to information, the mass gathering up to the time of the clash between the groups was caused by a trivial issue that later developed into the main problem. A child named Fauzan Saridjan while playing on his bicycle in AM Sangaji St, Sunday around 16.00 was struck by a town carrier heading for Kudamati, the driver coming from a group opposite to that of the victim's family.

Seeing the victim was helpless, the driver stopped, picked him up and placed him in the vehicle. According to information, the victim was brought to Dr Haulussy Hospital or the military hospital. But when the family tried to contact both these hospitals, Fauzan was not actually there.

END


*Ambon heats up again, journalist shot*

The hit-and-run that was followed by the kidnapping of Fauzan, 13, on Sunday evening yesterday, has inflamed Ambon again. The incident at the Trikora intersection, Ambon municipality, triggered a riot, and brought down other victims, including a journalist.

Max Apono, 57, a journalist with *Suara Maluku* was injured in his right eye while observing the stand-off between two mobs. Besides that, two security personnel also
received injuries from a bomb and bow-and-arrow. Meanwhile, the Silo Church located at the Trikora monument intersection was finally burnt down by an angry mob. Torching was also carried by the mob against five houses.

Up to the time this news was released early evening, there was no information about dead victims. Excluding Fauzan and Max, 26 civilians received gunshot wounds. On the security force side, there were four injured victims – two from the cavalry, one (sic) from Armed and one marine.

Up till early evening, the sound of firearms and bomb explosions could still be heard. Christians still celebrating Christmas early evening were also discharging firearms and bamboo canons. Meanwhile, another mob were standing guard outside a house, and another fleeing the city.

To overcome the problem of yesterday's riots, security forces made a barricade. Several armoured vehicles were deployed to chase away the mob who were persevering. Several times, security personnel were heard letting off warning shots.

An incident began when yesterday afternoon, Fauzan, from Gang Kayu Buah, Baru St, Ambon – not far from Al Fatah Mosque – was cycling with some friends at the eastern end of AM Sangaji St, on the western side of the Trikora monument. Suddenly, a Kijang van moving at high speed passed and hit Fauzan. Meanwhile, the driver of the Kijang who was suspected of being drunk and with blurred vision left Fauzan unconscious and covered in blood.

Seeing Fauzan quite seriously injured, several Marines standing guard at the Trikora monument immediately stopped the transport vehicle heading for Kudamati. The marine gave orders for Fauzan to be taken to the military hospital, around 200 metres from the scene of the accident (crime scene - TKP).

There were some who had already become suspicious and who were preventing Fauzan from being taken with the carrier owned by people from Kudamati, the majority of whom were Christian. However, the vehicle owner paid no attention. Abdullah Sarijan, 35, the father of Fauzan who was also the local head of RW and Ny Ip Sarijan, 32, the mother of Fauzan, who was already in the vicinity of the carrier, was also not able to prevent her child being taken away in that vehicle.
“I have my doubts, because my child was just thrown into the car,” said Ny Ipa Sarijan to Republika. Ny Ipa can only cry. “The officers should not have been so reckless allowing my son to be taken by the Kudamati carrier,” she went on.

Fauzan’s parents concern was based on several previous incidents. At the Kudamati general hospital, on the 20th January last, tens of Muslim patients were killed. For them, Kudamati is indeed the most frightening Christian stronghold (base) in all of Ambon city.

After the carrier in question had passed, Fauzan’s father and mother along with some neighbours in Baru St rushed to the military hospital. However, Fauzan was not there. And so, they checked with Al Fatah hospital. The people of Baru St were in uproar. At that time, Fauzan’s father had not yet arrived at his house. “My husband is with the marine commander going to look for my son at Kudamati hospital,” said Ny Ipa.

The disappearance of Fauzan made the Baru St folk at the western end of Trikora very angry. And probably, this had been anticipated by Christians, who had earlier amassed on the eastern side of Trikora. Both mobs who were more and more concentrated finally could not contain their anger. One or two of them were determined to be at the front to push through the security blockade. At the hands of security forces, they were chased back and returned to their group.

Repeatedly, deafening shots were fired into the air. But instead, warning shots caused many more to join the mob. For a long time the security forces were overwhelmed. Two armoured vehicles were brought in from ‘their base’ on AY Patty Street, and immediately parked crosswise in the middle of the mass gathering.

In the meantime, at both end of the street, the Muslim and Christian mobs were already facing each other just 25 metres apart. In their midst, barricades were secured across the street reinforced with a blockade of Armed, Marine and Brimob troops. “Hi Obet [Christian – editor], why do you disturb Muslims, whereas we don’t disturb you having Christmas,” yelled several youth standing on top of the barricade behind the armoured vehicle.

At that moment, the *tarhin* was heard coming from the mosque’s megaphone, a signal that fasting was about to break again. The mass gathering were still resisting
even though it was time to break the fast. At that time the Muslims only broke the fast with a glass of water. Several cases of water with gilded glasses were divided up among the mob.

Just as the water was drunk, repeated gunshots emanating from the Ambon offices of PLN, were directed at the Muslim mob that were breaking fast. As if on cue, that firing was followed by the Christian mob moving forward to attack. The Muslim mob then became hysterical and some others ran in to counter the attack, ignoring the sound of bullets flying past them. Another part of them it seemed were dancing the Cakalele in the middle of the street, although others protected them from the pelting of bullets.

One security personnel from Armed II, Private Hadiwijaya had a bomb thrown at him from the direction of the Christian mob. A soldier that kept covering his face was carried towards the Al Fatah hospital. Not long afterwards, a marine, Private Helmi Widiantoro, was hit by a bow-and-arrow in his left leg.

The Muslim mob and security personnel finally retreated around 150 metres from the Trikora monument. The constant firing from the direction of buildings around Diponegoro St made them both lie face down. Republika who was monitoring this event were forced to go face down together with them. It was at that moment the journalist Max Apono was shot.

“Watch out for sniper,” screamed the mob as a warning to themselves. “There, Pak, there, Pak, they are shooting from the buildings, Pak,” the mob shouted to the security officers. It was not known who kept up the shooting. But the results of Republika’s observations were that many of the weapons’ muzzles pointed out from windows of a building in Diponegoro and Philip Latumahina Streets. And, however many snipers there were, their discharges most often came from the windows of the building housing the Ambon branch of PLN.

Towards night time, the level of tension increased, and the Silo Church that was located across from PLN was finally burnt down. The mass gathering also drew thicker, but did not advance because they were blocked by the security cordon.

Information ascertained by Republika is that several people were also hit by a volley of bullets, but their identities are not yet known. Until 21.30, the centre of Ambon city
was gripped with fear. The letting off of rifles and thundering of bombs continued to reverberate in a deafening way. The people of Ambon city left their houses while carrying sharp weapons and homemade firearms. Meanwhile, others had already taken flight. Evening prayers in several mosques around the location of the event were also quiet.

While this was going on, on Buru Island, evacuation proceeded apace. Yesterday, Buru Islanders were removed from the island on the vessel *KM El Shinta*. Based on yesterday's data, rioting on the island last week had already caused fatalities reaching 57 in number with 20 others still missing.
END
Appendix II

News articles – analytic summary

The following 79 news articles - from Republika (43) and Kompas (36) spanning July 1999 to June 2000 - are individually analysed according to four parameters: Identity, Sources, Narrative, Language and Style. This data forms the base of the news content analysis in Chapter 6.

Each article is given a date, original page number(s), its Indonesian-language title, the title’s English translation and an English translation of the first paragraph, followed by the four analytic categories.

The analysis finishes with a brief summary of key dates during the period of newspaper coverage.

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<th>Date</th>
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<th>Page Nos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last week of July 1999</strong>&lt;br&gt;26.7.99</td>
<td>Bentrokan di Ambon, Ratusan Rumah Terbakar</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hundreds of houses, shops, and street stalls in the area of Poka and Perrumnas villages, sub-district Baguala, municipality of Ambon, were damaged and burned by masses in intercommunal fighting in that area, Saturday evening around 9pm until yesterday morning. It was also recorded that 6 people suffered injuries, with one subsequently dying, struck by a sharp weapon in the incident.

Identity: pertikaian antarwarga; warga setempat; sekelompok massa; penduduk; warga yang bertikai; oknum-oknum tidak bertanggung jawab

Sources: wartawan Antara (unnamed); Kapolres; Pangdam (Tamaela) & Kapolda (Saman) but no quotes.

Narrative: from Antara news agency source; causes of ‘bentrokan antarwarga’ unconfirmed; but clash was tail-end of house evictions in one of 2 areas that experienced them (police); 36 arrested for evictions and destructions; situation secured by joint TNI-police company and weapons seized; clash caused 1000 from both areas to flee to ‘rumah-rumah ibadah’ (houses of worship).

Fighting caused atmosphere in centre of Ambon city to become tense again; Kostrad and Brimob dispatched to restore security & were seen to conduct extra tight surveillance; regional military & police commanders remained in the field to calm the community & prevent further outbreaks; commanders appealed to community ‘untuk
menahan emosi’ (to restrain their emotions) and not be provoked by ‘isu-isu’ deliberately blown up by irresponsible ‘oknum-oknum’ intent on bringing on new riots. Language & style: read like a SF press release; activities of the SF restoring calm & security is described in detail as statement of fact, without attribution.

27.7.99  Semua Perusuh Kasus Tual Harus Diperlakukan Sama

All rioters in the Tual case must be treated the same

The head of Care for Community of Southeast Maluku, Usman Toatubun said the Muslim community in Tual city called into question the seriousness of legal manoeuvres by the main security forces against disturbers of the peace. In particular, up to now the only rioters to be detained who have stirred up bloody events in Tual are from the Muslim side. Alternatively, those from non-Muslim circles have not been touched by the legal process at all.

Identity: kalangan Muslim dan non-Muslim; warga Muslim, Warga non-Muslim

Sources: Muslim NGO leaders (X 2) from Maluku Tenggara

Narrative: peristiwa berdarah (‘bloody event’ refers to 22 June); Muslim leader accuses SF of unfairness in arrests (backed by 2nd leader) and continued detention of some of them; bloody event sparked by return of Muslim refugees to their villages on Kei Kecil; source says Muslim patience is running out.

Primary angle supplemented by sub-narrative on fate of of 22,000 (Muslim) refugees; 2 volunteer doctors detail the condition in the refugee camps, including illnesses and threat to life (1-3 die per day); no right-of-reply for SF or Christian community.

Language & style: emoti
onally coloured in parts: ‘cetusnya menyimpan kesedihan’; strong emotive language from sources (pathos); one source inserts a Malukan proverb to show that Malukans respect each other’s adversities.

28.7.99  Kerusuhan Ambon Meluas, 11 Tewas

Ambon rioting widens, 11 killed

Rioting returned to shake Ambon yesterday. According to a press broadcast from Posko Al-Fatah Ambon (PAA) that Republika received, early evening, hundreds of shops in the heart of the city were burned by the masses. And, as a result of the intergroup clashes that occurred since last Saturday, about 11 people were reported dead and at least 70 people suffered injuries.

Identity: antarkelompok; massa; amuk massa; sumber Republika (unnamed) & secondhand direct quote of Kapolres relayed from unnamed source

Sources: Muslim militant group (PAA); fireman; Note Kronologi Peristiwa (versi Posko Al-Fatah Ambon) as breakout: no balancing version.

Narrative: details destructive aftermath of riot in heart of Ambon; said to have spread after riots in Perumnas and Poka a few days earlier (see 26.7.99); SF attempted to keep kelompok warga apart and were forced to use their weapons; nine killed by gunfire, 5 named; people running for cover as shops burn, observed by riot police; regional police chief appears on the scene to calm the masses; inter-island boat prevented from docking due to fighting.

Language & style: sympathetic account of SF discharging weapons on opposing groups dalam situasi kacau (chaotic, confused).
29.7.99  Korban Tewas 30 Orang
30 victims killed

Bloody intergroup fighting that points in the direction of SARA (suku, agama, ras, dan antar-golongan) still continues in several districts of Ambon since yesterday. Since bloody riots exploded Sunday last, the situation in Ambon and surrounds is still gripped. Throughout this, a number of victims totalling 30 were reported dead.

Identity: antarkelompok
Sources: police in Jakarta (Polri); NGO Muslim group (GUIM) via press broadcast (named & quoted); PAA source (unnamed); sumber Republika (refers to PAA); Kapolda contacted but not able to confirm.

Narrative: riots described as a repeat of the tragedy that struck umat Islam during Idul Fitri the previous January; clashes suggest (berbau=have the whiff of) an element of SARA; Muslim source claims riots are a plan to destroy the Islamic community in Maluku and break its strength. Source calls on Wiranto to replace the regional military commander (Tamaela); unnamed PAA source related an attack on a Muslim village repelled by riot squad; details of civilian and SF deaths and injuries; Polri ends with comment that 60 detained are being investigated along with possibility that a dalang (puppet master) is behind the riots.

Language & style: alternation between religious and non-religious references (umat Islam; tokoh masyarakat); detailed description of injuries to dead victims; precise updating of death and injury toll within specific timeframes.

Late August 1999
21.8.99  Menhub Minta Wiranto Amankan Bandara Pattimura Ambon
Minister of Communications asks Wiranto to safeguard Ambon's Pattimura airport

The situation in Ambon is still critical. Pattimura airport is now also threatened by rioting. Because of this, the Minister for Communications Giri S. Hadihardjono is asking Defence Minister and TNI commander General Wiranto to give security assistance to the airport.

Identity: senior PDI-P figures said to be involved in the riots (Tilaay)
Sources: government minister; GUIM (Maluku Islamic group)

Narrative: airport is paralysed and cannot operate without a security guarantee; property around airport torched; secondary narrative is the allegation of involvement in Ambon riots by a Muslim NGO (GUIM) leader against Sekjen PDI-P (Ambon?), Alex Tilaay without right-of-reply and call for him to end the conflict - from Maluku and not from Jakarta. List of peace organizations (e.g. Forpema) in Jakarta.

Language & style: 2 stories in one joined by sementara (meanwhile).

22.8.99  Massa Serbu Ruko Mardika Ambon, tiga Tewas
Mass attack on Mardika shop in Ambon, 3 dead

At least three people died and 8 are wounded including a member of Armed III, when raiding and burning of shops occurred in the Mardika beach area, Saturday afternoon.

Identity: pengerahan massa (mobilisation of masses); para penyerang; kelompok massa; kubu nonmuslim.
Sources: saksi mata; Tomagola; Muslim activist (LDK); (unnamed Muslim) youth.

Narrative: summary of eyewitness account – mob arrives in Mardika in cars and trucks and sets off bombs & molotovs and burns empty shops; fire brigade blocked
from doing their job by the masses; secondary narrative repeats some info about airport security & peace efforts in Jakarta (21.8.99) and expands with Tomagola quote on grassroots peace activism; interfaith nature of efforts is not addressed. Final quote from unnamed youth is introduced in such a way (ancaman kekerasan....) as to implied that the 80000 refugees (some of whom are dying of malnutrition) are Muslims; this is reinforced by the primary (riot) narrative which does not identify ‘the attackers’ (para penyerang) by their religion.

Language & style: use of quotes from Tomagola (native of Muslim Ternate) & multiconfessional & secular nature of Jakarta-based activism associates peace efforts with the Muslim side. Reinforced by failure to identify rioters in the lead as Muslims attacking a Christian area and final anonymous quote from youth about suffering of refugees, which implies they are Muslims. In this way, the selective observance of reporting taboo produces a disjointed partisan account that lacks internal coherence.

23.8.99 Enam Tewas, 201 Rumah Terbakar 3 die, 201 houses burned
(Ternate, North Maluku) Physical intercommunal clashes in sub-districts Kao and Makian Malifut, Thursday (19/8) until Sunday (22/8) caused 6 deaths and left nine injured, and 201 residences burned.

Identity: antarwarga; warga Kao, warga Makian (no mention of religion)
Sources: Antara at District Military Command guard post in North Maluku; Kapolres North Maluku.
Narrative: account from Antara source relates a clash in a village on the border of 2 subdistricts Kao and Makian Malifut; Kapolres confirms that a bomb went off the moment an official party of the bupati and head of the regional assembly were on their way to the Kao subdistrict; he says that the local subdistrict forces were investigating 5 suspects and were still looking for the dalang behind the incident; the origin of the incident is explain as stemming from the division of the area between the 2 subdistricts (to create a new one?); background to the Makian settlers; and the efforts of the NM regional government to clarify the status of ‘Kecamatan Makian’. It was formalised by a 1999 regional government law to become Kecamatan Makian Malifut. In so doing the new boundaries took in 5 Kao villages which was resisted. As a result of the incident, 551 Makian refugees from 2 villages fled to Ternate where they were to be repatriated to Makian island which was their wish. 2000 refugees from the 5 disputed Kao villages fled to the Kao subdistrict. Spokesman from bupati’s office implies that the regional government is not doing much and passage of Makians back to their home island is being organised by that office.
Language & style: police source insisted that the violence – connected as it is to the re-drawing of area boundaries – is a criminal matter, not a SARA issue.

25.8.99 Suku dan Agama bukan Pemicu Disintegrasi 2 Tribe and religion not a trigger for disintegration
Political sociologist, Dr Tamrin Tomagola believes it’s impossible for ethnic and religious factors to become a trigger for a province to support an uprising for disintegration from the RI nation. He does see a threat of national disintegration, not only from mistakes in state behaviour and its entire apparatus, but also ‘wrong thinking’ (salah-pikir) in the formation of its (negara=state) basic design.
Sources: Tomagola and Acehnese leader
Language & style: does not specifically address Maluku but an analytical piece that uses abstract academic language and is neither coherent nor conclusive
Last week of Dec 1999

27.12.99  Ambon Kembali Panas, Wartawan Kena Tembak  1
Ambon heats up again, journalist shot
The hit-and-run that was followed by the kidnapping of Fauzan, 13, on Sunday evening yesterday, has inflamed Ambon again. The incident at the Trikora intersection, municipality Ambon, triggered a riot, and brought down other victims, including a journalist.

Identity: dua kelompok massa; massa yg marah; warga Kristen; massa Islam dan Kristen
Sources: account of militant actions on both sides is unsourced; but later a Republika reporter is said to be observing the action; sourcing of direct quotes of combatants unclear – possibly eyewitness; Republika monitors events closeby (at end of article) and caught up in the melee;
Narrative: the claim of kidnapping in 1st par is presented as fact and not justified by the ensuing factual account – the injured child goes missing amid the chaos but there is no confirmation that he has been abducted. The child’s mother however is quoted expressing her worst fears. The narrative supports at least the Muslim suspicion of abduction by referring to 11 months prior when 10s of Muslim patients admitted to this particular ‘Christian’ hospital ‘dibunuh’ (were killed), implied by Christian hospital staff and not as a result of their wounds. The reporter positions himself with the victims by being present at a street battle alongside his Muslim brethren (the mob) and SF. All three share an identity by both being exposed to Christian hostility; the Christian mob is described launching aggressive actions, creating hysteria among the Muslims, some of whom engage them in battle. One group (presumably Muslims) dance the cakalele to protect them from the barrage of bullets.
Language & style: graphic account of physical battle from close eyewitness observer – concentration of mob challenging and clashing with SF; weaving of religious narrative into description of violence – as mobs clash, Muslims must endure ignominy of war during the observance of sacraments/prayers; the mob reactions to a sniper attack adds dramatic movement; the torching of the iconic and strategic Silo Church is not described in graphic detail but given one perfunctory line without the perpetrators (Muslims) being identified, leaving no chance to express religious outrage and garner sympathy. Firsthand narrative grips the reader because it capture the mayhem through observation at close quarters, but identifies with one side (Muslims) - ‘the victims’ - whose trials are described in depth and with sympathy.

28.12.99  Ambon Bentrok Lagi 51 Tewas  1
Clashes in Ambon again, 51 dead
The Maluku region is increasingly horrifying. In Ambon, as a result of intercommunal clashes that have gone on since Sunday evening (26/12), it is noted at least 51 people have died, 100 more injured. Apart from that, three mosques, one church, along with 10s of houses and shops have been burnt to the ground.

Identity: bentrokan antarwarga; massa Kristen; warga Muslim/warga Kristen.
Sources: head DPR; Kapolda (Maluku Tenggara)
Narrative: refers to aftermath of Tugu monument clash – death and injury toll; fire engulfed several areas and Muslim village was attacked by mob from Kudamati (Christian area); Christians described as fleeing an area; the burning Silo Church described as ‘protected by Muslims’ before it finally burnt to the ground; Muslim death during the fasting month is inscribed with religiously marked timeframes e.g. victims began to fall at Subuh (early morning prayers) & a 24-year-old youth was shot in the head as he was about to eat his last meal before dawn; Kapolda (MT) refers to ‘pertikaian bernuansa SARA’.
Language & style: mosques and churches are identified as such, not as rumah ibadah; abduction (see 27.12) stated again as fact not theory and one cause of clashes; the atmosphere is portrayed in figurative and elemental terms, like ‘an ember in a husk’, able to explode at any moment.

30.12.99  
Presiden: Akan Ada Intervensi Militer di Ambon

President: there will be military intervention in Ambon

Although the Ambon conflict is increasingly aggravated, President Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) says no action will be taken to put into effect a state of emergency, civil or military, in Maluku. However, he says, in the next day or two the government will send troops there.

Identity: clashes between two hostile sides; pertikaian antarkelompok massa bermuasara SARA;
Sources: the President; deputy head DPR; Indonesian church federation (PGI) indirectly quoted as urging govt to take action and find out what is going on behind the bloody events (2 priests named but no direct quote);
Narrative: apart from Gus Dur’s promises to send more troops at the request of the provincial government, the deputy head DPR is quoted at length sternly warning the government to take decisive action and not avoid its responsibilities; update on Ambon fight, death and injury toll; proposal to send peacekeepers (as put forward by church group) rejected by head DPR; religious leaders and security forces urged to take action against those destroying religious facilities and the leaders of the latter ensure their officers don’t take sides and arrest those causing damage.

30.12.99  
Pertikaian di Maluku Berlanjut, 60 Tewas

Fighting in Maluku continues, 60 killed

Fighting with SARA overtones in the Maluku area is yet to end. Clashes between Islamic and Christian mobs since yesterday are still going on in a number of places. At least 50 people were recorded dead in Halmahera [North Maluku], three in Ambon city, 7 in sub-district Haruku Island [Central Maluku], along with 100s injured.

Identity: massa Islam dan Kristen; aparat beragama Kristen (Christian force)
Sources: MUI leader (Maluku); seorang warga (Muslim name); unnamed Kostrad officer; Pangdam (Tamaela); named Galela community leader; umat Islam/kelompok Kristen
Narrative: changes to command & control of operations (from police to military) is noted giving military authority to do weapons sweeps of villages and houses; restrictions imposed on movement at night (not a curfew); victims evacuated from Haruku; MUI source mentions attack by Christian force on 2 Muslim villages on Haruku; Ambon fighting continues with bombs and torching; account of burning of two of the main streets of Ambon hit by destruction of shops and a human barricade under threat of sniper fire; snipers identified by Tamaela as ‘oknum aparat’ along with some civilians; asked why he doesn’t visit the field of battle, he replies it would be foolish to die in a state of chaos. First mention of Galela as ‘fortress for defence of Islamic community’; first hand account of Galela fighting mentions Umat Islam is surrounded and attempting to resist the Christian group which gives way resulting in death with many left scattered in locations and others buried straight away, with the rest taken to the local clinic. A Marine is questioned about two marines kidnapped which he denies; he also denies 2200 bullets going missing at Ambon security post.
Language & style: ‘rounds of gunfire are the morning greeting for the people of Ambon’; MUI account sympathetic to Muslim side but could well be describing Christian victims without identifying them as such; note religious inflections in the
telling: ‘sebagian lainnya langsung dikubur’ (immediate burial according to Islamic custom); the physical clash is portrayed as two forces (antardua kekuatan) not as a one-sided slaughter.

31.12.99   Korban Tewas dalam Lima Hari 453 Orang

Victims killed in 5 days: 453

Tension continued in the Maluku area that since last Sunday (26/12) “heated up” as a result of fighting with SARA overtones between Muslims and Christians. In several locations yesterday the sound of gunfire and homemade bombs was heard along with the burning of shops. For 5 days the fighting has already consumed the lives of 453 victims.

Identity: pertikaian bernuansa SARA antara warga Muslim dan Kristen; sekelompok massa; penyusup (infiltrator); massa mengamuk; penduduk setempat (MTB=Sudwest Maluku);
Sources: eyewitness (named); Pangdam Tamaela; MUI leader; Kapolres (MTB)
Narrative: eyewitness account of burning of shops (quote included); the burning of shops near Al Fatah mosque and the reaction of the congregation is recounted; MUI criticism of Pangdam for not anticipating perpetrators of burning; Muslim resident says villagers providing their own security as they don’t trust SF; redrawing of boundaries (pemekaran) in new regency of MTB (Tual) (16 Sept 99) referenced in relation to 2nd phase of riots there and described by Kapolres as originating with a phone call reporting that 21 people from a village in MTB had been killed in riots in a location in Maluku Tengah (Central Maluku). A body count was compiled for the last 5 days from several areas – Ambon, Ternate, Tobelo, MTB, Galela, Haruku & Morotai totalling 453 deaths. Reliance on MUI for estimate of deaths and injured in Tobelo.
Language & style: events marked by religiously inscribed timeframe ‘saat umat Islam Ambon melaksanakan shalat tarawih’ (the moment Ambon’s Muslim’s began evening prayers); spread of interlocal violence portrayed as stemming from news of kin killed in another regency ie mobilisation in MTB based on place of origin without reference to religious identity.

First week of Jan 2000   2 – 8 Jan

2.1.00   Upaya memindah Ambon ke Jakarta?

Effort shifts from Ambon to Jakarta?

Why is the violent rage of the masses so easy to inflame? Why suddenly do they as if possessed destroy and burn anything they encounter? Why suddenly do they have such daring? Where is the position of the armed forces as the side that is competent to safeguard peace and security?
[news analysis]

Identity: amuk massa.
Sources: head of martial arts school Jakarta; FPI spokesman; Banser rep (all Jakarta)
Narrative: guru believes conflict is complex; certain sides (pihak tertentu) are heard to want Jakarta to smoulder like Ambon: he rejects this idea but then says in the background possibly this is true; he stereotypes such unnamed groups by saying they are like Ambonese - given to singing and playing music during shalat and making people (Muslims) uncomfortable. The article also illicits views from two Jakarta-based Muslim leaders: FPI spokesman on militant actions (occupations) against tempat maksiat (houses of sin); FPI action are procedural as they report to the governor when closing down such places, demanded by a large part of the jamaah. They are in any event a last resort, he says. FPI says burning of places of
worship are deeply political and in some cases (Doulos=a Christian facility previously burned) the community is restless because these places were not authorised to be erected; Banser DKI rep on the other hand says massa amuk results from the euphoria of being freed from restraints; in the case of ringleaders of disturbances, this originates with group interests who didn’t want to the special session MPR (November 1999) resolved democratically.

Language & style: quotes from (martial arts) expert are vague, ponderous and self-contradictory. He comments on the existence of lasykar that are trained and armed ‘to defend themselves’ and warns against confronting them, instead preferring persuasion. FPI uses a ‘procedural’ cover and mass support of the ummat as justification for illegal militant actions.

Two different grassroots Muslim leaders in Jakarta express the origin of Jakarta violence differently; but there is no real account of the connection between physical strife in Maluku and Jakarta, whether they are different phenomena or whether elite interests in Jakarta are seeing their work come back to them in terms of the political impact of Maluku violence. In this way, the valid question of the headline is not well analysed or answered.

2.1.00 ‘Masyarakat Kehilangan Pegangan’ (Community loses its grip)

Radical actions and anarchy that has developed in our community recently, according to sociologist UI Sarjono Jatiman has been a cause for the community to lose its grip, that is concerning who can be trusted to put an end to the problem.

Identity: tindakan anarkhis = amuk massa (mob actions are ‘anarchic’)

Sources: various academics and Islamic leaders (no Christians), incl a sociologist and criminologist; Muslim foundation head; NU leader.

Narrative: In this news analysis not specific to Maluku a sociologist (Sarjono) says in the absence of anyone able to end conflict, people play their own judge; a pakar (criminologist) blames lack of firm legal measure for anarchic acts; the latter says peristiwa amuk massa is connected with achieving political goals of (unnamed) political parties (massa parpol tertentu), that is, riots were a reaction to failure of ‘ketua umum’ (Habibie?) in Bali, Solo, Jakarta but were untouched by the law. These were brave acts as they grew confident they would not have the same done to them by SF. Sociologist accounts for radical actions in failure of community (mainly in the New Order) to learn dialogue and the ‘essence of difference’. Conflict was seen as something that was just bad and couldn’t be solved through dialogue; there was no communication between groups and no political space for dialogue. A third pakar (Hawari) says that since the New Order the community has been made ignorant because it hasn’t been taught to be democratic, understand difference or end conflict peacefully through dialogue; its aspirations have not been met and dissatisfaction has accumulated and exploded now; in relation to actions based on SARA the previous regime had a SARA strategy: Javanisation produced bad results ie settlers becoming victims (religious issue); it was clear which religion was courted and which one pressured; the pressured took revenge (religions not referred to by name). An Islamic leader weighs in by claiming that amuk massa is a plan by pihak tertentu to corner the ummat and brand them as easily provoked; the purpose being to blame Muslims as a group as uneducated, easily used and ignorant. Harmony was consistent with the conferring of rights on the ummat, so the image of Islam was brought down by pushing them (lower stratum) to damage houses of worship, immoral places, commit plunder, all orchestrated by a grand coalition. NU spokesman (& member DPR) says the violence must be stopped at its roots.
Language & style: various discourses in the perspectives of pakar (commentators) explore the roots of anarchy expressed in mass violence against people and property.

3.1.00  **Kebutuhan Pokok di Ambon Melonjak Drastis**

Basic necessities in Ambon take a drastic hike

The price of several basic necessities, mainly vegetables, fish, and spices in two traditional markets in Ambon city in this last week drastically shot up 100 per cent. This occurred in Batumerah shops and the Gotong Royong market.

Identity: the local markets are divided into *pasar kaget Kristen* & *pasar tradisional warga Muslim*; pertikaian antarwarga bernuansa SARA.

Sources: direct quote from fish vendor from Batumerah, a Muslim village; head of Maluku govt trade body; Pangdam Tamaela; Muslim Maluku Islamic leader (GUIM).

Narrative: this story laments prices rises caused by the disruption to supplies of basic goods to both Muslim and Christian markets; speed boats are shot at in Ambon bay and supply routes were closed due to barricades. Some Christian markets have become dependent on supplies from Muslim centres of production (fish, vegetables); as it has passed through many hands, the price of goods at the Christian markets is high. Because of the break in supply routes there is no fresh fish in Ambon city. Using traders from (all Muslim areas/markets?), the rises are detailed for individual items and sometimes the causes expanded on.

Meanwhile, a police and TNI group operation carried out a successful weapons sweep; some of the weapons were held by SF members and civilians connected with bomb-making; some of the weapons parts were SF issue. Pangdam in press conference says fighting in whole of Maluku had gone down and in Ambon was under control of SF. In Masohi (Central Maluku)) fighting continued; in North Maluku nothing too conspicuous and security was strengthened by a Kostrad battalion. A boat carrying refugees from Tobelo and Galela was turned around while heading for Ambon by ‘massa Pelabuhan Ahmad Yani Ternate’ in order to pick up refugees from Tobelo, according to a regional commander. Death and injury toll in Masohi and manner of their death; riots there sparked by a kidnapping.

Language & style: 2 separate stories detailing impact on food markets in Ambon where religious distinction between marketplaces is clear; update on violence across Maluku from military commander – reassuring role of SF weapons sweeps which acknowledges involvement of SF personnel.

4.1.00  **Dalam Semalam 800 Muslim Dibantai**

In one night 800 Muslims slaughtered

The greatest humanitarian tragedy in North Maluku is at once its most depressing. No less than 800 adult Muslim men were slaughtered in just one night in three villages in sub-district Tobelo, Halmahera, North Maluku province. Meanwhile, women were raped in the streets.

Identity: ‘Konflik sosial yg kini berubah menjadi perang agama….’; pertikaian bernuansa SARA

Sources: Tomagola; MUI (North Maluku); Pangdam Tamaela

Narrative: the killings occurred in three Muslim pockets of three Tobelo villages in the minority Muslim town; MUI source also reports woman raped in the street; MUI estimates 2000 Muslims killed since 26th in Tobelo alone plus 4 mosques were burnt down. Events reconstructed by Tomagola: mob of 10-20,000 gathered in Tobelo on Christmas Day from around North Halmahera and Ternate; a convoy of trucks moved passed villages and stopped at Muslim ones, doused the houses with petrol and when the inhabitants ran out, they massacred the adult males; they also attacked ethnic Chinese who fled to two mosques for protection along with the Muslims. One
mosque was surrounded, doused with petrol and burnt resulting in 250 deaths. Tomgola’s estimate of deaths (North Maluku?) since 18 August fighting started in Malifut is 2500; reference to Kao expelling Malifut Muslims (no date) as Christians (not of mixed faith). Tomagola notes the ‘social conflict that became a religious war’ is a continuation from the Malifut conflict. Following expulsions from Tobelo and Kao, 3000 Muslims are squeezed in majority Muslim Galela and Muslims are surrounded in ‘Jaelolo’.

Tomagola is also quoted criticising the civilian government for being slow to provide real help and coordination, and Komnas Ham (Human Right Commission) for being less responsive in its attitude to the violations. He points out on a scale of magnitude the North Maluku tragedy is more serious than the Ambon conflict because the former has taken 2500 lives since August and Ambon 1200 over a one year period.

Language & style: ‘Tragedi kemanusiaan berbau genocide…’; pembantaian used in headline and by sources (Tomagola); religious ritual used to designate time: attack occurred ‘setelah buka puasa’ (after the breaking of the fast)(Tomagola). The mob are believed to have celebrated Christmas in Tobelo the day before the attack. The fact is not directly sourced so only intimates that the massacre was foreshadowed by ritual, inscribing the atrocities with a motivation and meaning profoundly anchored in religious (Christian) belief. On chain-of-command, procedural details are quoted in full (Kodal Kamtibum)

4.1.00 KISDI: Menapa Komnas HAM Diam atas Pembantaian di Halmahera?

KISDI: why is the Human Rights Commission silent on the massacre in Halmahera

Conflict which suggests a SARA element in Maluku has never died down, and even continues to hot up. Many groups hope fair and firm steps are taken by the government to overcome the conflict. But, the government has never done it.

“Government measures are extremely sluggish,” said Hussein Umar yesterday, one of the leaders of Indonesia Committee for Solidarity with the Muslim World.

Identity: konflik berbau SARA; warga Muslim; kedua kelompok yg bertikai; kerusuhan SARA; konflik berbau SARA; kalangan warga yg saling bertikai; kelompok merah dan putih; kelompok Kristen.

For the first time, within the data under study, a report introduces a re-framing of the conflict as one prospectively a Muslim nationalist struggle against a renegade Christian separatist movement, a possible revival of the post independence RMS. Sourced to unnamed Polres in Ambon, the targeting of police & military barracks is woven in the narrative, intimating that this ‘Christian’ movement may now have changed strategy by targeting state SF representing the centre; this redraws Muslim SF members as defenders of the republic rather than neutral agents trying to keep warring communal groups apart.

Sources: KISDI; MUI (from previous story); Polri Maluku death & injury toll for one year, breakdown of civilian and SF, arrests & weapons seizures, property loss with breakdown including houses of worship; Kapolres Ambon

Narrative: reporters back up KISDI opinion by editorialising that govt response has been extremely sluggish; he attacks the govt for failing to bring the sides together and lacking a sense of crisis; Komnas Ham too are suspected of being controlled by ‘certain groups’, quick to anticipate an attack on a Christian foundation but not sensitive to the slaughter of Muslims in Halmahera.

Finally, the reporters note a pattern of attacks and threats against SF barracks in Ambon, targeting Muslim police officers and elite members of Kodam. Citing Polres Ambon sources, they speculate on alleged infiltration of Muslim compounds, naming two separate TNI quarters. They go on to suggest a radical movement is forming and
preparing to establish an interim government in the manner of RMS. As evidence, they cite a letter from the Dutch foreign minister to Indonesian counterpart offering assistance. It is added that such ‘evidence’ supports the proposition that the Ambon conflict is being transformed into a war between Muslims and RMS (ie a separatist war) but the word separatist is not used. Tomagola, however, is quoted as brushing aside this suggestion.

Language & style: reporter editorialises that as Idul Fitri approaches, despite all the death and injury, the government has taken no real steps to overcome the conflict.

5.1.00 Amien: Jika Konflik Meluas Negara Bisa Bubar

Amien: if the conflict spreads the nation can break up

Head of the MPR Prof Amien Rais has warned that if the case in Maluku is not ended straight away, conflict with SARA elements (tribe, religion race and class) can move to other areas in Indonesia. And when this happens, Amien worries that the life of the republic will come to an end.

Identity: berbagai etnik oleh umat Kristiani; penganut Kristen dan Muslim

Sources: Amien Rais, head MPR; KISDI and Partai Keadilan (Justice Party); Team for Tackling and Rehabilitation of Victims of the Riots in North Halmahera (TPRKKHU)

Narrative: story relies on Rais’s admonitions, first that if the govt fails to end the ‘pembasmian umat Islam’ the masyarakat will see it as their role to do so, and second, there will be a backlash (reaksi balik) from the umat that will be bigger again (lebih besar lagi). He adds that it is natural for the umat to become very emotional, but that the govt still be trusted to overcome the problem. He says Gus Dur’s recipe for Malukans to solve their own problems is mistaken and is like giving carte blanche to the strong to annihilate the weak.

Perceptions on the Halmahera slaughter came also from KISDI and Partai Keadilan (PK); and adviser for TPRKKHU: 250 women, children and elders were burnt inside a (2?) mosque(s) after having surrendered by putting up a white flag; not clearly attributed to this source, the narrative relate the case of the body of an imam being chopped up and thrown into the fire of his own mosque. The attacks spread to other areas in North Halmahera and bodies were strewn in the streets and a Muslim woman was raped (doesn’t say where). Rais says the slaughter was like the slaughter of rabbits or animals; he asks the govt and head of TNI to stop ‘genocide suku dan agama di Maluku’ (religious and ethnic genocide in Maluku).

PK spokesman notes the conflict started with traditional weapons but now involves firearms, bombs, grenades; once civilians faced each other, now it is TNI and police so those who should be dampening the conflict are involved in it.

Komnas Ham (Darusman): conflict not religious or social but is connected with political and military interests and will not end while tightly bound to political situation in Jakarta in transition (check translation); what was needed to end the conflict was not separation of religions or international intervention but effective and neutral police action, weapons seizures, curfews, raids and expulsion of provocateurs and preventing entry to certain people. He also supports a govt peace mission aimed at restoring order under civil leadership, and the removal of some civil and military authorities like pangdam and gubemur.

Language & style: the term ‘pembasmian umat Islam’ is used to refer to ‘efforts in the province’, when reporting Rais’s speech, the term ‘pembasmian’ (eradication), normally used for vermin; his direct speech implies an intention on the part of umat Kristen to wipe out Muslims from the entire Maluku archipelago. In direct quote, Rais also refers to ‘pembasmian suku dan agama’. Attacks on umat Islam are described
as pasca-Natal (post-Christmas) and carried out by ‘berbagai etnik oleh umat Kristiani’. A group of Islamic foundations’ statement refers to Christian actions in Halmahera as ‘barbaric’ (biadab).

5.1.00 Tobelo and Galela Jadi Ladang Pembantaian Kaum Muslim

Tobelo and Galela become killing field for Muslims

The sub-districts of Tobelo and Galela, North Maluku district, situated on the northern island of Halmahera, has become a killing field for the Muslim community. Since 28 December 1999 to 4 January 2000, 2084 are reported to have (sadly?) died.

Identity: Kelompok Merah (the Red group); orang Kristen; warga Kristen; in Tobelo those Kaonese supporting the attacks are described as ‘warga Kristen Kao’ (to make it clear Muslims were not killing Muslims); massa Kristen; a preacher was shot by ‘oknum brimob Kristen’.

Sources: subdistrict head (Galela); MUI Maluku; two witnesses/residents.

Narrative: subdistrict head (Galela) cites 2080 Muslims killed in three villages alone in Tobelo and 4 in Galela; two witnesses/residents from Galela relate Christian attacks there; 7000 attackers from three subdistricts (including Tobelo) on their village Dukuh Lamo; the attack was met with resistance led by the local imam; the attackers chopped up pigs’ tails through the village and coated (?) their weapons in pig’s blood; eyewitnesses are quoted as observing ‘naked woman dancing through the village’ their interpretation being that pigs’ blood and obscene movements were designed to make it easy to face opposition led by the imam. The imam was killed when the village was surrounded and like other corpses his was ‘crucified’ (disalib) and placed on the village border, where it hung for several hours before being brought down by villagers and buried.

Along with 75 others, the pair walked over the mountain to another Muslim village and from there heard that a boat was taking refugees from Tobelo harbour. These refugees having taken a boat from Tobelo to Ambon give an account of Muslim flight from Tobelo: those fleeing were Buton, Bugis, Makassar, Java and Sumatran settlers; Islamic schools and houses were burnt and panic set in; they fled to the mosques but were surrounded; woman, children, elders were pulled out and slaughtered; of the women who had got out of Tobelo safely many had been raped. Fleeing the mosques, many were gunned down with automatic weapons (senjata mesin): 750 were burned inside mosques, the most in Jami Tobelo mosque. Of those able to be counted, a MUI source, said there was 1400 victims on the Muslim side; he said the Tobelo attacks ‘were helped’ by 9000 Christian Kao, some of whom carried M-16s: Christian security personnel from Koramil and Polsek were involved in shooting Muslims.

Another MUI source details attacks against Muslims in Central Maluku near Masohi: a number of (named) villages and settlements were wiped out, including a transmigration settlement; 49 killed in one village and in another 40,000 (‘40 KK’?) are lost; several other villages destroyed and another cleansed; within Masohi town several madrassah and schools & govt facilities were destroyed; a preacher was shot by ‘oknum Brimob Kristen’.

It was also reported through Antara that ammunition used by the Kao against Muslims of Sidangoli in Jailolo were supplied by helicopter owned by an Australian mining company (PT Nusa Halmahera); in addition a (named) spokesman for ‘pasukan jihad’ (jihad troops) in Ternate said the company transported (?) fighters for this same purpose. The source claims to have witnessed a helicopter land in the middle of a mob who were attacking the people of Sidangoli, and to have deduced that the weapons material was foreign, not homemade.
The subdistrict head (Galela) described how the local Muslims were taken by surprise; they were informed by the guard post that conditions were safe but the opposite was true; this is confirmed by Tomagola; however, the attackers were successfully expelled. 8000 had fled Galela with 3000 remaining, preventing it falling into Christian hands.

Language & style: subdistrict head (camat) refers to killing as ‘more sadistic than PKI [1960s-era Communist Party]’ and ‘more cruel than Bosnia’ and those that were crucified (disalib) in the streets, burnt in mosques. The Galela camat defines his area in dramatic terms as the site of a ‘final battle’ or ‘last stand’: ‘this is the last pocket of the Muslim community in North Halmahera’.

6.1.00 Pertahanan Muslim Makin Terdesak

A life-and-death battle between jihad troops from Ternate and a mob of attackers in Susupu, sub-district Sabu, district North Maluku is estimated to have killed hundreds of people from both sides, such was the admission of one Islamic force member, Tuesday night. News spread around that bases for defending Muslims were increasingly encouraged.

Identity: warga Muslim; laskar Islam; pertikaian berbun SARA; massa Kristen;
Sources: pasukan jih (named); church group GMIH (first citation of named Christian source but no quote); subdistrict head (Galela) & PK Maluku spokesman (same person); MUI Maluku; Kodim source (unnamed); Panglima TNI; Kapendam (Kodam); HMI Ambon source; Lembaga Eksistensi of Maluku Muslims (LEMM); Maluku youth leader (Muslim).
Narrative: [ex-Ternate] the lead refers to jihad militia from Ternate engaging (Christian) fighters in a Christian district Susupu, North Halmahera and a general unsourced observation that there was a growing call for Muslims to set up (militarised) bases to defend themselves. A number of villages in North Halmahera had become bases from where pasukan jihad from Ternate and Tidore defended minority Muslims surrounded by Christians from majority Christian areas such as Sahu and Jailolo [Susupu is in subdistrict Sahu].
The named pasukan jihad who was wounded retells his combat ordeal and identifies his shooter as wearing TNI stripes. A church group GMIH disputes the toll of victims in a letter as overstated, and also questions the killing of women and children and raids on houses of worship (but the named author/priest is not directly quoted). Camat Galela who is also local PK head confirms the large victim count, the massacre of women and children and burning of houses of worship; MUI source cites at least 3000 wiped out by Christians in Tobelo and Galela.

Death toll in North Maluku since 26 Dec: 3000; elsewhere in Dec – 60 on Buru Island, Ambon 65, Ternate 8, Masohi 50.

Extensive backgrounding, recapitulating and editorialising: authors speak of a new conflict emerging since July 1999 where even TNI and its facilities became a target in Ambon: it cites four (named) Kodam members killed; Muslim officers themselves are forced to become refugees.

HMI Ambon rep calls for Pangdam to be removed. Reporters weigh in pointing out two explosions of conflict in July and December under his leadership, adding that Tamaela has a tendency to make light of the problem. It editorialises on his failures, e.g. the Poka riots in July it blames on Christian mobs; it refers to the razing of two streets and the spread to outskirts and surrounding islands; it mentions too the kidnapping case (Fauzon) that it says was a trigger for the third episode at the end of December (Ambon) of which Tamaela is accused of being dismissive. LEMM spokesman weigh in by calling Tamaela putra daerah (son of an area) that has very much taken sides, whose loyalties are not to the head of TNI but to the priest. These
various critics, including MUI, are unhappy with his response to alleged involvement of RMS, by changing the topic to alleged involvement of Islamic separatist movement, which was disputed. LEMM spokesman says (unnamed) head RMS already admitted involvement in Ambon war in *Tempo*.

Language & style: covers enormous ground both north and south without focused treatment of any one issue; structure allows for reporting recent events plus analysis of wider conflict over time and sustained ‘free kicks’ against the TNI regional commander without right of reply.

6.1.00 Konflik Sosial sudah Sangat Serius

Social conflict already very serious

For the umpteenth time the DPR again insisted that the government immediately take measures to end the social conflict in Ambon and North Maluku. To do this, says the head of the DPR Akbar Tanjung, the legislature today sent an official letter to president Abdurrahman Wahid.

Identity: kerusuhan berbau SARA; konflik horizontal; konflik antarmasyarakat; kelompok-kelompok tertentu yg berorientasi separatisme; masyarakat Protestan;

Sources: Head DPR; FPPM (Professional Forum for Muslim Brotherhood); FSRM (Forum for Voice of Maluku People); head PERSIS; head Coordination Board for Muslim Community in Maluku (BKSUIM)[see BKSUIMU: 7.1.00]; deputy head DPR.

Narrative: DPR meeting issues a letter to the president; govt and civil groups criticise the president’s failure to cope with the riots in Ambon and North Maluku, and take aim at Megawati for lack of competence and the govt for not being serious or energetic in ending the conflict. One leader warns that the momentum of Idul Fitri has the potential to thicken the solidarity of the umat, and speculates as to the impact on group emotions if every preacher lectures on ‘violence against Muslim brothers in Ambon’.

A Yogyakarta-based Islamic leader (BKUIM) claims separatist groups are behind the slaughter of Muslims and have infiltrated Protestant communities to provoke attacks against Muslims; he explains this by pointing to attacks on SF posts since Nov 1999. He says Protestants were fired up by separatist provokator and they portrayed ‘neutral’ forces brought in from this time as ‘taking sides’. The article then provides details of the Monas rally the next day (*Aksi Sejuta Ummat*), including speakers. It editorialises that the many requests and appeals to the president from DPR by letter to end the conflict have not yet been taken seriously. But a DPR member admits that they have no recommendations because a committee is yet to finish its work. Head of DPR says state of emergency is not necessary, rather firm action by the SF to uphold the law will receive political support.

FPPM source calls for Muslims to unite and not act alone; the umat must pressure the govt but not in a ‘frontal’ way but through moral pressure; reaching Malukan Muslims cannot be done alone – prayer and funds are needed. Head PERSIS talks up the ‘demo massa’ in being able to spread solidarity over the conflict; in so doing the position of Gus Dur’s govt will be threatened. He also urges geographical separation of warring groups and he believes Gus Dur’s appeal for Malukans to end their own conflict will be interpreted as giving them the go-ahead to kill each other.

Language & style: appeals for Muslim solidarity speak directly to reason and religious feeling. Some quotes serve as motivational urging to unite to deal both with a regional conflict and also use the faith- based groundswell to undermine the current leadership. As such the discourse within the exhortations of Islamic spokesmen goes beyond simply ending the Maluku war. Note separatist discourse is woven into explanation of events and one source portrays some Protestants as duped by (unnamed) separatist agitators, fusing both discourses – separatism and provocation.
7.1.00 Tentara Asing Terlibat Pembantaian

Foreign troops involved in massacre

Foreign soldiers and a number of helicopters are believed to be involved in a massacre of Muslims in Halmahera.

Identity: kerusuhan berbau SARA
Sources: deputy head MUI Maluku (Tahir); pasukan jihad (Alkatiri); staf Kodam (unnamed); (Coordination Board in Solidarity with Islamic Community in North Maluku (BKSUIMU)(Yaru & Sahafin); GMIH (unnamed); Islamic Defenders Front for Maluku Utara (FPULMU); Polres Ambon (unnamed); Polda Maluku (Jekriel); Pemda Maluku (provincial govt); Tomagola (LERAI).

Narrative: a number of serious allegations are made against a foreign mining company as well as a charge that foreign troops (tentara asing) were involved in the slaughter of Muslims at Tobelo at the end of December. The source of the allegation is a MUI spokesman and he relies on a local member of a jihad group as an eyewitness to the troops. The jihad member is contacted independently and claims to have seen foreign troops in a village (Mamuya). The only evidence offered to identify them as foreign is his quote: “Their stripes were quite different and looked like stripes that I saw in the G-30-S/PKI film”; he also identifies a ‘magasin senjata pasukan asing’ (weapons magazine of foreign troops) unlike that of TNI. He claims that ‘tentara asing’ attacked Muslims together with ‘aparat TNI/Polri Kristen’. He further alleges (relying on information from ‘several friends’) that ammunition was transported in coffins by helicopter to a church in Kao.

In addition, the MUI source speculated that the foreign troops were from Interfet (East Timor), saying that last Sept they tried to launch an attack by helicopter in Southeast Maluku.

The narrative tries to lend weight to the ‘pasukan asing’ allegation by misusing a respected expert - Tomagola. His quotes do not confirm any attack on Muslims by foreign troops; rather he confirms from intelligence sources the infiltration of foreigners by boat and air ‘dari arah Filipina’ (from the direction of the Philippines). Such foreigners on Indonesian soil are more likely to be from militant Islamic bases in the southern Philippines.

The allegation against the mining company, PT Nusa Halmahera Mineral was brought by the MUI source and ‘confirmed’ by a local Islamic group (no background), namely that a helicopter owned by the company was used to both supply ammunition to an attack (Tobelo) and also take part in it. Confirmation was sought but not obtained from Kodam; confirmation from the (local) company was ‘belum diperoleh’ (not yet obtained) but added that the parent company ‘admits’ to operating helicopters on Halmahera. No direct quotation from either company is obtained, only excerpts from an ABC broadcast with the MD of parent; he denied using helicopters for political enterprises but confirmed they were used to carry TNI personnel on a series of tasks ‘to safeguard peace in the Maluku area’. He remarked that the forcible grounding and ‘kidnapping’ of one of these helicopters at Ternate airport was a misunderstanding.

The story then deals with verifying the atrocities committed in Tobelo (slaughter, rape, ransacking of mosques), which are disputed by GMIH (no name nor quote) but confirmed by a number of Islamic spokespeople who are named and quoted. One such source (FPULMU) describes in detail the treatment of Muslim women: “After being raped, their body parts were chopped up and strewn around.”

The MUI source relates how in Galela the fight was slowly rebalancing towards the Muslim side, after local pasukan jihad arrived. Back in Ambon, official sources give their account of the latest fighting and the targeting of Muslim SF; a recent convert to Islam and Polda officer was killed with his body delivered to one area and his head to another, according to an unnamed police source. There were also attacks on
provincial govt property and offices. A TNI blockade of the waterways was also underway designed to stop the spread of violence, according to their own sources. Language & style: a number of linguistic devices are used to strengthen the case for allegations contained in the article. The reporters try to support the assertions of the primary 'eyewitness' with tendentious reasoning and non-sequiturs. Confirmation of the involvement of foreign troops and the use of helicopters to supply weapons is 'belum diperoleh' from the local company eventhough the parent company has denied it. In reference to the forced takeover of a helicopter at Ternate airport, ‘the people of Halmahera Island’ are described as ‘forced to kidnap the helicopter’. It goes on to lend justification to the illegal action by saying the kidnappers were ‘certain’ the helicopter was used to supply ammunition to attack Jailolo. Similarly, the eyewitness is anything but independent, a jihad force member fighting against the Christian forces and as such the extensive use of his account fits the classical mould of war propaganda. This witness never provides any evidence of the allegedly foreign origin of these ‘foreign troops’; instead he says they look like troops in a ubiquitous New Order propaganda film that likely associated communists with foreign infiltrators. The article refers to ‘tentara asing’ as an established fact, rather than an allegation. The most egregious misuse of sourcing is that of Tomagola’s comments: ‘Information about the presence of foreign troops and the involvement of helicopters was also received by…..(Tomagola)’. However, this information has nothing to do with the specific allegations in the article, but are rather general comments about foreign infiltrators during the Maluku conflict. Ironically, his reference to boats and aircraft coming in from the Philippines may be identifying foreign support for the Islamic side from jihad training camps in the southern Philippines. The unverified account of (unconfirmed) pasukan asing joining forces with ‘aparat TNI/Polri Kristen’ to attack Muslims associates Christian aggression with foreign infiltration and reinforces the spectre of a ‘foreign menace’ operating to undermine the umat. Similarly, the publication of the MUI source speculating about the origin of pasukan asing in Interfet plays to Muslim nationalist anxieties about loss of sovereignty from the intervention of foreign forces in East Timor.

7.1.00 Amien Rais: Komnas HAM Diskriminatif

Amien Rais: Human Rights Commission discriminatory

Head of MPR Amien Rais called into question the hesitant response of the National Commission on Human Rights for the Halmahera tragedy which has consumed thousands of victims. He considers the commission’s failure to be proactive shows a discriminatory attitude exists in the organization.

Identity: Komnas HAM controlled by ‘kelompok tertentu’; some members are ‘sangat anti-Islam’ (very anti-Islam); Komnas HAM, according to PBB source is being dominated and used by opportunists from a minority community (kaum minoritas). Sources: Head MPR; Health Team for Maluku Utara (TKMU); Subdistrict head/PK official; Team for the Handling and Rehabilitation of Victims of the North Halmahera Riots (TPRKKHU); KISDI; member DPR/PBB (Mardjono); deputy head DPR/FPP; head DPR (Tanjung);

Narrative: Rais accuses Komnas HAM of dishonesty, lack of balance and the president of a mistaken plan to give the problem back to the people of Ambon. TKMU estimate of 991 died in 7 districts in North Halmahera since 26 Dec contradicts Rais’s less precise statement that ‘ribuan warga Halmahera dibantai’ (thousands have been slaughtered). The article admits there is a controversy over numbers citing a priest’s (GMIH) letter disputing rape, and slaughter of women and children and ransacking of places of worship. Subdistrict head and PK official (unnamed) ‘confirms’ the figure is more than 2000 slaughtered and that what the letter disputes is in fact true; MUI Maluku source (named) says deaths are as high as 3000.
Rais accuses Komnas HAM of being influenced by and fearing foreigners, and seeking out their praise. PBB’s Mardjono says the body is being used by opportunists from a minority community; KISDI’s Umar adds that some of its members are anti-Islam and is suspicious that it is controlled by ‘kelompok tertentu’. There is an exchange from these Islamic leaders about the need for an investigation as compared to the immediate problem of stopping the violence.

The article reiterates the letter sent to the president by the DPR to explain how he will end the conflict. FPP source raises the question of a dilemma for TNI/Police that if they take firm action according to law, they are afraid of HR violations but by not acting they are accused of taking sides; so they need to be given a legal basis to take wide action; on this he supports a new law (UU PKB) that has been strongly challenged in DPR; otherwise failure to take a firm attitude in the field may require a civil or military emergency.

Language & style: the story leads with the quotation of Rais’s rhetorical appeal directed at the umat, designed to draw attention to bureaucratic hypocrisy; but his language is extreme and distorting, for example: ‘at the time of the Timtim crisis, there are one or two people killed, they (Komnas HAM) had a very strong reaction…..’

FPP source said in relation to need for Komnas HAM investigation: ‘the genocide that is spreading like that must be stopped’; Rais refers to the need to arrest the provokator, cecunguk (spies), oknum (rogue elements), pentolan yg tidak benar (leaders that aren’t really leaders);

7.1.00 Muslim AS Kutuk Pembantaian di Maluku

American Muslims denounce Maluku slaughter

[Note: end of text missing]

The slaughter of Muslims in Maluku not only infuriated local Muslims. A number of Muslim groups in America denounced the slaughter upon the Muslim community that killed thousands of people. They also regretted the lack of attention by government and international foundations towards the tragedy experienced by the Muslim community.

Identity: Muslim sources are international – Indonesian, Bangladeshi, Bosnian; Muslim deaths are downplayed by media massa international, LSM-LSM Barat (Western foundations); human rights violators are spoken about in the context their faith, e.g. oknum Muslim.

Sources: American Muslim leader NY; Indonesian Muslim leader NY; American Muslim journalist.

Narrative: a number of Muslim leaders based in US condemn attacks on Muslim in Maluku as well as reactions of Western organizations. Some allege hypocrisy when compared to East Timor. The article develops into a media monitoring exercise: major news websites don’t seem to touch on various massacres; no exclusives by CNN, Reuters, ABC, BBC. They are accused of underestimating the victims, reporting the 2000 estimate as only 200 or 250; it also accuses these media of not stressing which side is attacking and reporting as if the victims are hidden.

Language & style: the narrative continues the theme of Western hypocrisy and the devaluing of Muslim victims that it implies. The reporters openly endorse the opinions presented by their sources e.g. ‘Begitulah memang…..’. In a summary of international coverage of Halmahera massacres, reporters complain in their critique that international news reports were guilty of not specifying who was attacking whom. Interestingly, this was a feature of their own reporting prior to the large-scale massacres in the north at the end of 1999 and reflected the legacy of New Order taboos over SARA matters.
7.1.00 ‘Sudah Habis Air Mata Kami, Mana Tangis Anda Mega?
[Note: end of text missing]
We have no more tears left, where is your weeping Mega?
Thousands of protesters, standing for Muslim students and youth demonstrated at the silence of vice-president Megawati Soekarnoputri, yesterday. They demanded Megawati step down because she lacks the ability to end the Maluku conflict. A show of feeling was also made by activists of the Muslim foundation of Jabotabek, which asked the government to take a firm approach to violent action and the rape of Muslim woman in Maluku.

Identity: 10,000 massa Muslim
Sources: speeches from militant Islamic groups – Laskar Front Perjuangan Umat (FPU)(pemuda Maluku); PK party official; DPP-KNPI (?); activist Laskar Pembela Islam
Narrative: this is a political gathering of Islamic militants, youth groups and officials in a mosque next to VP Mega’s official Jakarta residence; a series of emotional speeches stir the crowd of 10,000; the narrative theme plays on tears shed for Maluku Muslims: ‘those tears have already been swapped for flowing blood of our martyred brothers in Maluku’; the massa needs to be ‘restrained’ going on a ‘long march’ (English used) and they chant slogans through Mega’s residence calling on her to step down.
Language & style: the 10,000-strong gathering preceded a ‘visit’ to the VP’s official residence; language of speech are deeply emotional which stirs the massa to the point of them needing to be restrained.

8.1.00 Hari Ini Muslim Ga….[title unclear]
The situation in several places in North Maluku up to early evening remains tense. The condition of Muslims in Galela, Halmahera is all the more pressing and sensitive in the face of attacks from Christians around there.
[Note: end of text missing]
Identity: serangan dari warga Kristen; umat Kristen; umat Kristen dan umat Muslim di Maluku; MUI source raises posibility of ‘pemusnahan ras’ (racial annihilation); pertentangan antaragama (interreligious hostility); pertikaihan antarwarga; kerusuhan bernuansa SARA;
Sources: sumber Republika (Muslim)(unnamed); Gus Dur; MUI source Padang (named); VP Mega; head, Tim Kesehatan Maluku Utara (TKMU);
Narrative: unnamed source (Galela) gives a warning about an impending attack and pleads for assistance of SF and also medicines; same source: about 100 corpses were buried from Tobelo mosque fire 10 days earlier, including children, babies and adults; TNI had already buried others when found strewn about the streets and beach. He reports one neighbourhood has already been destroyed by umat Kristen; 300 killed and 1000s of pasukan merah ‘are approaching our village’, ‘we’ only number in the 100s.
The article reports the president in Padang announcing that the Maluku Governor will be changed in accordance with local wishes as a result of the ‘slaughter of Muslims’; significantly, the president challenges the dominant ‘religious’ discourse on communal violence in relation to North Maluku: the killing of Muslims by Christians was commanded by Muslims, that local Muslims exploited Christians to wipe out their own (see his quote); so religion is used as a tool to make the Islamic community bow down. He also mentions ‘Islamic defenders’ trying to go to Maluku; he pledges that if they are found with weapons they will be confiscated and the people detained by police and TNI as ordered.
Megawati denies being silent on ending the conflict, saying going there with the president was ‘responsible’. TKMU source says weapons are smuggled by fisherman’s boats from north Morotai to Kao harbour, a non-Muslim logistical base, and TNI must tighten these waterways. The article reports unsourced that TNI-AL (navy) have sent 5 boats to North Maluku to ‘evaluate’ 50,000 refugees; these warships have also been patrolling the waters between Morotai and North Halmahera. A Manado official begs the navy for security guarantee to allow refugees to be offloaded at Ternate harbour.

Language & style: neighbourhood ‘diserbu habis oleh umat Kristen becomes ‘pasukan merah’ (massa Kristen); unsourced material likely to have been supplied from the SF appears to reproduce the PR language of official releases, namely, the airforce and the navy are referred to as ‘breaking up a number of riots’ in North Halmahera.

8.1.00 Nurcholish Madjid: Umat Islam Harus Membelas Diri

Nurcholish Madjid: Islamic community must defend itself

Muslim intellectual Nurcholish Madjid said whoever in the Muslim community is treated unfairly, they must oppose it in order to defend themselves. Evil, says Cak Nur – Nurcholish’s nickname – must be answered in a proportionate way without excess.

Identity: umat Islam; no mention of other faiths, just ‘unity in diversity’.
Sources: Nurcholish Madjid; Gus Dur; Menag (minister for religion); head, Pemuda Muhammadiyah.

Narrative: At this major gathering at Senayan, religious, political and youth leaders have an opportunity to deliver a message during Idul Fitri. Cak Nur believes mutual forgiveness and discussion will bring peace; while the umat is permitted to respond to unfairness, they must not do so excessively, otherwise this will amount to cruelty: ‘we must indeed destroy the enemy, but peace and forgiving each other is the more important thing’; this does not mean that all the umat should do is forgive; to do so would allow one to be trapped in moral weakness and as a result the law will cease to function.

Wahid talks about unity and brotherhood in diversity; to lead a religious life is to respect the presence (keberadaan) of those who are different.

Language & style: Cak Nur delivers his message with careful precision and attention to meaning and narrative; for example, he says fitrah (titheing during Ramadan) means struggling (berjihad) to create peace. Repetition among speakers of national principles of integration: persatuan, kesatuan, persaudaraan (dalam keberagaman).

8.1.00 Dari Masjidil Haram hingga Chicago Tangisi Muslim Maluku

From the forbidden mosque to Chicago tears shed for Malukan Muslims

It is not only American Muslims who are shedding tears for Malukan Muslims. In the mosque of Amir Bin Ash, Cairo Egypt, Thursday (6/1), when the thoughts of Ramadhan Syeikh Mohammad Refaat fell on the Maluku case, a part of the community cried. Cried.

Identity: ‘pembantaian’ umat Muslim Maluku oleh kelompok tertentu;
Sources: Muslim leaders from overseas mosques
Narrative: a number of Muslim leaders from overseas mosques address the killing of Muslims in Maluku e.g. from Mecca, the imam compares ‘systematic slaughter’ in
Maluku with Bosnia and Kosovo; a preacher in Egypt in a sermon said the victims deserved to be honoured because these ‘martyrs’ were slaughtered at the time of breaking their fast (puasa) during Ramadhan, and was designed to coincide with the end of the fasting month (Idul Fitri).

However, an Indonesian Muslim leader in Australia called for financial aid for ‘pengungsi Maluku’ as a form of care for what has befallen ‘rakyat Maluku’ (the Malukan people); he goes on to describe how the collection of funds was run from the start of Ramadhan and together with titheing (zakat fitrah) was all channelled to ‘korban tragedi Maluku’

Language & style: inscription of Muslim victims with martyr status (syuhada); internationalising of Muslim victimhood (e.g. Bosnia) where only Muslim deaths are sanctified; in the reported speech of the Australian-based preacher, financial assistance and charity is described as channelled to the victims of the Maluku tragedy without drawing any distinction between the faiths of those victims (ie affording equality of esteem to victims)

8.1.00 ‘Abu Lahab dan Abu Jahal Ambon akan Kita Gulung Bersama’
‘Ambon’s Abu Lahab dan Abu Jahal will bring us together’

MPR head Prof Amien Rais said the large-scale killings of Muslims in Halmahera, North Maluku constitute a conspiracy to disable the Islamic community. For this, he reminds the Islamic community in Indonesia that it must still stand up to power for the sake of strengthening the fraternity of Muslim believers.

Caption to main crowd photo (Monas) –
Maluku Action: Hundreds of thousands of Muslims from the Jabotabek area gather and fill the Monas area, Jakarta, Friday (7/1), in ‘A million Muslims action’ that was led by a number of leaders and preachers. They yelled laudations and invitations of ‘Jihad’ to end the slaughter of Muslims in Maluku. They also demanded the government end the conflict that has already killed thousands of Muslims.

Identity: umat Islam; kelompok tertentu; umat Islam Indonesia (group declaration).
Sources: Amien Rais, MPR; Ahmad Sumargono (KISDI/PBB/DPR); Head of PPP Hamzah Haz; Hussein Umar (DDII); rally organiser (Rasyid).

Narrative: this contains excerpts of speeches from the Monas rally the previous day (Aksi Sejuta Umat Muslim); Rais urges state leaders (the government and TNI) to arrest the spies and provocateurs in Ambon and warns that if that is not done ‘Ambon’s Abu Lahab dan Abu Jahal will bring us together’ (meaning unclear); later he makes another veiled threat to the president that if the country’s problems (persoalan bangsa) are not resolved and if he (the president) lacks the capacity, then the people (rakyat) will guarantee its (the country’s) continuation. After being urged not to attend, he said his presence at the rally ‘berada di tengah umat’ (in the midst of the umat) was needed precisely because he is head of MPR. The problem, he says, can be ended quickly because TNI has the intelligence and weapons; he recounts a discussion with the president about the timing of its resolution and remarks that if (the president) means one or two years the umat in Maluku will be finished. He adds that Komnas HAM has been unresponsive and discriminatory ‘as if it doesn’t care about the massacres’ and if this continues it should be dismantled.

Sumargono (KISDI) warns the government about the DPR’s intention to issue a motion of no confidence with 30 days notice; failure to bring peace to Maluku would mean the government must resign its mandate; a large number of DPR members would support such a motion because they are Muslims.

PPP’s Haz supported a military emergency in North Maluku ‘to end the fighting and genocide against the Islamic community’. Such a move would not be excessive, he says. He characterises the Maluku problem as different to Aceh: ‘They (certain
groups) are not happy with Islam and are trying to destroy Islam by way of these massacres'. Hussein Umar (DDII), on a different note, warns provocateurs acting in the name of MUI not to spread anarchy to non-Muslims here (Jakarta) as this would only ‘tarnish our mission’. The report ends with a commentary on a group declaration to be issued at the rally by the head of its organising committee; it is reported to be framed in terms of connecting ‘umat Islam Indonesia’ with an orientation towards ‘violations of the right to life, honour and the principle of peaceful coexistence in Ambon’. Rasyid asserts that the history of human civilisation notes that the umat is prepared to live peacefully side-by-side with other communities that are different, even when it is the majority and dominant, although the umat still protects other minority groups. Rasyid is reported to refer to the Muslim fraternity creating the seed for the formation of a unified nation through its long struggle against plunder as it wrestled under the old and new orders (Orla dan Orba), and has proved its commitment to safeguard the integrity of the nation: “However, the humanitarian tragedy in Maluku in the form of systematic slaughter, ill-treatment, raping of women, killing of children, destruction of houses of worship and settlements has already broken the limits of tolerance of the glorious umat.” He says religion and humanity have a responsibility to put an end to the scenario of a massive disaster in Maluku as soon as possible as a response to fundamental human rights violations. He puts the government and TNI on notice that if the slaughter and expulsions continue, the umat will reluctantly defend each other; he warns them not to repeatedly push Islam’s limits of tolerance that are already very high. He is again reported to be saying (not directly quoted) that with sincerity and a real awareness, ‘bangsa ini’ (this nation) can tie the bonds of nationhood that began to tear through sacrifice for the honour of each citizen and create the principle of living side-by-side in peace. Those, he adds, who disavow this duty will have war made against them as rebels. The preparedness of the umat to sacrifice possessions and lives for the sake of all human salvation compels it to be mobilised and for the momentum of Idul Fitri to be used to clear a path for a Jihad command post and to support Jihad. Language & style: In the guise of a summary of key speeches at a Jakarta protest rally, a narrative is built which lends ideological justification to non-Malukan Muslims waging religious war (Jihad) in Maluku ‘to end the slaughter of Muslims in Maluku.’ The repetitious warnings and exhortations by speakers to government ‘to end the conflict’ become fused with the belligerent appeals ‘to end the slaughter of Muslims’. By the end of the summarised speeches, there remain a narrative thread that harmonises the two interrelated appeals: religious war (waged on behalf of threatened Muslims) is consistent with ending the conflict and may even constitute a resolution to it. The motif of a stoic and noble umat recurs through the article, implicitly through Rais’s veiled threats interwoven with nationalistic rhetoric and later Rasyid’s reference to the limits of tolerance of the umat being very high. The tolerance of an umat that has historically protected non-Muslims and lived side-by-side in peace with them has been stretched to the limit; this lays the groundwork to justify (to his immediate audience and the one mediated through press coverage) a call to commence war preparations by setting up command posts (posko Jihad). The machinery of state is ineffectual or discriminatory and in its disabled state opens the way for grassroots mobilisation to achieve what the authorities are impotent to do: end the conflict and end the slaughter of Muslims. There is no analysis of the year-old conflict – its origins, actors, protagonists – nor are there alternative strategies offered in place of ultimatums to government. The focus is on the umat as collective victims that transcend localised disputes, with only vague references to unnamed enemies - ‘kolompok tertentu’, provokator & cecungk.
The only account of what drives these shadowy agents is from PPP’s Haz whose explanation is both primordialist and conspiratorial: ‘certain groups’ want to destroy Islam by way of genocide.

There is only one discordant thread in the war narrative where the DDII speaker takes issue with another Islamic group (claiming to be MUI), accusing it of wanting to spread chaos in Jakarta against non-Muslims.

There is a strong theme in the speeches towards ‘nationalisation’ of the conflict so that the fate of Maluku rests in the hands of ‘umat Islam Indonesia’. The political implications of such a posture are serious as it purports to move this outer-island conflict to centre-stage of elite politics and contestation. The fear of national disintegration is identified with threats to the umat; hence, Rais alludes to a religious duty of the ‘rakyat’ (ie the majority Muslims) to hold the republic together, by inference, by deploying numbers to the Maluku warzone. By reclaiming parts of a fracturing republic, Muslims can fulfil their historical mission to safeguard their indivisible nation and also safeguard the integrity of their own religious community by protecting their brothers in Maluku. The Maluku periphery is thus constituted as a site for ‘struggle’ (jihad) in defence of national integrity and Muslims as being the natural defenders of Indonesian unity. To convey this preferred reading, there is no need for explicit reference to separatism or RMS or even Christians.

To realise their (religious) mission (to protect Malukan Muslims), the article renders ‘the enemy’ more-or-less invisible; the caption records (visually and in words) a million Muslims occupying a significant site of nationalist struggle (Monas) at the spiritual centre of the republic; the masses recite the Qu’ran and invite jihad (holy war) to end a conflict which has already killed thousands of Muslims. It is not clear if this estimation of casualties refers to the recent North Maluku slaughter or the entire conflict both north and south. In the context of a war narrative, this is immaterial: the critical message is about the scale of Muslim deaths. Enemy deaths – in whatever region or phase of the war - are not counted and like their living counterparts are invisible.

**Early April**

7.4.00 *Laskar Jihad Unjuk Rasa di Depan Istana* 1

Laskar Jihad vent their feelings in front of the palace

Thousands of members of Laskar Jihad protested in front of Merdeka Palace, Jakarta yesterday, demanding President Abdurrahman Wahid get serious on the Maluku issue. However, representatives of the demonstrators that were received by the President for about five minutes stated that the President threw them out.

Identity: pertikaian antarumat beragama; Panglima Perang (Thalib); kelompok lain;
Sources: FKASWJ (parent org for LJ)(named); Laskar Jihad; Kapuspen TNI (head of army information); DDII rep (Umar); PPMI rep (Sudjana).

Narrative: Protest gathering outside Merdeka Palace was preceded by a *tabligh akbar* (sermon) at the Main Stadium at Senayan, organised by Forum Komunikasi Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama’ah (FKASWJ). The meeting was attended by 10s of 1000s of people dressed completely in white, some with samurai swords, machete and waist shield. The meeting with the president included Umar Thalib (*Panglima Perang, Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama’ah*), former Maluku military officer Brigjen Rustam Kastor and Muslim leader Aly Fauzy; some background on Laskar Jihad is offered: it was sparked by a *tabligh akbar* in Yogya 31 January after which a Posko Laskar Jihad (LJ command post ) was formed, the purpose of which was to provide facts about events in Maluku to the ‘masyarakat’ (community)(ie informational, not paramilitary); the same FKASWJ source asserts that all funds were given spontaneously by the umat, not yet received from overseas sources. Explaining the intended deployment of LJ members, the source says eyewitnesses will have an impact on hostilities towards
the *umat*, but until it (the seed of hostility) is revealed, they (LJ) have no right to wage war. Thalib gives notice that 3000 members are due to travel to Maluku at the end of the month, followed by 7000 others in a second wave. The basis of the jihad is defence of nation and country.

The TNI rep says the sending of jihad troops to Maluku needs to be prevented though a persuasive approach (upaya pendekatan persuasif) with Polri – because of its connection to legal supremacy - as the spearhead; TNI can play a support role if requested. He admits that pasukan jihad will disturb the environment that is conducive to reconciliation, and incite the other side to do the same. TNI’s approach is the same as the president’s, but he adds repressive action will be counter-productive.

DDII rep says the jihad action is just normal but they should not take sharp weapons; nor is there a need for a command since helping their fellow Muslims is already an obligation.

Language & style: There are signs of paramilitary escalation in the appearance of a jihad ‘force’ (laskar), the presence of its ‘panglima perang jihad’ (Thalib) and Panglima Perang Tidore and the shadowy presence of former senior TNI brass (Kastor); but the rhetoric of this ‘war party’ is benignly contradictory: the Maluku situation must be ended through the application of law, says a preacher from Ambon; but the LJ commander follows by admitting they have lost faith in the SF to end the conflict; the TNI – in their attitude to impending disturbances - are unconvincing and affirm their failure of will to prevent violence by suggesting a ‘persuasive approach’, deferring to the police, fuelling suspicion that the SF are indeed ‘lamban’ (slow, sluggish) in the face of militancy.

The FKASWJ organiser veils LJ’s aggressive intention behind a language of ‘defending the umat’. Avoiding open declarations of war, he uses a negative construction to convey the message that LJ is a disciplined force: ‘unless hostility towards the umat becomes visible, we have no right to attack’ (Muhaimin). The reporters do not process or draw attention to the contradictions in the speakers’ rhetoric but rather give full voice to its threatening symbolism; no alternative voice questioning the goals of a civilian militia is entertained and their ‘defensive’ words are taken at face value. It leaves undiscussed the proposition that the failure of state forces paves the way for militant (paramilitary – posko) intervention. Words of caution from DDII (don’t need sharp weapons) do not blunt the war narrative but rather serve to strengthen its propaganda effect.

8.4.00 Demo Laskar Jihad (Tajuk – Editorial)

Laskar Jihad’s Demo

The general situation in Maluku is generally reported to already be relatively conducive to begin taking steps to restore security and social order. Especially in Masohi, Central Maluku community calm already very much supports peace efforts between groups that are warring with each other. This is also the case on a certain border in an important part of North Maluku province.

Narrative: [see translation]

Language & style: While not a news story, this editorial employ certain news constructions such as direct quotes of sources so that its narrative style is similar to news. The paper's institutional voice is also revealing for its generally positive outlook on Maluku’s security situation, considering what was written about LJ in its news pages the previous day.

There is no analysis of role of these demonstrations in mobilisation of fighters for escalation of war in Maluku; it unquestioningly reproduces and amplifies the ideological tactics of the warmakers, and in doing so legitimises them, distracting attention from manoeuvres on the ground propelling external intervention in the war. No analysis of the relationship between the organisers and SF. As an editorial with
the chance of interpreting the events of the day before, it misses its opportunity: the only warning is to imply that if future demonstrations become unruly, this might invite repression from the SF. With the panglima perang giving notice of the deployment of 3000 ‘volunteers’ by the end of the month, the paper fails to ask the question: what will be the likely impact of such deployment on the lives of Malukans already at war? The tenor of the editorial is not one of impending danger, but reassuring: its opening par suggests conditions in central and north Maluku are conducive to peace efforts; no link is draw between these conditions and war preparations in Jakarta.

Last week of May 2000

24 – 30 May

24.5.00

Ambon Tegang Lagi; Satu Tewas Tertembak

Ambon tense again, one person shot dead

news brief – 2 pars only

One victim’s soul took flight after being shot when the throwing of a homemade bomb occurred in the area of DR Tamaesa Street which was followed by a warning shot into the air Tuesday midday around 13.10 WIT.

Identity: the faith of the victim is not directly identified but readers would know from the name; no explanation is given for the explosion or the shooting so it is not clear who is targeting whom.

Sources: Antara news agency.

Narrative: a person is identified as being shot while driving his becak in an area of Ambon where there was a bomb explosion. There is no indication of whether the driver was intentionally targeted. Students were prevented from returning home and 100s of civil servants were also forced to run home.

Language & style: the narrative is devoid of religious references, except for the name of the victim.

26.5.00

32 Tewas dan Puluhan Lainnya Luka-luka di Galela

32 dead and 10s of others injured in Galela

Around 32 people died and more than 52 others suffered light or heavy wounds when an intergroup riot occurred that again spread in Mamuya village, subdistrict Galela, North Maluku province since dawn Thursday around 5.00 WIT.

Identity: antarkelompok; para pemusuh (anti-Christian); antarwarga.

Sources: GMIH: it’s unclear whether the Christian sources speaks directly to the paper or whether the account is relayed through Antara by phone; Pangdam (Tamaela)

Narrative: a church spokesman identifies an attack by a group on Mamuya village Galela; the source reports a substantial death and injury toll on the Christian side and a smaller number (8) of dead attackers. Interestingly, the attack by sea (speedboat) and from the hills is not presented as a military-style assault but as another ‘kerusuhan’ (riot). Some of the dead attackers are identified as non-Malukan ie from south & north Sumatra.

The attack was confirmed by the Maluku military commander who said a non-Malukan battalion (East Java) were assigned in the area as locals had rejected the stationing of TNI posts in that area.

Language & style: the Muslim aggressors are identified only as ‘pemusuh’ (enemy) or ‘penyerang’ (attackers); no exploration of the the external origins of the fighters is undertaken nor is there any mention of Laskar Jihad.
PSPK research indicates TNI involved in Ambon riots

The director of the Centre for the Study of Regional Development (PSPK) Laode Ida revealed the results of its foundation’s research over a month and a half showing an indication of direct or indirect TNI involvement in the Ambon riots.

Identity: muslim.

Sources: PSPK (centre for the study of regional development); author of book on Halmahera; Pemuda Muhammadiyah Ambon; history professor UI; PGI; HAMMAS; TNI (Usodo);

Narrative: foundation spokesman says Maluku conflict is a ‘grand design’ by SF to create instability, and in so doing have a role again. Evidence of TNI involvement includes weapons and ammunition in the community, shootings, indifference to events such as 19 January, taking sides, engineering & mass provocation. In addition, standard TNI weapons were used to make war, in some cases sold to civilians. Book author (Iqbal) says in addition to indifference to January 19, the SF were careless when troops arrived heading for Tobelo and Galela. They came ashore at Ternate (8 hours away) instead of Morotai (one hour). During that time, large-scale killings had already occurred against Muslims: “It is extremely surprising that forces so well trained could make a mistake in bringing their troops ashore.”
Pemuda Muhammadiyah rep suggested TNI involvement was a matter of personnel, not institutional.

TNI rep put forward that such accusations were commonly designed to corner TNI, in Aceh as well as Maluku; it was very difficult to engineer (riots) with 17 battalions in Maluku. TNI did not want to take risks because of the possibility of creating victims (check translation)

Language & style: the report at the start, while leading with serious allegations, summarises the TNI response in its most common form of denial, namely that there may be one or two rogue elements involved in rioting but insists on proof of TNI itself orchestrating the disturbances: “logically, it does enter our minds to engineer riots” (Usodo).

Overall, these serious allegations call out for independent investigation by the newspaper itself.

Last week of June 2000

24.6.00 Presiden: Maluku Tertutup bagi Orang Luar
President: Maluku closed to outsiders

Following the igniting again of conflict in Maluku the government declared the province closed to outsiders. At the same time, the police force, helped by TNI, conducted a raid for sharp weapons.

Identity: orang-orang luar (outsiders); orang dari Jakarta (people from Jakarta).

Sources: Abdurrahman Wahid; GUIM (Movement for an Islamic Fraternity in Maluku); PDI-P faction in DPR and party.

Narrative: this story is about a decision taken by the president after consulting the TNI head, police and the VP. First, he vows to prevent outsiders coming to Maluku, whom he accuses of creating disturbances; second, he orders weapons sweeps by police, assisted by TNI, since weapons are coming in from outside. He points the finger at people from Jakarta ‘who do not want to see change’ and warns: “Your time is over. Your actions have gone too far. When our patience runs out, watch out!”

GUIM rep urged the president to get to the root of the problem and uphold the law and arrest local, national and international provocator. PDI-P reps urged the govt to declare a civil emergency esp in Ambon; a party rep laments lack of coordination
between police and harbour officials saying it is common knowledge that militia are being recruited from Java and that the prohibition is not working. When asked whether the continuation of the conflict proved Megawati (PDI-P) had failed in her job, he replied that her brief was not accompanied by sufficient authority or resources.

Language & style: conflict portrayed by govt as stirred up by unnamed figures from Jakarta, militia recruited and sent in with weapons. The govt is questioned on its tactics and their effectiveness in preventing external forces entering the province. This reinforces the provocator thesis with manipulations centred in the capital and the govt seemingly impotent to manage the levers of power to thwart them.

24.6.00  **Asrama Brimob Diduduki, Gudang Senjata Bobol**
Brimob hostel occupied, armoury broken into

The Brimob quarters of the regional Maluku police in the Tantui area, subdistrict Sirimau, municipality of Ambon were occupied by rioters. Two logistical storehouses of weaponry in the area were broken into. The action happened following fighting with SARA overtones in that area 21st-23rd June.

Identity: kelompok massa; para pemusuh; pertikaian antarwarga bernuansa SARA; oknum aparat TNI-Polri.
Sources: Kapolda (head of regional police)

Narrative: the break-in at the two police warehouses by a large mob yielded different kinds of weapons, ammunition and police uniforms; subsequently, the mob burnt down the living quarters housing 2000 police and their families. The intercommunal fighting (at this time) claimed 20 lives and 100 injured.

The police spokesman mentions the break-in occurred despite coordination with the local military command: he admits the possibility of rogue elements of TNI/Polri being involved. In Tantui, SF fled the fighting and the report editorialises that this creates a bad image in community circles. The SF cannot be trusted if their morale is fading.

Language & style: the narrative again creates an image of SF who are institutionally impotent and undermined by defections of personnel committing criminal acts and taking sides in the communal conflict. Police officials continue to assert cooperation with military colleagues though they admit to oknum involvement in these activities.

24.6.00  **Protes ke AS Berdatangan**
Protest at American arrivals

Official statements by the US State Department ‘that seemed to interfere’ in the Maluku conflict continued to bring to the surface protests from Islamic groups. They blamed the United States for going too far in interfering in the affairs of the Indonesian state. In spite of that, there were also those who considered it a form of concern from a friendly country.

Identity: satu pihak yg bertikai (unnamed Christian side); dunia international (international community); pemerintah AS (US government)
Sources: GUIM; PII (Gospel Federation of Indonesia?); GPI (Indonesian Youth Movement)

Narrative: GUIM rep questioned whether Indo interests are being interfered with since it has never provided any solutions to the Maluku problem; regarding the (US) call for dialogue, he says dialogue is yet to yield results to this complex conflict, so interference in Indonesian state affairs is unwarranted. He goes further by accusing the Indonesian foreign minister of being uncaring for failing to clarify the situation to the international community.
PII rep on the other hand believes it is not interference but an expression of concern and attention towards Indonesia: if humans and animals can be friends, why not humans with humans. GPI rep says US govt declaration has a double meaning and tends to support one of the warring parties.

Language & style: structure is a rare example of a balanced report though there are two anti-US sources (Muslim & youth nationalist) to one pro-US (Christian) source; and no comment from the US govt/embassy.

26.6.00 Warga Muslim Lindungi Para Tokoh Kristen di Galela

Muslims protect Christian leaders in Galela (Ternate) Around 30 Christian religious and community leaders were under the protection of Muslims and TNI, following fighting in Duma village, subdistrict Galela, Halmahera Island (North Maluku) in the last few days. Together they - with around 80 other Christians protected – consisted of children, the elderly and woman.

Identity: oknum tertentu di Tobelo; warga Muslim; umat Kristen; korban perang (war victims).

Sources: MUI North Maluku; TNI (Sutrisno); head MPR Amien Rais; Maluku regional politician; TNI commander; head of national police;

Narrative: Muslim leaders in North Maluku deny Christian victims from fighting in Duma village were kidnapped; rather they were protected by their Muslim brothers in Galela along with TNI, contrary to reports in the national and international media. The MUI source reports that Christian leaders and community members felt deceived by ‘certain elements’ from Tobelo; after being offered the chance to evacuate to Tobelo, many chose to stay in Galela, including children and elderly; this was confirmed by TNI source. He (MUI) accused the media of blowing the Duma fighting out of proportion while treating the massacres of Muslims in two Tobelo mosques as casualties of war.

Rais agreed to the need for a civil emergency in Ambon, even a military one; he says even if reconciliation cannot be achieved, at least violence and the spilling of blood can be stopped.

TNI commander from central Java said people would have a chance to hand in their weapons voluntarily and after a time limit, there would be ‘sweeping’ in the streets and settlements.

Head of national police admitted that the defence strategy had been carelessly applied by police commanders in Ambon, following the break-in at Brimob warehouse Tantui 21-22 June, but failed to clarify this further.

Language & style: the main story is a rebuttal to an existing media account that reflected poorly on Muslims; the word of local Muslim religious leaders are relied on, backed up by TNI but no Christian source representing the Galela refugees is consulted. The heart of the textual battle is a struggle over representations of religious space (Galela being a majority Muslim town) and thus the moral imagery surrounding religious communities at war.

27.6.00 Darurat Sipil Berlaku di Maluku

Civilian emergency instituted in Maluku

Finally, the government announced the decision of the president about the implementation of a civil emergency in two provinces that are now flaring up, Maluku and North Maluku. Emergency conditions began to take effect since Tuesday (27 June) at midnight Eastern Indonesian time until normal conditions return.

Identity: konflik antarkesatuan.
Sources: head TNI information centre; Menkumdang (YI Mahendra); Tomagola; sociologist Imam Prasodjo;
Narrative: the article outlines the hierarchy of emergency powers with president at the top; it lists the conditions under which emergency powers can be exercised distinguishing between a states of civil emergency, military emergency and war; the TNI explained how civil rights were very restricted and regional govt powers could still take repressive action. There are some technical legal issues about the implementation of these law.
Tomagola says applying the civil emergency status to Maluku needs to be followed with special troops to restore safety, who are not partisan. Up to now those sent to Maluku were not effective because they lacked a direct command. He said special troops were needed to prevent intervention by the UN. Prasodjo advocates pulling existing troops from Maluku because on their emotional involvement in the conflict. Peacekeepers also need to be formed, he said, including from civil elements, working both in a voluntary capacity and looking out for negative impacts of military action.

Language & style: 1st part is legalistic

28.6.00  **Gubernur Maluku berlakukan Jam Malam**

Maluku Governor brings in night curfew

Following implementation of the civil emergency in Maluku and North Maluku since Tuesday midnight WIT, the commander of the civil emergency who is also Maluku Governor, Saleh Latuconsina yesterday declared a curfew in Maluku. The curfew, according the governor’s announcement was in effect since yesterday starting at 22.00 WIT to 6.00 WIT.

Identity: dua kelompok yg berseteru (two hostile groups); kelompok massa tertentu dari arah Talake.
Sources: Governor Maluku; Menko Polkam; Army general (Sudarto).
Narrative: curfew conditions are detailed e.g. ban on gathering of more than 10 people without a clear purpose and handing in of firearms within a time limit; since the civil emergency 27/6 both provinces were relatively calm except Ambon where one soldier was shot in the head by a sniper. There were a number of other mysterious shootings *(tembakan misterius)* in Ambon where victims are named.
Menko Polkam from Jakarta warned that if things got worse a military emergency could be brought in; the army head (Sudarto) lends support to the civil emergency saying it will dispel hesitancy on the part of soldier to act for fear of violating human rights (no quote).

28.6.00  **Upaya Damai di Maluku**

Peace efforts in Maluku

[end of article missing]

The Maluku riots are entering a new phase with the implementation of the civil emergency by President Abdurrahman Wahid. Those conditions are effective starting Tuesday (17/6) midnight WIT. The implementation is based on regulation to replace law No 23/1959 connected with No 52/1960. Various data suggests that victims resulting from this prolonged rioting have already reached thousands of lives. Riots that began on 19 January 1999, several months later (August 1999) spread to several places, reaching North Maluku (North Halmahera, Ternate, Tidore).

Sources: former military officer (Sudrajat).
Narrative: the article notes that despite visits from the president, the VP, a peace agreement signed by community leaders, the violence continues. A TNI estimate of 11,253 military personnel, 8 battalions in Ambon and 7 elsewhere. It then
summarises measures taken to overcome the rioting up to the declaration of a civil emergency.
28 Feb – 1 March 1999: a military-sponsored peace agreement was signed by village heads, religious & youth leaders, subdistrict heads from Ambon & surrounding islands but a day later 5 were killed in the tragedy ‘Bloody Dawn’.
5 March 1999: the regional police chief was removed and replaced by a North Maluku native; a Makassar battalion was pulled out and replaced by marines from Java.
8 March 1999: a special TNI team was formed to handle the riots made up of officers from Maluku - Muslim, Protestant and Catholic. It met with various leaders and officials and concluded the mass media had distorted information; the team then formed a press centre.
During March 1999: MUI in Jakarta formed a fact finding team; a Maluku Muslim delegation also came to Jakarta for meetings;
PAN also sent a reconciliation mission to Ambon.
12 May 1999: a multifaith agreement was signed by MUI Maluku, Catholic and Protestant churches in Ambon with leaders from Sulawesi and Bali, Maluku governor as witnesses.
Language & style: in introduction to timeline of peace initiatives, there is no mention of religion.

29.6.00 Fuad Akui Masuk Daftar akan Ditangkap

Fuad admits inclusion on list of those to be arrested [incomplete]
Former finance minister Fuad Bawazier confirmed he is on the list of 40 political elite that are to be arrested. Fuad is accused of hindering the General Session MPR and funding the dispatch of Laskar Jihad to Maluku. “Yes, I’m just calm. That’s important. If asked, yes I am relaxed,” Fuad said in Jakarta yesterday.

Sources: Former finance minister Fuad Bawazier; tokoh Poros Tengah (Central Axis leaders); PPP rep; Attorney-General; deputy head MPR Ginandjar; ‘menurut sumber….’

Narrative: the proposal (to the president) to arrest a number of the political elite is sourced to Sofjan Wanandi (National Development Council), according to Poros Tengah leaders (unnamed); this is disputed by Sofjan; he says he only asked that attention be given to the security problem. Various other officials from different party factions are questioned about the list and whether they had heard who is on it or whether such an order had been made. According to an unnamed source, prior to the order being given by the president, the Attorney-Gen contacted Ginandjar to discuss his role in a number of riots and the arrest order.
Language & style: the article is consumed by speculation about the existence of a list and who is on it; there is nothing (except the last unsourced par) about the accusations, investigative process, laws alleged to have been broken in relation to Maluku violence or the sending of paramiliaries from Java. That is, no legal analysis.

END REPUBLIKA
Wiranto: Wajah Indonesia Bukan Preman

Minister for Defence and TNI commander General Wiranto says faces full of peace, resignation along with the full faith in God is the original face of this country’s community. Not the face of preman, cruel and tricky.

Identity: attempt to re-engineer Indonesia’s identity through image politics: honesty and brotherhood challenging the image of the deceitful gangster & trickster.

Sources: Defence Minister & TNI commander; congregation leader & university rector.

Narrative: surrounded by military top brass and East Java Muslim clerics, Wiranto plays image politics with a section of a core religious and electoral constituency, a month after parliamentary elections but before a new president is selected by MPR. He emphasises that change is inevitable, drawing on the passing of historical kingdoms and with references to ‘Allah’. He stresses the new order under Habibie represents reformasi, not revolution – which will perfect what is already there and improve on what is not yet good from what already exists. But the speech is a call for post-election unity. There are groups, he laments, who do not want to compromise; the media is full of endless debates, vilification which is not good because it divides people (check translation); all the people, he says, need to be united in their thinking to get the best decisions for their country. If each group strives to win, that will lead to break-up. He admits that conditions in the country are ‘kurang kondusif’ (less than conducive) but they can be handled by building ‘kebersamaan, persatuan dan kesatuan’ (togetherness, unity and integrity).

The local congregation leader (also university rector) also spoke about not destroying the country.

Language & style: Wiranto appears in his speech to the congregation to be trying to harmonise his own unspecified agenda for change with religious principles and place his own spin on the political discourse of reformasi; perhaps his rhetoric about ‘unity’ appears designed to place limits on the political openings created by reformasi – the subtext being that political contestation will not and should not be permanent. The image politics also includes the show of strength by military heavyweights in attendance who help to frame not just Wiranto’s official persona but also the military institution as one of national guardianship, rather than chaos and criminality.

Megawati: Serukan Perjuangan Antikekerasan

Head of DPP PDI Perjuangan, Megawati Sukarnoputri, called on her followers to continue the struggle according to the principle of anti-violence. She urged PDI Perjuangan people to walk in-step and hand-in-hand, not just with their fellow party members, but also with all of the people who want change.

Identity: bangsa Indonesia.

Sources: Megawati; Jakarta Governor (Sutiyoso); Gus Dur
Narrative: substance of a speech commemorating the 27 July 1996 incident (sacking of PDI headquarters) delivered in Jakarta to PDI-P supporters by Megawati herself; includes a report on a related protest at the former PDI headquarters. Megawati stresses that ‘we must show that we - the people of Indonesia - are a civilised people’ at the MPR general session (to choose a president): “Choose good leaders. This is the essence of 27 July, that is antiviolence that must be carried out.” She says that the struggle in Indonesia can only be done in a peace-loving and antiviolent manner. Language & style: the rhetoric of antiviolence shaping a contemporary message; but no direct reference to current violent conflicts such as Maluku.

27.7.99 Bentrokan Massa di Ambon, 11 Tewas

Mobs clash in Ambon, 11 dead

Around 11 citizens were killed and one disappeared in an intergroup communal clash in Ambon city, Tuesday (27/7). In addition, 45 more, including 4 security officers, were wounded and treated in 6 hospitals. The mob also damaged and burnt hundreds of buildings and three vehicles.

Identity: bentrokan antarkelompok masyarakat; massa; bentrokan fisik antarkelompok masyarakat; kelompok massa; rumah ibadah;

Sources: Pangdam (Tamaela) & Kapolda (Saman) both named but uncontactable because they are in the field (di lapangan); head of Kodam information office (Budiman) reports Pangdam’s order to increase security (pengingkatan pengamanan) but is not quoted directly; Staff territorial Bandung (Yudhoyono) says additional troops will depend on need & type (of problem ?) but is not quoted; a hospital doctor.

The only indirect pointer to the faith group of victims is the named hospitals where they are treated; accounts of victim details are recorded from both Christian and Muslim hospitals (e.g. GPM & Alfatah) but the sources from the Muslim hospital (e.g. Alfatah) are unnamed and unspecified. The Christian hospital has a named & quoted doctor.

Narrative: this is an account of clashes in the village of Poka and elsewhere in the city of Ambon; the generally indirect reporting of the activities and views of senior military figures in Ambon and Java are presented without any direct quotes; this is followed by descriptions of the impact of clashes between unnamed groups at barricades in the presence of SF and ensuing physical destruction and fleeing. The physical combat of the opposing groups are described in detail along with their weapons. This is followed by reporting from hospital sources on deaths and injuries and the origin of the victims (which parts of the city). A distinction is made between shooting, stab wound and victims burnt inside buildings, including children. In two hospitals there are reported to be more shooting victims than stab wound victims.

Language & style: the physical description of individual bodily injuries is quite explicit with the method of death or injury spelt out; however, the victims are unnamed and only their gender and age group are identified.

30.7.99 KISDI: Ambon Merupakan Perang Agama

KISDI: Ambon is religious war

Indonesian Committee in Solidarity with the Muslim World (KISDI) considers that the violent events occurring in Ambon are already really a religious war, not just a bloody inter-group dispute that points to SARA (ethnicity, religion, race & inter-group – Editor). The government and security forces must have an honest and fair attitude in ending the Ambon case, along with not hiding the real problem.
Identity: Ambon is a 'medan jihad' (field of jihad) for Muslims; perang agama.  
Sources: head KISDI (Sumargono)  
Narrative: a straight report of a conservative Muslim group speaking generally about the grave situation in Ambon. Sumargono mentions only Muslim victims and says they are being treated as martyrs of war; he says the flaring of religious war follows the return of Muslim refugees from outside Ambon, 1000s of whom remain at the Al Fatah mosque. He demands the SF take firm measures against each side: Don't be defensive, above all (don't) rush to remove the weapons of Muslims, since they cannot defend themselves."
Language & style: the most important linguistic construction is to assert definitional hegemony over the conflict by describing it as 'perang agama' and not just intergroup fighting with SARA overtones; in this way the group attempts to overturn New Order taboos and lay bear the essential nature of hostilities as 'religious'.

30.7.99 Ambon Berangsur Tenang  
page no. unknown  
*Ambon gradually returns to calm*
The atmosphere in Ambon city is slowly returning to calm, Thursday (29/7), although throughout the day, mobs were seen in certain places. There was almost no more sounds of shooting, sounds of exploding bombs or burnings inside the city.

Identity: kelompok massa.  
Sources: there are none and as such may be based on observation of local reporter.  
Narrative: this is short, general unsourced update on the security situation in Ambon; it describes the presence of SF (marines) in specific parts of the city, the withdrawal of the mob. Some (named) villages remain tense with mobs facing off without clashing physically. On the outskirts fighting continued with victims and house burnings (e.g. Poka). The Pangdam is reported to be at his headquarters receiving delegates from both camps. At this time, 8000 had already fled.
Language & style: language is purely descriptive and surveys parts of the city according to level of calm or tension.

**Late August 1999**  
20 – 31 August

20.8.99 Note: no reference to Nth Halmahera clash or pemekaran (administrative divisions) except inside 21.8.99

21.8.99 Kerusuhan di Maluku, Lima Tewas  
*page no. unknown*  
*Riots in Maluku, 5 dead*
Five people died from mass clashes in three sporadic locations in Maluku, between Thursday and Friday (20/8). In those clashes it was also recorded that between 10 and 20 people were injured and 201 houses burned. The intergroup clash happened again in Poka village, around 35 km from Ambon city, Friday afternoon. One person, Calvin Rahankelang (38) died, and two others, Ricard Ayal (22) and Mic Quanre (25) were badly wounded from being shot by two rogue elements of the security forces.

Identity: bentrokan antarkelompok.  
Sources: Ambon police chief; regional military commander; regional police chief; deputy police head.  
Narrative: this short article dispatched from Ambon actually covers three theatres of fighting – Ambon, Seram Island and Malifut in North Maluku; there is no particular theme, just a round-up of stats from these areas of conflict: no of deaths, injured,
houses burned; in Poka, Ambon 2 victims are named, on Seram 2 settlements are attacked with one death reported. In Malifut, three dead, 11 injured and 201 houses burned.

Most remarkably, after three pars, the Malifut fighting from 19th is mentioned for the first time in one par listing casualties but no other background about the combatants, why they are fighting in North Maluku or any explanation as to a connection between hostilities in the north and south. It then jumps to a report on harbour security arrangement in Ambon following riots the previous month.

Language & style: the two police (& one military) sources quoted reveal nothing in their quotes claiming they have no information. And yet, the lead mentions how many killed, an estimate of how many injured, no of houses burned and the names (& ages) of two of the victims, but no sources for these details. Drip-fed information from armed forces results in a minimalist, context-less and truncated presentation of separate conflicts happened around the archipelago. No follow-up on Malifut violence.

21.8.99  
Universitas Pattimura Tutup

Pattimura University closes

Pattimura University (Unpatti) Ambon decided to close all its lecturing and other academic activities for 9000 students for an indeterminate time. The policy is connected to the security situation in Ambon and surrounds not being stabilised. “Then there’s the issue of registration for 2000 new students,” said Unpatti rector Prof Mus Huliselan to Kompas, Friday (20/8), in Ambon.

Identity: antarkelompok massa; amuk massa.
Sources: rector Unpatti (Pattimura University); Jakarta foundations.
Narrative: the article is based almost entirely on an interview with the rector Huliselan who explains why the university must be shut due to security concerns in Ambon (the campus is located in Poka where fighting began the previous month). It will remain so until there is a security guarantee along the approaches to the campus. He notes that 10-15 percent of students are from outlying areas – e.g. Manado, Java, Irian, Ternate – and have already left Ambon.
A part of the campus is already being used to house refugees (1500); a number of schools are not offering classes, in Ambon (about 230), affecting 90,000 pupils and 5000 teachers.
Six foundations have also called on Habibie to visit Ambon and help offer a solution, the problem is too big to be handled by a governor or military commander.

23.8.99  
Diselidiki, Aktor di Balik Pertikaian di Ambon

Investigated, Actor behind fighting in Ambon

Rioting in Ambon city and around it is believed to be activated by three intellectual actors, including a police officer holding the rank of lieutenant-colonel, for certain political interests. Also reported is Pattimura regional [military] command 16 and the regional Maluku police have especially placed one battalion for guarding Unpatti campus and the settlement around it at Poka village, Ambon municipality.

Identity: tiga aktor intelektual acting untuk kepentingan politik tertentu.
Sources: Unpatti student senate leadership; Maluku Governor; Pangdam Maluku; regional police chief.
Narrative: the lead raises two issues from a meeting of the governor & police with Unpatti reps: the allegation (that appears to emerge from police and military sources)
is that three actors are behind Ambon riots working for “certain political interests”; and the announcement that security around Unpatti and Poka would be strengthened by the deployment of a special battalion. The body of the article however deals first with student demands to have refugees removed from the campus, to which the governor agrees.

The allegation about orchestrating of riots emerges from a (unsourced) report which the police commander says is being investigated by SF. If proven, the military commander says, the three leaders will be processed by law. The letkol (police) suspect is being handled by military police of the regional command (Kodam) and the other two civilian suspects handled by police. They have evidence of the three bringing 60 men to Ambon on a boat the previous month. There are witnesses, police say, who saw cash destined for the 60 men who left the boat. However, the (unnamed) suspects disputed their involvement and disclosed a letter to their legal advisors who were preparing a brief to refute the allegations.

Language & style: Style sticks to legalese in keeping with official sources. Again SF sources make every attempt to outline activities to ensure security at the same time allegations are raised questioning the integrity of the security operation. This historically ambiguous role is reported separately without any analysis to connect the different roles played by members of the same security forces.

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**Last week of Dec 1999**

26 Dec – 1 Jan

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>27.12.99</td>
<td>Tengah Diupayakan untuk Menambahkan Pasukan ke Pulau Buru</td>
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<td>Centre attempts to increase troops to Buru Island</td>
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Intergroup fighting in the regency of Buru (Buru Island) has now spread further. For this, efforts are still being made to add troops who will be assigned to Buru Island so that the riot areas do not spread even further. Around 240 houses have been burnt since their occupants were forced to flee.

Identity: pertikaian antarkelompok warga; amuk massa; pertikaian antarpemuda (between groups of youth).

Sources: military information officer.

Narrative: a military information officer notes that as a result people had fled to police and military installations or hidden in the jungle; the fighting cannot yet be controlled despite the addition of a Brimob platoon and a TNI company. SF are also involved in a rescue mission of those hiding in the jungle; a list of named military officials head off to inspect the riot location; the information officer reports an indeterminate number of dead victims and houses still burning; refugees would be grouped with others around Ambon. The death toll is likely to rise to 43 with 39 injured.

Language & style: narrative reproduces jargon of security forces e.g. a Brimob platoon was sent to the island “to strengthen the local organic and territorial apparatus”; the rarefied language of military spokesmen is suitably wooden and euphemistic: “According to a report from the local military command, houses or buildings along with the means for (meeting) social and religious needs that were burnt increased as well.”

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>28.12.99</td>
<td>Pertikaian di Ambon Terus Berlanjut, Lagi 34 Orang Tewas</td>
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<td>Fighting in Ambon still continues, 34 more dead</td>
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Intergroup rioting and fighting with ethnic, religious, racial and intergroup overtones in Ambon that broke out again Sunday (26/12), keep going until Monday (yesterday).
As many as 34 people from both sides died. Others received light and heavy injuries. It was a concern that the number of dead would increase in the future because there were still many whose condition was critical.

Identity: pertikaian antarkelompok warga bernuansa suka, agama, ras dan antargolongan (SARA); dua kelompok yg bertikai; empat rumah ibadah; sekelompok warga tertentu; bentrok antarkelompok warga.

Sources: an Ambon person; regional military officer. Menurut keterangan...(x 2).

Narrative: this story reports a preliminary death toll of 34 from communal fighting in Ambon with details of injuries incl those to SF personnel; it reports widespread destruction of buildings and houses in named settlements of both sides including houses of worship and SF housing. A military spokesman notes the return of the Panglima from Jakarta.

The fighting was attributed to 'konsentrasi massa' (mass gatherings) in certain named neighbourhoods. Presumably sourced from the military, military efforts under a named commander to prevent the clashes are described in detail, along with how 2 of their own died. A Suara Maluku journalist was injured in the fighting.

The final section addresses the spark that set off the fighting though the account is unsourced (menurut keterangan). A local transport vehicle is alleged to have struck a young boy (Fauzan), his name identifying him as Muslim. The driver is said to be from an opposing group to that of his family. Unsourced reports about the driver taking the boy to 2 different hospitals cause alarm when it is discovered he cannot be found at either of them. This background to the riots is described in the subheading as 'isu sepele' (trivial issue).

Language & style: again oblique references to kedua kelompok obscure the identities of the combatants. Communalism is encoded in reference to street, hospital and personal names, as well as the destination of a town bus (jurusan Kudamati – a Christian area).

A number of narrative techniques reflect the desire of the journalist to bring the reader closer to the atmosphere of battle. It is not clear if they are based on first-hand experience or the accounts of other sources, incl their primary military one.

29.12.99 Demo Warga Ambon di depan Istana Merdeka 16

Around 100 Ambonese in Jakarta and Surabaya Tuesday (28/12) midday protested in front of Merdeka Palace, Jakarta. Over two hours, they staged various activities, like speeches and unfurling banners, in one corner of the intersection of the National Monument. They demanded an end to the Ambon problem and criticised the lack of competence of the regional parliament and the Maluku governor.

Identity: no direct references, just 'masalah Ambon'.

Sources: Harry Souisa (?); former Kostrad commander; Protestant priest named Alex.

Narrative: the articles simply reports on a number of speeches made outside the presidential palace but the lead suggests there was also a protest in Surabaya; one speaker said the group is waiting to meet the president and VP; the priest notes his concern about the SF taking sides and blames them for the deaths in Monday’s riot (27th). It is noted the protest is witnessed by police and presidential guard and was orderly.
29.12.99 Kerusuhan Ambon, Dua Tentara Diculik

*Rioting, 2 soldiers kidnapped*

Rioting since Sunday in Ambon, Maluku, has now spread further. Victims subsequently continued to mount up. Private Laode Ismail finally died after undergoing treatment at the military hospital (RST) Ambon because his neck was hit by a bullet. Meanwhile, two security force members from regional command 16/Pattimura, that is Serka Suranto and Serka Suwarno were kidnapped and their fate is unknown.

Identity: pertikaian antarkelompok warga; street names substitute for naming communities (Diponegoro, Pohonpule).
Sources: a (freed) military captain; head of information (regional military).
Narrative: this is a follow-up on the previous day’s report about a riot that started 26th; apart from the 2 quotes most of the narrative seems to be based on journalists’ observations and research. The author editorialises that the lack of restraint from both sides is motivated by revenge. Destroyed buildings are listed, including some military housing.

Though the lead mentions 2 (named) kidnapped officers, nothing more is said about them; the rescued captain is quoted contemplating his fate if he were not freed. But it’s not until the final section where account is taken of deaths – up to 46 – with 2 named (& opposing) neighbourhoods said to have lost 9 people each.

Armoured vehicles have become spectacles for those not directly involved in the battle. Military officers are hemmed into their command, finding it difficult to reach their posts with the streets full of barricades. The article end on an ominous note with the military spokesman doubting the ability of the two sides to make peace.

Language & style: the rescued captain provides drama by describing how his teman (friend) also a captain) freed him from the tangan anak-anak (hands of kids) in Kudamati, indicating that he was attacked by Christian youth. Once again place names become code for identifying parties to the war.

30.12.99 Takkan Ada Keadaan Darurat

*There will not be any state of emergency*

Intercommunal fighting occurring in Ambon up to Thursday, or the 4th day, is still going on without anything to end it. Clashes also occurred on Ternate between troops of the sultanates of Ternate and Tidore. Despite this, President KH Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) stressed, emergency conditions will not be implemented in Maluku. The President was more inclined to conscript additional troops.

Identity: massa kedua kelompok; bentrokan antarsultan; oknum-oknum pelaku kerusuhan.
Sources: President Wahid; district military command (North Maluku); Pangdam (Tamaela).
Narrative: the president forewarns of military intervention but rules out a state of emergency in Maluku; however, he states that an end to the conflict must be made by the two sides. Military intervention, he says, is at the request of the Maluku government and it is yet to be seen how their arrival will be received.

The fighting still raged in Ambon and there were 70 more victims and 150 injured. Some scenes of destruction are described; warring groups gathered in sensitive areas with their weapons of war; the streets become impassable and even access from the bay remained sensitive. Raids at sea had received less attention but reinforcements of water police led to one youth being shot in the back. As is often the case, the SF are described as lacking the capacity to restrain the masses; the explanation: the city is extremely gripped *(sangat mencekam)*.
The clash between sultanates (bentrok antarkesultanan): Without context or history of the dispute, the article swings to the conflict in the north between warring sultanates. Relying on Antara reports from the district military command there, a number of victims are recorded dead (7) with a possible rise to 20 as fighting continues. A clash in the district of Kampungpisang in south Ternate resulted in 10s of houses burned; it is said to have begun with the burning of 2 schools in south Ternate by people from Kampungpisang, which displeased the sultan of Ternate. His troops attacked that district. Troops loyal to the Sultan of Tidore arrived and there was a confrontation. Again neither side can be restrained by SF or the regional govt resulting in 100s of refugees. The governor and provincial council attempt to reconcile the two sultans but there no confirmation from military or police on their success.

The final part of this long report records the change of command responsibility for the riots from the regional police chief to the Pangdam (Tamaela) on express orders of the Panglima (head of TNI). Tamaela also announced new restrictions on the civilian population: searching of villages and houses, seizure of unauthorised property, detaining of rogue elements behind the riots and disabling (melumpuhkan) of people disobeying instruction from the SF. Other restrictions are curfews, curbs on movement and people entering Ambon. This will be supported by 2 more battalions, bringing the total to 12.

30.12.99 Pemerintah Jangan Ragu Bertindak Tegas

Government shouldn't hesitate in taking firm measures

For the sake of upholding law and order in Ambon the government will not allow any delay in taking action and making decisions. However, firmness must be balanced by a security force attitude in the field that does not take sides and can take a firm attitude towards those causing damage from whichever group.

Identity: kelompok A, kelompok B (Hendropriyono); kawasan Muslim dan Kristen; tokoh-tokoh pemuda Muslim dan Kristen; para pelaku perusakan fasilitas keagamaan (destroyers of religious facilities).

Sources: TNI head (& former minister); deputy head DPR; head DPR; senior military officer; Tomagola (Lerai); Antara.

Narrative: Apart from the summary statement attributed to three sources, a senior military officer (Wirahadikusuma) criticises the regional military command as not an answer to ending the conflict; he even says the same about military force and favours increasing awareness among the warring groups.

Tomagola says separation of Maluku into Christian and Muslim areas must be a last resort. Such moves would make turn the conflict into a more full-frontal one. TNI head (Hendropriyono) is summarised as calling for the govt to declare a state of emergency or partition the region between the warring groups. The community must lend moral and psychological support to SF to not delay in putting an end to the fighting. He laments TNI being blamed for carrying out its duties which must cease so that it can be brave and strong. By creating hostility-free zones and expanding them, states of emergency can be instituted within them (civil or military), then curfews with violators shot without any problems with human rights.

Tomagola agrees (religious) partition is not the answer and prefers isolation of the province to prevent weapons infiltration. He refers to the Fauzan incident in Ambon which is being mediated by Christian and Muslim youth leaders. But then the SF sold off bullets which led to many victims.

Head DPR (Tandjung) says SF must take firm action without taking sides; deputy head DPR (Soetardjo) implores the govt to take action or it will be destroyed; he supports the shifting of security command to the military in the interests of stability.
Wirahadikusuma eschews a military approach: Violence and the like cannot be ended militarily. They are human and have a weakness for a neutral approach. He suggests a deeper approach to overcoming violence, which he says is embedded in society and in the SF.

Language & style: the news lead is a summary of 2 separate statements by 2 officials – one military and one parliamentarian. The statement is also attributed to Akbar Tandjung in a press conference but none are directly quoted. Could they all be speaking in unison? Wirahadikusuma’s bold criticisms are not developed in terms of a split within military thinking. His remarkable views are placed at the end of the article following the hard-nosed operational assessments of the TNI head and lawmakers:

According to him [Wirahadikusuma], the Indonesian people especially the SF are already very intimate with violence. Violence is already very normal, not just at home and at the office, but also in the field. "When we are small, some small mistake we are beaten, late for school we are beaten, when we become a cadet we become a target for the seniors and so on," he said.

This character later is brought into the operational environment. Because it is not patient, the SF commit violence either through inducements or beatings. This mistake has already happened since the beginning because violence has already become the culture of the organization.

Agus believes, in the change to this era, a new awareness must be developed towards human rights, law and democracy. For this to happen, this country must undergo national repentance or reconciliation.

31.12.99   Sekitar 265 Orang Tewas di Maluku Utara
Around 265 people killed in North Maluku

Clashes between groups of different religions in Ambon spread to various outlying areas in Maluku, mainly North Maluku without either side being able to restrain it. In subdistrict Tobelo, Halmahera (North Maluku) around 265 were reported dead in three days (Monday-Wednesday). The tragedy follows intergroup clashes in the municipality of Ambon that began on Sunday (26/12) that claimed more than 70 victims.

Identity: bentrokan antarkelompok berbeda agama; bentrokan antarkelompok; warga Tobelo (not warga Muslim Tobelo); warga kelompok lain/kelompok pengganggu (not Christian attackers); attacks in Galela referred to as kerusuhan/pertikaian without naming the sides; only by naming of settlements that were attacked and the ones which were the subject of reprisal attacks could the reader identify who was attacking whom.

Pertikaian antara penghuni Desa Pelau dan Desa Hlaliu (Haruku Is); tempat tinggal penduduk Kristen dan Islam

Sources: central military post Jakarta; (named) military commander Tobelo; unnamed source from Ternate (account of Tobelo attack); head DPR Jakarta.

Narrative: the narrative notes that the 'spread' is part of a series of serious clashes in the last week with high death tolls: Buru Island (125), Ambon (70), Ternate (7) and Tobelo (265). It is suggested that the timing of the Tobelo killings is related to the bentrokan besar (big clash) in Ambon city occurring a day or so after the Ambon riot begun (26th). A Jakarta military source reports many injured in addition to the large death toll, as well as destruction of many buildings including churches and mosques. A Ternate source (which side?) describes the background to the Tobelo attacks but only the events just prior to the attacks (bomb explosion).

Interspersed are a number of pars about Ambon’s blocked streets and the high price of fish. It jumps to mention of an NGO demonstration in front of the palace in Jakarta but President Wahid was in Makassar.
Tandjung again rejects partition if it is to be a final solution; intentional separation would violate the philosophy of *Pancasila*: “Our state is not a religious state. Citizens who embrace whatever religion should be able to live wherever.”

Language & style: concept of clashes ‘spreading’ to the north assumes the origins of the conflict in both north and south share a common overarching source, overlooking local causes.

The overcommitment of facts to this story is evident in the way it cannot maintain a clear narrative or follow any of the many threads towards some kind of conclusion. So there is large-scale killing in Halmahera (but not a massacre) with no distinction in casualties for either side and indeed no clear description of the parties to the clashes. From traffic conditions and fish prices in Ambon and protests in Jakarta to discussion on the merits of partitioning Maluku, there is no real focus on verifying details from specific events; in its place is a narrative incapable of staying with one topic and speculation about possible connections between events e.g. the riots in Ambon and the mass killings in Halmahera which remain unsubstantiated and untouched by analysis.

31.12.99  Pemerintah Dinilai Lamban Selesaikan Konflik

*Government judged sluggish in ending conflict*

Traditional community representatives that were in dialogue with President Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) in a cultural meeting in Makassar, Thursday (30/12), considered the government to be slow in resolving various conflicts and rioting that is happening in a number of areas.

Identity: kelompok yg bertikai.
Sources: the president.

Narrative: student protest outside Gus Dur’s meeting extended to ending conflict in Aceh and Irian Jaya, as well as Ambon. Gus Dur is quoted explaining how the key to resolving conflicts (generally) -expressed as ‘masalah ketidakadilan pusat dan daerah’ (the problem of injustice at the centre and in the regions) - is ‘kebersamaan’ which has justice at its core.

The last part of the article is a report from Gus Dur on a meeting held in Makassar with senior military and police and provincial officials on the proposal to abolish the territorial function of TNI. Most of it is about process and not linked to the Maluku problem.

Language & style: Similar to the previous story on the same day, the president’s visit throws up many issues for reporters – Maluku, Aceh, Irian and an idea from a military reformer to dismantle TNI’s territory command system. Such a large national issue as the latter cannot be treated as an add-on to a report about the president’s visit to a provincial capital. It needs, like the others, separate treatment and development in a number of focused stories over time.

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**First week of Jan 2000 2 – 8 Jan**

2.1.00  14 Tewas pada Pergantian tahun di Maluku

*14 dead at year's end in Maluku*

The change of year in Maluku was marked by the thunderous sound of a homemade bomb carried out by one group of people fighting in Ambon, Friday (31/12) in the middle of the night around Saturday. Similarly, firing was heard from SF weapons that scared off the two warring groups so that they would not face each other.

Identity: sekelompok warga yg bertikai; pertikaian antarkelompok warga; dua kelompok yg bertikai.
Sources: head of district assembly (central Maluku); regional military chief; Maluku governor.

Narrative: the story contrasts world celebration welcoming the new year with more rioting and killing, this time 14 dead in Masohi and 40 injured. Meanwhile, in Ambon a number of neighbourhoods were cordoned off and although there was a concentration of people on New Year’s Eve, there were no casualties; burnings and SF gunfire followed the next day with the military spokesman directly quoted but offering nothing of substance. The governor new year’s message was sombre and he is quoted expressing condolences to the families of the dead victims.

Language & style: an example of the (very common) strict adherence to official sources, who as so often is the case don’t have much to say, so their perfunctory quotes serve as a kind of respectful deference to officialdom. True identity of fighting groups revealed only by reference to named neighbourhoods of origin e.g. Batu Merah (Muslim).

4.1.00 Pos ke Ambon Berhenti Sementara

Mail to Ambon temporarily stops

Postal mail in the form of letters and packages destined for Ambon and surrounds has been stopped temporarily following intercommunal fighting that is still continuing. The forced stoppage was put into place to avoid the risk of damage or loss of mail. In addition, it is connected with the lack of means of sea and air transportation to this area.

Identity: pertikaian antarwarga.
Sources: human resource manager PT Pos Indonesia.

Narrative: the postal manager says from Bandung that the service will resume once there is a guarantee from the SF and the warring parties that mail and mail workers will not be interfered with. The delayed post is being held at Surabaya and Makassar: “the community is asked for its understanding.”

Language & style: the news selection of this story is compared with the lack of follow-up stories on the Ambon killings reported 2 days earlier or the mass killings in Ternate and Halmahera in the north 5 days earlier.

5.1.00 Hentikan Pembunuhan

End the killing

The head of the People’s Consultative Council (MPR) Amien Rais has asked the government and the Armed Forces (TNI) to immediately deploy troops to Ambon to bring an end to what has been called genocide. If the Ambon case widens to reach Java, Sumatra or other islands, then this will be the beginning of the death knell for the Republic of Indonesia.

Identity: Rais’s delegation is described as “20 orang Muslim Ambon” but there is no explicit context for the use of the term ‘genocide’ in Rais’s reported speech in the lead.
Sources: head of MPR (Rais); North Maluku MUI spokesman; Attorney-General.

Narrative: Rais’s ominous, almost apocalyptic tone in the lead is followed by his call to disarm both sides and arrest provocator. The Attorney-General ups the ante by calling for an (internal) peacekeeping mission with a TNI component, as well as a demand to remove the Maluku governor and military commander. He also wants local political elites fighting for the new governorship of North Maluku not to act excessively.

The MUI spokesman is reported as criticising ‘the slaughter of women and children’ in Tobelo. TNI are cited as rescuing refugees from Morotai by flying them to
Makassar. Manado is also mentioned as a ‘pilihan pengungsi’ without revealing that Christians chose Manado and Muslims Makassar.

Rais uses his meeting with the Muslim delegation to criticise the president for telling the Ambonese to end their own conflict; he believes this means the strong will overcome the weak. He accuses him of trivialising the Ambon problem and warns against its export to other parts of RI; he also warns that if the central govt does not take action, the community will fill the void.

Over 3000 refugees are evacuated from Halmahera to Ternate harbour but the military trucks were forced to fire warning shots as some refugees suspected the military of using their trucks to bring in rogue SF elements who were accused of supporting one side (unnamed) (in Halmahera??). There were belasan ribu pengungsi (umteen thousand refugees) flooding a city (Ternate) of 120,000; the evacuation was supported by a coalition of Muslim groups who sought financial aid: a bank account number is provided for contributors dari pihak mana pun (from whatever side) in the report.

Conflict of political and military interests, according to the Attorney-General, is the core of the dispute, not religion; he rejects the religious separation of populations and any foreign intervention. In addition to a national peacekeeping mission, effective police action is required, weapons seizures, raids, curfews and arrest of provokator. Space is also given to the Justice Party (PK) who condemn the violence as uncivilised and call on the govt to end it. If the VP can’t do the job, they ask the president to shift it to a part of the govt that is more competent. The party asks Muslim organizations to pray for the salvation of umat Islam wherever they are but esp in Maluku. However, the party’s views are not sourced to any individual, only to its Pimpinan Pusat (central leadership).

Language & style: the word ‘genocide’ is dropped into the lead without context or explanation; similarly, the first use of the word pembantaian (slaughter) is presented as a fact without argument, neither from with the article or from previous discussion and distinctions between different kinds of violent assaults.

Heavy bias towards govt and Muslim sources with only one political party (Muslim) given chance to express its views. Predictably, concern for victims is urged through prayer exclusively towards Muslim victims, without any equality of esteem for non-Muslims.

5.1.00 Maluku Utara Mencekam

North Maluku gripped

The situation and condition in North Maluku is increasing gripped, the conflict between groups is still going on everywhere. It’s now even been reported to have already spread as far as South Halmahera. A number of victims have died and been injured in Tobelo, Galela, Sindangati, Jailolo and in a number of other villages, keep increasing.

Identity: pertentangan antarkelompok warga; berbagai sumber di Maluku Utara (not cited as Muslim); desa Togaliwah & Geruah (Tobelo) not identified as Muslim;

Sources: Pangdam (Tamaela).

Narrative: Essentially a briefing from Tamaela about the situation in North Maluku though there is very little background on the events that began straight after Xmas. The imprecision of the lead (conflict is continuing everywhere) is followed by Tamaela confirming a rising death toll but unsure if it has reached 800; the author mentions (unnamed) sources from North Maluku who claim it is more like 2000; two Tobelo villages are linked to this higher figure. It is reported that fighting has spread to South Halmahera (unsourced). Reference is made to the battle readiness of both sides, while the SF are said (by Tamaela) to be positioned (with 2 battalions) to take
quick action to stem casualties. The Kodam staff head was now in charge of forces in Tobelo itself.

Meanwhile in Ambon, the military are preparing for residential sweeps and have ordered migrants (Seram, Buru, Buton) with no clear purpose in Ambon to leave; if they are caught up in the sweeps they will be processed according to law.

Language & style: lack of sourcing lends article a lack of transparency; the military spokesman is not required to respond to any contradictory evidence but allowed to talk up their increased numbers (North Maluku) and planned raids (in Ambon). The article sells short the Muslim estimate of ‘massacre’ casualties by refusing to name the sources and have the figures tested against official estimates.

6.1.00 Pemerintah Bantah Bertindak Lamban

Government disputes sluggish measures

It is not as if the Government is hesitant and not do anything to deal with the Maluku problem. In the meantime, the TNI will take all out measures to end the problem in Ambon and North Maluku. The leader of the DPR and those DPR factions in agreement will send a letter to the President urging him to take immediate steps so that the tally of victims does not increase.

Identity: konflik horizontal.
Sources: Menko Polkam (Wiranto); Panglima TNI (Widodo).
Narrative: this is a reply by the govt to accusation by legislators by its coordinating minister for political & security affairs; Wiranto says the govt is doing things (to end the crisis) that the public doesn’t know about e.g. a full-time Maluku desk coordinating the work of related departments. In this way, the different sources of information coming out of Maluku can be assessed accurately. When the situation calms down, measures will be taken to isolate the province that doesn’t involve closing it off; this is to prevent entry of weapons; he hopes that once this is done, reporting that is not proportional can be stopped. Stopping inflammatory reporting (without banning it) is couched in nationalist language ie the nation has a responsibility to regional problems.

Widodo tells reporters that TNI will go ‘all out’ to end the conflict and lists the number of battalions deployed and the action that can be taken by these forces: sweeping, preventing concentration of mobs and curfew.

The DPR head says the DPR has agreed to send the president a letter asking him to take steps to tackle the problem, prevent further casualties and protect the unity and integrity of the nation. The DPR does not support a state of emergency but rather it lends political support to firm steps to uphold legal authority.

Language & style: The first sentence is presented as a statement of fact, not sourced to Wiranto. Wiranto’s unremarkable and cryptic prose is quoted directly at great length; the reporter relies on Antara and sticks to official ministerial denials and while airing DPR impatience with the executive there are no independent accounts from the war zones which illuminate why it is that the large security build-up (12 battalions) has been ineffectual in preventing outbreaks with large casualty figures.

6.1.00 Panglima Kodam Pattimura: Situasi Maluku

Pattimura regional commander: Maluku situation starting to calm down

The situation in the province of North Maluku and the regency of Central Maluku, that until Tuesday (4/1) night, was still at boiling point, by Wednesday already started to appear calm. Throughout yesterday, there was more-or-less no more fighting between those groups of different faiths.
Identity: pertikaian antardua kelompok yg berbeda agama; pertikaian antardua kelompok; kecurigaan antarkelompok masyarakat; pertikaian dua warga
Sources: Maluku governor; head TNI territorial staff headquarters (Yudhoyono); Pangdam (Tamaela).
Narrative: the governor considers the spread of fighting in Central Maluku is more to do with the impact of fighting in Ambon. Yudhoyono believes the sides need to sit down and look for consensus. Tamaela says fighting has subsided in South Halmahera (direct quote unclear); he confirms there were victims in Central Maluku and North Maluku since 28 Dec that reached the 100s. It sources Antara on a battle in Susupu, subdistrict Sahbu, North Maluku where 100s were killed from both sides; this estimate relied on an (unnamed) wounded Laskar Jihad member. (Presumably) the same source or Antara reported residents of a named village fleeing to the beach after seeing their neighbour’s village burnt down. An unnamed military source confirms the Susupu battle but SF from Ternate were not there when the riot occurred.
Meanwhile, in Ambon, security conditions are improving (unsourced). Pangdam denied the hijacking of a (named) boat including a massacre that killed 6 people. He says the boat is still operating and he objects to the term ‘pembantaian’ (slaughter): ‘we are refined – don’t be so coarse’. The original allegation is unsourced. He chastises the media for making inflammatory news which only makes it harder, he says, to end the conflict.
He reassures that the sweeping and KTP (identity card) checks were not designed to just expel people but would be done in a careful, directed manner, but warned that even those with KTP might be sent home if they did not have a clear purpose being there.
On his return from Central Maluku, the governor said the people’s suspicion brought on by fighting in Ambon finally broke out in strife that spread, leading to 5000 refugees. Yudhoyono supports the proposal to send a peacekeeping mission to Ambon.
Language & style: the format is classic jurnalisme omongan (talking journalism) where senior officials have their say without any real coherent storyline developed.

6.1.00 Konflik Maluku Dikendalikan Elite Jakarta

Maluku conflict controlled by Jakarta elite

There are signs that vertical and horizontal conflict in Maluku over the last year, apart from being rooted in local problems, is being controlled by the political and military elite in Jakarta. This last point can be observed from a series of facts and events in the fighting in various areas of Maluku, each time not long after there is criticism or unpleasant action experienced by certain political or military elites.

Sources: Tomagola (UI & tim penyelesaian masalah Maluku); Tega Maluku (team of independent groups mapping the Maluku problem)(network of aid, religious and advocacy groups)
Narrative: A summary of Tomagola’s background analysis on North Maluku presented at a seminar in a Jakarta mosque. He lays out three causes of violent conflict in North Maluku: the struggle for religious territory that stretched back 127 years; struggle over the Malifut gold mine; struggle over the position of governor of North Maluku – 1. A volcanic explosion on Makian island in 1975 forced Makian islanders to relocate to mayoritas at the bottom of North Halmahera; the formation of the Malifut subdistrict left Muslim Makianese villages a majority on Christian Kao and Jailolo land. The first violent outbreak was 18 August; the second was 24 Oct destroying all Makian
villages; Makian refugees later responded in Ternate and Tidore by attacking Christians who fled to North Sulawesi.
The third attack was in Tobelo 26 Dec on 2 Muslim villages and in Galela that still continues.
2. the gold mine was on Kao land; the rezoning (in Malifut) created an imbalance in religious-communal numbers at a time when there was a drive to control revenue from the mine.
3. the background to the struggle for governor was the history of hegemonic competition between the sultanates of Ternate on one side, and Tidore and Bacan on the other. Rivals for the position were the sultan of Ternate and the regent of central Halmahera, supported by the sultan of Tidore.
In terms of solutions, Tomagola says in the short term, the national leadership should visit North Maluku, freshen up SFs, ensure firm action by SF to uphold security, investigate HR violators and physical and mental rehabilitation. In the medium term, facilitation of meetings between Makianese and Kao/Jailolo, organising dialogue between religious leaders, actualisation of adat foundations, making local elections a success and fairness in the rewards of the gold mine. Long term, the solution is to develop the means for supporting the unearthing of the region’s potential.
Language & style: a succinct summary of Tomagola’s position but no other substantive arguments offered. Most significantly, his perspective and background analysis does not appear to shape the news discourses of this paper or Republika.

7.1.00 Menneg HAM Akui Pemerintah Kurang Koordinasi Soal Maluku
Minister for Human Rights admits lacks of coordination on Maluku problem
State Minister for Human Rights (HAM) Hasballah M Saad admitted that during this time, lines of government are indeed less coordinated in solving the Maluku problem, since it was seen as slow in overcoming that problem.

Identity: konklik sosial yg mengarah pada SARA; kemarahan kolektif kaum muslimin; warga sipil yg saling bertikai.
Sources: State Minister for Human Rights; State Minister for Children’s Affairs; Muslim youth from various Jakarta Islamic bodies communiqué); Forum Islam Maluku Bersatu; Pangdam Brawijaya (Silalahi); Muslim preacher (refugee in Jakarta from Haruku).
Narrative: the admission in the lead is not elaborated; the state minister talks about organising aid and setting up expanding ‘safe havens’ (zona aman). For this he will ask the navy and airforce for help.
The State Minister for Children’s Affairs sends food aid and medicines to North Maluku, 500 tons by helicopter plus 5 doctors to Ternate. He met with Ternate leaders in Ternate and was challenged by a local leader (Basri) that if the SF is unable to anticipate the SARA conflict by way of guarantee, his visit will have been useless. The minister replies that the central govt will provide a form of security protection to the community and help with air and sea transport, while the regional govt and community leaders can hopefully calm the people’s emotions.
Saad wants to sit down with Christian and Muslim leaders to go back to what the problem really is. Saad also rejected the partition proposal as this would encourage similar things in other provinces. Rather TNI must protect the integrity of the zones and be objective, unlike the tendency of troops to defend their religious group. He referred to ‘shooting in between TNI SF of different religions’. A Muslim protest in Jakarta is given considerable coverage, that is, one directed at the VP’s official residence: a communiqué is quoted as saying that the Maluku conflict will cause the collective anger of the umat to emerge in various regions. The
document warns that it could lead to social chaos and national disintegration when spread to other areas that ‘store the same seeds’. It is signed by conservative activists, Bawazier, Umar (DDII) & Sudjana but also Rais. The protest is tracked to another location (UI) where the reporting of their activities continues: the erecting of posters around the campus boundary.

The article jumps to another Muslim protest this time at the DPR by Forum Islam Maluku Bersatu: they demand Tamaela be withdraw and DPR take responsibility for the conflict.

The commander of Kodam Brawijaya addresses his troops in Malang before being sent to Maluku, stressing that it is not ‘tugas tempur’ (aggressive task) but a peace mission where they must really be neutral by separating the hostile groups.

Meanwhile, fighting rages in central Maluku (Masohi) and North Maluku with 22 civilians dead, with 3 soldiers and 18 people injured. Tamaela reports 18 dead and 71 injured in Masohi alone, with 2 soldiers among the dead; 4 dead and 9 injured in Central and South Halmahera, including one soldier killed in central. Special security is being provided to the umat Muslim to allow them to celebrate Idul Fitri.

A refugee and preacher from Haruku island (Bakar), through the paper conveys his request for a security guarantee on behalf of 20,000 people (faith not specified) from 5 villages, including calm to celebrate Idul Fitri fearing a repeat of the tragedy on that day 19 January 1999.

Language & style: quoting a local leader (one name only) challenging the visiting minister directly is a rare case of local sources putting their views squarely in front of responsible Jakarta officials.

The coverage of Jakarta protests shows an editorial willingness to showcase Muslim street protests and victims but no counterbalancing with avowedly Christian voices. This is recounted without any background information on the relative fate of victims from their respective faith communities.

7.1.00 Ambon, Menyambut Lebaran di Tengah Kekhawatiran

Mosques in Ambon have already begun to beautify themselves. The people’s sense of mutual assistance, cleaning the environment around Lebaran now come to the fore. But part of the townsfolk and settlers have already begun to leave Ambon city. The city is now shattered, filled with the ruins of destruction from burning that almost levelled all buildings and shops that make up the shopping centre.

Identity: warga kota dan para pendatang; bentrok antarkelompok; toleransi antarumat beragama; antarkelompok warga; kaum perusuh (rioting community; in this context, Christians).

Sources: young Islamic leader (first name); an Ambonese Christian (first name); student leader (unnamed); MUI Maluku spokesman (unnamed); security force commander (military)(named); Muslim person (named);

Narrative: this is a survey of the atmosphere in Ambon city in the lead-up to the end of Ramahdan (Idul Fitri); much of it is street-level observations matched with speculation on community emotions backed up by a number of comments by locals. The movement of passengers around the shattered city is now limited. Despite this, Muslims greet each other affectionately: “there’s not yet so much atmosphere here. If you go to the villages or settlement areas the atmosphere is far different,” says a young Islamic leader.

This year’s Lebaran is contrasted with previous ones, recalling the times when tolerance was strong, communities lived side-by-side and visited each other. The author speculates that this cannot return for at least two generations; children of school age are already learning about war and making enemies. A Christian talks
about the *pela* ties in the past when communities conducted mutual visits when celebrating Xmas or Idul Fitri. Although only 10% are involved in the fighting, it has blown evenly across all populations, says a student leader.

There is a description of street preparations for Lebaran with regret about the ruined landscape after the riots which has left the fate of Ambon and Maluku people hidden (buried in the ruins). The subject then turns to the immediate needs of security. The sector commander outlines preparation in anticipation of trouble during Lebaran.

Troops have been put in readiness around places where prayers will be conducted, especially mosques with detailed plans for each command post, with a focus on the Al-Fatah mosque. The commander has prepared 2 back-up battalions, having received requests from traditional and religious leaders to provide protection and allow them to feel safe.

Language & style: the writer uses as a metaphor for inter-communal deterioration - rice that has turned to porridge, suggesting new living arrangements will be needed to bring the communities together again. The article is very much regretful and nostalgic in tone but returns to the immediate threats faced by *umat Islam* in their desire to continue to celebrate their festival amidst the ruins and sadness (*kepiluan*) of a shattered city.

[8th – no edition]

10.1.00 Umat Islam Desak Gus Dur Segera Selesaikan Masalah Ambon [Monas demo]

*Islamic community asks Gus Dur to immediately end the Ambon problem*

The Islamic community has urged President Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) to immediately end the Ambon problem. If Gus Dur cannot end horizontal conflict straight away the people's representatives in the DPR from Islamic parties will move a motion of no confidence. The conflict between religious communities in Ambon and other areas that have been going on for a year has already torn out the souls of many Muslim believers.

Identity: konflik antarumat beragama; pembantaian umat Islam; pembunuhan Umat Islam.

Sources: head MPR, PAN, Poros Tengah Amein Rais; Head PPP Hamzah Haz; head PK Hafiduddin; head PBB Sumargono; unnamed preacher (jailed for Borobudur bombing).

Narrative: the core of the story is a threat by Muslim parties to move a motion of no-confidence in the president if he doesn’t solve the Maluku problem. Attended by ‘100s of 1000s of Muslim men and women from the capital and surrounds’, Rais told the gathering at Monas the umat’s patience was running out. Apart from the president he also warned the TNI commander (Widodo) to end the conflict if he wanted to retain the support of the Islamic community, telling him, ‘Arrest the provocateurs’.

Haz echoed Rais to ‘end the slaughter of the Islamic community’ and to introduce a military state of emergency; to disband Komnas HAM ‘for not doing anything about what’s happening in Ambon’. Sumargono gives the president and VP 30 days to end the conflict or a motion of no confidence will be brought in the DPR. He also called for the removal of Pangdam Tamaela for not being neutral and allowing the ‘killing of the Islamic community in Maluku’ and for him to be brought before an international court.

Almost as an afterthought, an unnamed preacher with some notoriety is recorded calling for mosques to be set up as command posts (posko) for the recruitment of volunteers wanting to wage jihad in Ambon.
Language & style: speakers at the rally are openly quoted using the word ‘pembantaian’ (slaughter) in relation to Muslim victims. The language and accusatory tone is harsh by the Muslim political speakers and at times extreme. The accusations are serious against individual officials and institutions, with no reaction afforded them. Given the seriousness of the accusations and threats in front of such a large gathering, the mobilisational importance of the event (esp the call-to-arms to volunteers) is clear but not analysed in this or other news reports.

Early April

7.4.00 Enam Wakil Laskar Jihad Bertemu Presiden
6 Laskar Jihad representatives meet the President

Six people representing Laskar Jihad Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama’ah were received by President Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) at Merdeka Palace, Jakarta Thursday (6/4). During the ensuing discussion between Gus Dur and the aforementioned six, hundreds of people from laskar jihad spread out in a demonstration in front of Merdeka Palace.

Identity: the titling of the Laskar Jihad representatives is significant as a challenge to secular military authority: panglima perang; the titles also indicate their origin e.g. Ambon, Tidore.

Sources: Laskar Jihad (Thalib); state secretary (named); LJ member (‘his colleague’; unnamed)

Narrative: this story covers two key events, first the later one where LJ member go to the presidential palace to meet Gus Dur. There is no account of what led up to the president giving them a hearing, only that he spent just 5 mins with them. The earlier event was a religious meeting of Muslims held at a Jakarta stadium (Senayan) at which LJ leaders urged followers to join the war in Maluku by waging jihad there.

Accounts of what occurred at the meeting are supplied from both sides: LJ saying they delivered harsh criticism to Gus Dur re: Maluku and his idea to withdraw a 1966 law banning communism. The state secretary said the president listened to a few of their views and said he was not personally responsible (for Maluku) but answerable to the MPR to which they accused him of wanting to take the easy way out/do as he pleases.

The demonstration in front of the palace was filled with protesters from the Senayan meeting and was met by an encirclement of security forces. Protesters demanded, inter alia, the removal of the Pangdam.

Back at Senayan, prominence is given in reporting to a speech by Ja’far Umar Thalib: he proclaims the year 1421 as ‘the year of jihad’ and decrees it as ‘a mark of our solidarity towards the humanitarian tragedy that has fallen on the Muslim community in Maluku’. It mentions other attendees at the tablig, including a retired TNI brigadier-general. Thalib continues by saying the umat has the energy to face the enemies of Islam and claims the meeting is the pinnacle one for urging the spirit of the umat to wage jihad and defend the country and people from the foreign threat that wants to leave the country in disorder (not a direct quote). He is quoted directly saying that LJ is ready to train 3000 troops with a second wave of 7000 to be trained and sent on as the following group; he outlines LJ intentions: to train them at Bogor with former members of campus regiment (menwa), not TNI. They will gather at a pesantren in Yogyakarta and from there move as a convoy to Surabaya and board boats to Maluku. He notes that both civilian and military forces have been lobbied to allow them to carry out their plans for jihad – it will go ahead, Thalib says, despite Gus Dur’s vow to arrest those leaving to fight in Ambon.
Language & style: There is a detailed account of the precise times at which LJ members enter different parts of the state palace and from what direction. This may be to indicate how little time was spent with the president in the palace.

The account of the Senayan rally is remarkable for its frankness and acts as an outlet for LJ’s views and intentions which are laid out transparently. Such a clear notice of intention to make war in Maluku must have alarmed Kompas readers, esp Christians. Being forewarned of the group’s serious intentions, the paper needed to devote resources to tracking their movement from strategic and political directions, not just report what is said at their rallies.

The language of Thalib’s reported speech - while flanked by his war commanders, including a retired Brigadier-General - is one of the best examples of war communication given media space and left uncritically to resonate among diverse audience groups. Tapping primordial and atavistic urges, he announces the current year - 1421 -from the Islamic calendar as ‘the year of jihad’, thus tying his call to arms to a ‘sacred’ religious history. His words also position LJ as propagators of a xenophobic religious nationalism. His insistence that training of pasukan jihad is not being handled by TNI is ironic given he stands side-by-side with a ret. Brigjen and ultimately it is TNI cooperation that allows his troops to fulfil their mission in Maluku. The statement is nonetheless an attempt to position his movement as a grassroots uprising of Muslim youth, rather than an orchestrated TNI-dependent operation; such projections of organizational independence serve to mask the nature and extent of TNI coordination of LJ paramilitaries.

8.4.00 Amien: Jangan Anggap Enteng Kelompok Jihad
Amien: don’t take Jihad group lightly

MPR head Amien Rais says the Maluku problem is not a trivial problem but rather a serious one that must therefore be handled by the government in a serious manner. A jihad group exists because a section of the people see and (??), do not resist seeing the Ambon problem that has dragged on. (check translation)

Identity: kelompok-kelompok tertentu dalam masyarakat.
Sources: Amien Rais (head, MPR); Abdul Matori (deputy head MPR); Akbar Tandjung (head DPR).
Narrative: an important article of substance which allows three of the most senior government officials to comment on the wisdom of sending jihad troops to Maluku. Rais’s main point is that the jihad movement should not be dismissed as inconsequential; their motivation is based on determination (tekad) and spirit (semangat) which expresses an idealism. Despite this, his meeting with reps from LJ’s parent body FKAWEJ was said to last just 2 minutes. Visiting the parliament building, the group’s appearance is described in some detail: they appeared to be battle-ready (siap tempur) with swords and bamboo sticks, wearing white robes, turbans and army boots.

Matori presents an unambiguous rejection of the jihad plans; in a clear repudiation of them, he speaks of creating a national democratic system, not through violence. He refers to ‘certain groups’ becoming radical and acting violently, an approach which will destroy democracy. Asked if he believed the existence of the group demonstrated the community was dissatisfied with the president’s methods of resolving the case, he replies: the approach needs to be based on legality, human rights and dialogue which requires patience. The problem predates the formation of the govt. In any event, the jihad group, he says, does not represent the whole umat. Tandjung opposes the dispatch of jihad fighters but is more cautious and conciliatory in his language. He believes it will worsen the atmosphere there: it’s not yet clear, he says, if they (jihad troops) will be able to resolve the conflict which is exactly why
there is a concern it will bring forth a new problem. It is better to send aid in the form of cash and food, not through mass recruitment.

Language & style: Rais’s analysis of the jihad movement (which he publicly supported in January) serves to legitimise it by portraying them as determined, highspirited youth expressing idealisme. The article contains a clear summary of the different streams competing to influence the govt approach to LJ’s mobilisation and propagation efforts. This is a useful follow-up to the space given to the group’s reps the previous day but it is only one article in the lead-up to the mass deployment the following month.

The description of the jihad troops on display at the parliament is heavily coded and in one sense speaks more forcefully than the opinions of legislators. The white-robed troops - battle-ready and armed – constitute a convincing performance signifying the power of religious solidarity to bind warriors in readiness for war.

**Last week of May 2000**

24 – 30 May

[24 – 31 May 2000 – no references to LJ]

**Last week of June 2000**

24 – 30 June

24.6.00 Orang Luar Dilarang Datang ke Maluku

*Outsiders banned from entering Maluku*

In order to restrain increasingly protracted rioting in Maluku, the government is banning outsiders from entering the group of islands. At this moment, police, with the help of TNI, once again is arranging a clean-out and weapons raid in that area.

Identity: konflik sporadis antarkelompok; kelompok massa.

Sources: President Wahid; Antara; Polda chief Ambon; doctor (dir RSUP Malalayang)(??); head KPMM (commission to investigate and mediate Maluku); PDIP faction DPR; head Commission I DPR (Baharruddin).

Narrative: the lead is the decision of the president taken in consultation with the VP, head Polri and head TNI; Gus Dur reminds big shots (orang kaya) in Jakarta considered to be the brains behind the riots who do not want to see change and are funding the chaos: ‘Your actions have gone too far. If we run out of patience, look out! There are limits….So we will see ourselves, those who have high rank, large wealth will be run over by the people.’

Meanwhile, a number of govt officials have called on the govt to implement a civil state of emergency; and one (Baharruddin) says if that doesn’t work after three months, try military emergency.

Relying on Antara, it reports from Ambon 15 killed and 80 injured (sub-heading) in named areas; it describes the manner of injury – victims were shot either by SF (trying to scatter both sides that are attacking each other) or the opposing side. Kapolda also reports the ransacking of two warehouses at Tantui by *masa kelompok* where weapons and police uniforms were stolen; in the attack a Brimob boarding house was destroyed which housed 2000 police and their families.

In the north, 300 Galela refugees were unable to board a helicopter because it had trouble landing and as such ‘gagal dievaluasi’ (failed to be evaluated).

Language & style: the police chief describes the sacking at Tantui as a ‘criminal and amoral act without humanity’; Gus Dur threatens unnamed *orang kaya* using nationalist rhetoric: ‘we are a patient people (bangsa)’ and you will be ‘overrun by the people (rakyat)’.
TNI akan Bertindak Lebih Tegas

TNI commander General Widodo AS has asked for the implementation of emergency conditions in Maluku and stresses that TNI will take stronger and firmer action in getting on top of Ambon-Maluku rioting, included among them in facing community groups that want to cause instability in those areas.

Identity: kelompok-kelompok masyarakat; pertikaian antardua kelompok; oknum aparat memihak kelompok tertentu (rogue SF elements taking sides with certain groups).

Sources: head TNI; deputy head army (Sutarto); deputy head DPR (PDIP faction); faction member PDIP DPR; Antara.

Narrative: The TNI head at a military graduation again pledges ‘firm action’ in Maluku, by the manner of troop deployment and also by calling on the community to hand in their weapons within a time limit; if this is not heeded he promises weapons sweeps street-to-street and house-to-house. These operations were already carried under the command of the Pangdam in Jan-Feb of the same year yielding 11,980 units of weapons which were thrown into the Banda Sea.

Deputy head of the army announces a new Pangdam for Maluku (Kodam XVI/Pattimura) will be installed 27 June and says he will be given ‘special directions’.

Further update on fighting in Ambon and casualty reports from various hospitals: Al-Fatah – 5 dead including a Kostrad soldier, 13 injured; Dr Haulussy 3 dead, 15 wounded; TNI naval hospital (Halong) 2 dead and 8 injured; most of the victims were struck by SF bullets when trying to disperse the combatants; or homemade weapons, bombs or hand grenade. People from a number of named areas fled to avoid being targeted by snipers: ‘the SF both TNI and police appeared to be having increasing difficulty dispersing the attackers who were equipped with weaponry almost the same as possessed by the SF.’

Language & style: at the end of the article there is a telling conclusion that completes the narrative thread on the TNI strategy of weapons seizure by depicting it as a failed one, without editorialising. There is also an elemental metaphor in the writing that harmonises with a primordialist narrative: ‘Although Ambon city and its surrounds was drenched by daily rain, it seemed this did not dampen the emotions of the masses in attacking each other and burning houses and other facilities.’

Ketua MPR Setuju Keadaan Darurat

A number of circles agree that special conditions be applied to overcome the intergroup conflict that continues to worsen in the Ambon area and Maluku. And, the head of the MPR Amien Rais agrees a civil state of emergency needs to be implemented in Maluku.

Identity: aparat dalam kelompok yg bertikai.

Sources: Amien Rais; Menteri Hukum (Mahendra); Tomagola; Kontras (Munir); Komnas HAM (Soeharto).

Narrative: this is about key officials and groups getting behind the darurat sipil (civil emergency); there’s also an explanation of the necessary legal process for it to be put in force. Rais supports it because every child of the nation’s life is ‘sangat berharga’ (very valuable); the justice minister is in favour of bringing what is technically known as a ‘keadaan khusus’ (special state) by means of bringing into
force a revised RUU (legislative plan) for a PKB (tackling a state of danger); the

darurat sipil process, on the other hand, is based on a 1959 law. Support for it comes
also from Kontras (Munir) ‘to stop more victims falling’, Komnas HAM (Soeharto) ‘TNI
and Polri can take firmer action’ and to avoid interference from foreign bodies.
The one dissenter is Tomagola who says a civil or military emergency will strengthen
the territorial grip on the area; he knows of witnesses who attest to the involvement of
SF in the fighting. He suggests instead opening Maluku up to the International Red
Cross and giving the widest possible access to foreign and national press. If the
condition worsens, it is better to invite UN troops.
Mahendra explains that the procedure for implementing a special or emergency state
is quite long and involves calling a session of the provincial assembly and filing their
decision with the central government.

Language & style: all views are thrown in together with technical legal arguments
without separate treatment which inhibits analysis of arguments for and against.
Although there is a break-out that lists the procedure and authority for a ‘keadaan
khusus’ (RUU PKB) and a civil emergency under the 1959 law, there is no analysis of
the practical effect on the ground that these increased powers are likely to have,
given prevailing security practices. Another example of jurnalisme omongan.

26.6.00 Halmahera Utara Tetap Mencekam

North Halmahera still gripped

[Antara] The security situation in several places in North Maluku, Sunday (25/6), is
starting to settle down and become conducive, while in the North Halmahera area,
mainly Kao, Tobelo, and Galela, since rioting on Monday last week, they are still
gripped.

Identity: oknum tertentu; konflik bernuansa suku, agama, ras, dan antargolongan
(SARA).
Sources: a reproduced Antara story; force commander (operation restore order North
Maluku) & Kostrad commander (Sutrisno); provincial rep North Maluku; head of
provincial assembly Maluku; Justice minister (Mahendra).
Narrative: this covers the security situation in parts of North Maluku and downstream
effects of the prolonged war; a military commander reports on the failure of TNI to
restore order despite the presence of 2 battalions and 2 platoons in areas of conflict;
he blames the geography of North Maluku, limited TNI & police personnel and lack of
transportation and communication. In addition, he mentions that the attacked villages
are the ones (named) that rejected a TNI presence: “there were attacks resulting in
victims, the SF were blamed and a guard post was then attacked.” He believes
oknum tertentu were trying to bring TNI into conflict with the community, as,
eventhough SF were rejected, they still enter Tobelo and Galela.
The fighting has also brought about unemployment in various industries and related
sectors e.g. a banana plantation in Galela has shed 3000 workers; similarly with a
cooking oil company in Ternate; thousands of harbour workers have been laid off.
The justice minister flags that the security status of the province(s) are about to
change with a new law and legal basis for TNI to move within a framework for
safeguarding conditions.

Language & style: buried lead of village rejecting TNI protection; the military
commander presents attacks on villages as caused by the rejection of TNI personnel
in their areas but then admits that his troops still enter these areas. There is no
analysis here or in previous reportage as to why villagers are refusing TNI
‘protection’. Journalists’ access to these villagers would be critical to providing a
countervailing view to the official military one.
27.6.00  
Darurat Sipil Resmi Diberlakukan

Civil emergency officially declared

President Abdurrahman Wahid finally put in place a state of civil emergency in Maluku and North Maluku provinces, starting 27 June 2000, at midnight (WIT). The government hopes civil emergency conditions can quickly be withdrawn again if conditions in both provinces return to normal.

Identity: warga Maluku (not identified as Christian protesters);
Sources: President; navy commander (eastern region); Antara; (Komnas HAM & YLBHI); FSRM (Forum for the Voice of the Malukan People).
Narrative: Gus Dur announces the civil state of emergency flanked by various ministers. The decision, he says, was discussed with the DPR leaders.

The justice minister gives a legal explanation as to why the govt did not itself put into force the PKB and instead relied on an earlier decision of Habibie which approved RUU PKB which at the time was not implemented due to social opposition. Relying directly on this earlier decision which itself derives its authority from a 1959 law, legislators were able to bypass the provincial assemblies which were not functioning at that time.

Meanwhile, a naval commander reports that his fleet patrolling Ambon Bay has come under sniper fire. Antara reports that the changeover of the Pangdam position occurred in Ambon presided over by the TNI army head.

The power structure of the civil emergency is outlined with the highest power in the provinces being the governors assisted by the Pangdam, Kapolda and head of judiciary. The TNI head says the new legal umbrella will be used to benefit his force in the field.

A number of human rights groups (Komnas HAM & YLBHI) say the new framework should not be used as the main lever to control violence. They believe that firm and effective security can be provide in spite of the new conditions; the govt must therefore correctly account for whether Malukans trust the SF so that they don’t become a new opposing side in Maluku. Komnas HAM’s Nababan goes further (despite another commissioner supporting it – 26.6.08) by saying he doesn’t think the changed status will bring security and order because the problem is the inability of the SF to be independent and professional.

A group of Malukans in Jakarta protested outside the US embassy demanding that the US fight to have UN troops and UNHCR brought to Maluku, saying they didn’t trust the SF because they take sides and even join in inflaming the conflict.

Language & style: Note the jargon used to summarise the TNI position: ‘With the spreading out of troops, explains Widodo, his side will make further evaluations. What’s important with a new legal umbrella (UU civil emergency) is that TNI and Polri will make the maximum effort to benefit forces in the field within a framework shaping the authority that is given to the governor as implementer of the civil emergency in the region.’

28.6.00  
Jam Malam di Maluku

Curfew in Maluku

The Governor and civil emergency ruler Saleh Latuconsina, Tuesday (27/6), instituted a curfew in Maluku from 22.00 until 6.00. The imposition of a curfew is one topic that is inserted in Declaration No 1 27 June 2000 to be followed by the community as a measure to stop the fighting with SARA overtones.

Identity: pertikaian bermuansa suku, agama, ras dan antargolongan; balas dendra antarkelompok masyarakat.
Sources: Maluku Governor/head of civil emergency; US govt spokesman; Interior minister; Kapolda Maluku; Antara; head DPR; TNI head of army; human rights activists (Widjojanto & Hendardi); minister for human rights.
Narrative: The curfew was the first action taken under the new state of emergency following a meeting of the governor and the two new appointees, Pangdam Maluku & Kapolda Maluku; in addition he prohibited gatherings of more than 10 people and renewed calls for weapons to be handed in to the SF; the new police chief said two Brimob companies had already arrived from West Java and Bali. Antara reported on the poor condition of refugees in two named locations in Ambon. The flow of refugees continues out of 4 named villages to avoid the crossfire. It is reported that after the new conditions were brought in the security situation has improved (no evidence) except that a (named) soldier was shot in the head by a sniper plus two other (named) civilians were also shot elsewhere. The US spokesman urges the govt to end the civil war and drew attention to reluctance and inability of SF to handle the conditions. The interior minister expects the civil emergency to restore security without the need to raise it to a military emergency; though the option to raise it is there, he hopes it is not needed as it presents a bad image. If order is restored quickly, remove the state of emergency, he says. Head DPR (Tandjung) does not want the civil emergency to go in the direction of a military emergency but supports it as a more effective framework to end the security problem. The head of the army hopes that the new conditions are fully supported, including by the political elite who should not look for HR violations but at all the lives that are being lost. He understands the powers of the state of emergency are fully in the hands of the governor, who is assisted by a board consisting of regional commander, Kapolda and head of local judiciary. The two HR activists say it might be doubted (?) whether the state of emergency can guarantee a safe existence because so much emotion on all sides has been invested in the conflict. To make sure that the forces entering Maluku are not influenced by circumstances there, it's better to bring in the civil emergency with the support of very neutral sides distant from the conflict, namely, the United Nations. The minister for human rights says the state has an obligation to stop the violence by whatever means, including a state of civil emergency; but it's important that it does not lead to greater HR violations. Language & style: all the officials put their slant on the new arrangements but there are again no perspectives from the combatants or their communal representatives who have a direct stake in SF policy.

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29.6.00 Kontrol Tetap Diperlukan

Control still needed

The organising of a state of civil emergency in Maluku and North Maluku provinces by President Abdurrahman Wahid needs to be supported to end the fighting with SARA overtones. Despite this, the arranging of the status of civil emergency must still be controlled by the community or the DPR. It can also be proposed to the civil emergency ruler to form a meeting with the war commanders of the red and white troops.

Identity: pasukan merah/pasukan putih; konflik antarmasyarakat; bentrok antarmasyarakat; kelompok-kelompok masyarakat; pertikaian bermuansa SARA. Sources: rector Gadjah Mada University; political observer (Rahardjo); sociologist (Tomagola)(Antara); lawyer (Panjaitan); defence minister; human rights minister; TNI head of army.

Narrative: another opinion fest of academics and officials 2 days after the civil emergency is in place: Tomagola wants the commanders of the red and white troops to meet; the lawyer wants progress reports from the governor on civil emergency esp
if power is exercised to close access to the press; control is needed from DPR to prevent civil emergency going off the tracks (penyimpangan). Observer (Rahardjo) says civil emergency is a step forward; when things calm down reconciliation can begin with LSMs introducing ‘sistem kontrak sosial’ (a system of social contract) – this involves community groups agreeing to live side-by-side in peace but there are barriers – like revenge – which are very difficult to destroy. The rector supports the civil emergency because a sensitive point has already been reached and if it goes on it can cause the people to be wiped out. The human rights minister announces that the govt is not pushing for a military emergency but depending on developments, it leaves this option open. The civil emergency does not give the SF legitimacy to act outside its authority and commit HR violations. They have provisions such as pocket books with pointers about how to avoid HR violations: ‘What is happening now is not SF action which violates HR but the public attacking the SF…these community actions cannot be tolerated because they are classified as opposing the state apparatus.’ He adds that his office does not provide supervision of the SF: they have their own internal mechanism for that as well as the local provincial govt has an obligation to provide oversight. The head of the army rejects the idea of foreign help since the Maluku problem is ‘urusan internal’ (internal matter) and the govt and the community must resolve it cooperatively. He calls on the community not to worry as the SF will take action under the civil emergency; what’s needed is a political policy and legal umbrella for the civil (governor), legal (police & judiciary) and defence (TNI) apparatuses.

Language & style: the disjointed and unfocused lead results from trying to summarise the views of 4 people - all speaking on separate occasions - in one par.

30.6.00 Kapal Pengungsi Galela Diduga Tenggelam

Galela refugee boat presumed sunk

Motor Boat (KM) Cahaya Bahari that was bringing around 400 passengers from the refugee areas of Tobelo, North Maluku, is believed to have sunk in the waters of Tagulandang Island North Sulawesi province, Thursday (29/6) around midday.

Identity: korban kerusuhan from named village in Galela (Christian?); Sources: Manado port office; informasi lain; Antara; president; Amien Rais; Polri chief

Narrative: the religious faith of those suspected of drowning (penumpang korban) is not explicitly canvassed but as they fled from Galela to Tobelo, it is clear they are Christian refugees; there is a suggestion of some communication with the stricken boat (informasi lain). The story is left hanging and cuts abruptly to a presidential statement from a Christian gathering in East Java hosted by GKJW. Gus Dur spell out his govt’s approach – to make Malukans aware that they must resolve their own problems, formal and informal movement to help the resolution process, and end the problem from Jakarta not just within Maluku. He acknowledges much greater powers under the civil emergency but adds there still must be limits. The responsibility to end the fighting, he says, is a collective one. He still takes responsibility but when faced with extreme people, the situation is complex; he is looking for a way out where victory can be achieved without insulting the other side; the reporter points out that ‘pihak yg ekstrem’ (extreme side) is not explained.

The Polri chief rejects the accusation that the civil emergency means censoring the media; he admits there are restrictions on news like telephone and telegram but the media is not targeted.

Rais assesses the civil emergency as not a problem because what counts is ‘the man behind the gun’ and as long as he is neutral, honest and doesn’t take sides, that’s fine.

Language & style: again there are 3-4 different themes all treated in the one article with an emphasis on official views. Most of the content of official statements is of a
public relations nature avoiding any actual analysis of the impact in the field of the new rules of engagement. Again no voice or platform is given to the combatants or their representatives. For example, at no point is any warring side able to comment on the president’s strategy of insisting Malukans had to find a way out themselves.

END KOMPAS

Maluku timelines

Conflict periodisation -

- 19 Jan 1999 – 15 May
- 24 July 1999 – 24 December
- 26 Dec 1999 – 1 April 2000

(Source: Tomagola 2000)

1st riot 19 Jan 1999 (Batumerah, Ambon)
2nd riot 24 July 1999 (Poka, Ambon)
3rd riot 26 Dec 1999 (Ambon 26th; Halmahera 27th)
4th riot June 2000 (Laskar Jihad entry to Ambon)

(Source: van Klinken 2006)

Other key dates –
National parliamentary elections mid June 1999
Creation of Nth Maluku province 16 Sept 1999
Monas rally, Jakarta 7 Jan 2000
Senayan FKA JW rally (Jakarta) 6 April 2000
VP Megawati visits Maluku 26 April 2000
State of civil emergency 27 June 2000

Other sites of violence -
Tual (Maluku Tenggara) 31 March 1999
(important date)
Attack on Malifut (Halmahera) 19 Aug 1999
Razing of Makianese villages (Hal) 24 Oct 1999
Refugees in Seram jungle & Haruku 12 Feb 2000
Clashes in Gane, Galela (Hal) early March 2000
Tantui incident (Ambon) 23 June 2000
Pattimura University burnt down 3 July 2000

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